JEREMIAH BVRROU GHS
Gospel = Preacher
To two of the greatest Congregations in England Viz.
St Paul's and Cripplegate London
AN EXPOSITION WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS CONTINUED UPON THE FOURTH, FIFTH, SIXTH, AND SEVENTH CHAPTERS OF THE PROPHESY OF HOSEA.

Being first delivered in several LECTURES at Michael's Cornhill London.

By Jeremiah Burroughs.

Being the Fifth Book, published by
Thomas Goodwyn, William Bridge,
William Greenhill, John Yates,
Sydrach Simson, William Adderly.

LONDON,
Printed for Peter Cole, at the sign of the Printing-Press in Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange, 1650.
To the Reader.

Reader,

Here present thee with a continuation of Expositions and Observations upon other Four Chapters of the Prophet Hosea, delivered by that Worthy Man, now with God. Himself in his life-time published the Three first Chapters; These now made public, were compiled out of the Manuscripts which Himself under His own Hand left, which being short, have been filled up and enlarged out of the best Copies of Sermon Notes taken from His own mouth. We must not undertake for all imperfections or mistakes that haply may be found, though a diligent and a skilful hand had the collecting of them. We only give Letters of Credence to them, that they are genuinely the Authors, and that they are singularly worthy of all acceptation, especially by such Readers as have their thoughts exercised in observing the ways of God's proceedings in and towards the Nations of the world where His Name is called. One great piece of His Dispensations under the Old Testament, was that towards the Ten Tribes, who remain in captivity to this day, and who were set up (as their Predecessors in the wilderness) as Types of God's dealing in like cases with us under the New Testament; as we may see in the instance of the Eastern and Grecian Churches that have groaned under the Mahumetan Tyrannies and Oppressions, of whom the Ten Tribes may seem to be the liveliest pattern, as the condition of the Saints in the Western European Churches under the Pope was exemplified in the captivity of Babylon, which befell the other two Tribes. Yet so, as both in
To the Reader.

sins and punishment the one and the other are general examples unto us upon whom the ends of the world are come, in which God acts over with a quick and swift motion, as being the last act, what was done more slowly under the Old. The worthy Author was one of the most accurate speculators in his time, that with a curious and searching eye beheld what God was a doing in the World. He was as one of those Wise men that knew the times, (as 'tis said of Ahasuerus his seven Counsellors, Esth. 1. 13.) and skilful therein, not as they in an humane or political way, but as the transactions in the world do relate unto God, who governs this world by the rules and presidents in His Word. He was one of those who as the Psalmist speaks, had pleasure to seek out the great works of the Lord, and to parallel those in these times with those of old under the Old Testament; and unto that end, in the entrance to these alterations in our times, he pitch'd upon the explication of this Prophecy, which the studious Reader will with much delight reade over when he shall observe how He made application all along to the Dispositions of that time in which He preached them. The Lord bless them to them of this Nation, for which they were principally intended.

Thomas Goodwin,  
Sydrach Simpson,  
William Bridge,  
John Yates,  
William Greenhil,  
William Adderly.

The Titles of those five Books of Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs lately published; VIZ.

An Exposition of the 4, 5, 6, & 7. Chapters of Hosea.  
A Treatise of Earthly Mindednes, &c.  
Gospel Conversation.  
Gospel-Worship, &c.  
The rare Jewel of Christian Contentment.

All Printed for Peter Cole, 1650.
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Obs. 1
Word of the Lord. Hard truths are hardly born; but when the Authority of the Infinite God appears in them, be they either making for us or against us, our hearts must bow to them; they lay bonds upon the conscience and bind over to eternal death if you reject them. 2 Chron. 26. 12. Zedekiah, a King, is charged that he did not humble himself before the Prophet Jeremiah. Though the Prophet be never so poor and contemptible in himself, yet if he brings the word of the Lord, Zedekiah the king must humble himself before him.

2. Ye children of Israel.] In this appellation God puts them in mind of the covenant he had made with them and they with him; you are not Heathens you are the children of Israel, in covenant with me, a people neer to me, yet I have a controversy with you.

Ob. The neeriness of a people to God exempteth them not from Gods contending with them for sin: Neither should neeriness to us exempt any from our contending with them. Deut. 13. 6. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thy own soul, intice thee secretly to worship a strange god, Verse 8. thine eye shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him, thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death.

Controversies between those that are neer are very grievous. Quid di- Propheta quietantae diligentiae vocarit audiatur verbi Domini. 3. The neerer the relation is between any the more grievous is the controversy, if there be a controversy at all. Hear the Word of the Lord ye children of Israel. It is a sad thing for one Nation to have a controversy with another; much more for a people to be at controversy with itself; Yet more when when the controversy comes nearer, into the family, between husband and wife, between father and child, between dearest friends who were before to each other as their own souls, controversies there are very sore and grievous, Prov. 13. 19. A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their contentions are like the bars of a Castle. Wind within the body is most troublesome and dangerous.

Hear ye.] O Prophet (saies Oecolopdius upon the place) Oecolop, what is it thou hast to say that with so much earnestness thou callest...
called to have the word of the Lord heard: this is the solemn message of the Prophet to this people. The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

The word translated "Controversie," signifies a debate, a contention, it comes of בורת Contendere vel privatim vel coram judice, to contend privately or to come before a Judge; sometimes a cause pleaded in Law. As Exod. 23. 3. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. That's the same word with this here, a Controversie. The Lord hath a cause to plead with this people, it is the controversy of the Lord; the Prophet stands up for God in his Name to plead against them, he pleads for the King, the King of Heaven: So should all faithful Ministers be sure they be on God's side, pleading his cause; For all Ministers are God's Sergeants at Law, his Attourneys, his Solicitors. The Kings Lawyers are sworn, they shall never plead against him, or take fee on the other side; And yet how many even in the exercise of their Ministry shew that they have taken fee on other side! How do many plead against God, against his Sabbaths, against his Ordinances, yea, plead sometimes against the power of God's line, against those things wherein the chief dignity & glory of God consists! Sometimes perhaps pleading for them but pleading more against them at another time. The Devil hath not more cordial Solicitors and pleaders for him than those who would be accounted the Prophets of the Lord.

The Lord.] As if the Prophet should say, Know, you have not to do with me, nor with Amor (who was contemporary with Hosea, & a Prophet to Israel) though you think you can make your parts good with me and with the other Prophets, know God will not now stand pleading with you so much by his Ministers, he will take the cause into his own hand and will plead, by his Judgments he will now take up the controversy himself. The Lord tells the people (Gen. 6. 3.) that his Spirit should no longer strive with them: what's that? That is, it should no longer strive in the way of Noah's Ministry, but he would come and strive himself after another manner, by bringing the flood upon them.
It is most dreadful for sinners for God to take the controversy into his own hand to contend with them in a way of judgment; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God. You think Ministers are hard, they preach terrible things; but if you have to deal with God immediately, if he should not speak to you by man but come himself and plead with you, you would find it harder to deal with him. When Job's friends were pleading with him, he could easily make his part good with them, but Chap. 38. ver. 1, 2. God himself comes and speaks out of the whirlwind, Who is he that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? and so goes on in a chapter or two; Chap. 42. ver. 5. Job falleth down now and faith, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my soul and repent in dust and ashes. Psal. 130. 3. is a notable Scripture for this purpose. If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity, Oh Lord, who should stand? Mark these words, how Lord is twice here repeated, it would have been full sense thus, If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity who shall stand? There would have been a mighty emphasis in the word Jehovah, who shall stand, for it is thou Oh Jehovah: but it comes in again, to Note that herein lies the Emphasis, if thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity, Oh Lord who shall stand? This Oh Lord seems to be a pleonasme, one would think that it breaks the sense, but the scope is to shew that the sight of having to deal with God in our sins, is very terrible, sin causes a dreadful controversy between God and men. But further, that which is the main thing in this, is, That sin causeth a most dreadful controversy between God and the soul, between God and a Nation: For this God comes to strive, to contend for his glory, & the sinner strives & contends against God. It is God that is infinitely above the sinner, who hath the controversy with him, Isa. 45. 9. Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker, Let the potter strive with the potter's clay, Yea thus doth every sinful impenitent soul, and every sinful impenitent Nation, they strive with their Maker. The Lord is above them; therefore to intimate the distance between God and us in this controversy; faith the text, The Lord hath a
controversie with the inhabitants of the land, poor earth-
creeping creatures that have dwellings here below whose
houses are houses of clay, and God is the great God of Hea-
ven and Earth.

The controversy that God hath with a sinner is a just con-
troversie, God hath right on his side, and the injury is great
that is done unto him.

Thirdly, It is a controversy that we have begun, God did
not begin it with us, but we began it with him, we have the
worst of it.

Fourthly, It is an old controversy a controversy of our
forefathers, a controversy that God hath had with one gen-
eration after another, and we as a wretched generation stand
forth to hold up the old controversy. As in England in for-
mertimes there hath been wars for hundreds of years (as in
the Barons wars) and when one generation was gone, the gen-
eration after flood forth to hold up that controversy; so it
hath been between God and man, God hath had a controver-
sie with the children of men ever since the fall of Adam, and
one generation after another hath flood forth to hold up the
controversie, and thou wretched sinner standest up in thy ge-
genration, in thy place to hold up the controversy that man-
kind hath had with God since his casting out of Paradise.

Fifthly, It is such a controversy as stirreth up all the Power
all the Wrath of God against a sinner, if God have any power
in him, it shall be put forth in making his cause good against
a sinner, Levit. 26. divers places in that chapter, If ye walk
contrary unto me I will walk contrary unto you, my Power my Wisdom
all mine Attributes are against you. A man that hath a controver-
sie with another employes and improves all the strength he
hath against him that he is at controversy with.

This controversy is a deadly controversy, it is such as
strikes at our lives, at our souls, at our eternal estates.

A controversy with God who is set upon it to have satisfa-
tion for all the wrong we have done to him, he will have it
one way or other.

Such a controversy as only the Lord Christ that great Med-

ator,
diator, that great Peace-maker is able to make up; None can reconcile God and a sinner but Christ God-Man, He must stand before God to satisfy for the wrong the sin of man hath done unto him.

A controversy with him who hath thee at infinite advantage, who hath thee under his feet and the point of the sword of his Justice is at thy heart.

A controversy (that if thou look not to it) is like to prove an everlasting controversy. **Psal. 57. 16. I will not contend for ever, neither will I always be wroth, for the Spirit should fail before me.** This is spoken to those that are in Covenant with God, in regard of the lesser controversies that after their reconciliation may be between God and them: But with thee if not reconciled to God in Christ who art yet in the great controversy that God hath with sinful man, (I say if thou lookest not to it) it may prove an everlasting controversy to thee: Certainly God will overcome thee, God will have the day of thee, the Lord will overcome when he judgeth. **Julian strove a great while against the Lord, but at length Victi Galile vicisti, he was forced to acknowledge with his blood cast up into the air, The Lord hath overcome, the Lord will overcome.**

It is a vain thing for thee to stand out striving with this great God. **Job 40. 2. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?** So it is translated in your books, but according to the words in the Hebrew, and so translated by Pagnin and others, Is there any wisdom, or any learning in contending with God? any knowledge shewed in that? No certainly there is no knowledge, no wisdom, no learning in contending with the Almighty: Our greatest wisdom is to fall down, to be humbled before the Lord. The Lord hath appointed a certain period for thy coming in to make up thy peace with him, to satisfy him; if thou neglectest that time thou art lost, undone for ever.

My brethren this is no time to have any controversy with God, to stand out against him in ways of enmity. It is time now when such blackness of darkness is upon us even forms of blood hang over our heads, It is time now (I say) however
however, to be at peace with Heaven, to make our peace with God.  
Job. 36. 18. There is wrath, beware therefore that he take 
thee not away with his stroke.  The Lord is come forth from his 
place, he is pleading his cause, and now in the waies of his 
administration he declares that he will have glory from his 
creature, he hath sworn by Himself and the word hath gone 
out of his mouth in righteoufnefs that every knee must bow to 
him and every tongue confefle his Name, he seems now to re-
solve he will have it so indeed, he will have all to bow before 
him.  It is no time therefore now for us to have contro-
versies with God, to have controversies with God and man 
both, with Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and with our own 
consciences and all.  What shall become of us?  Be not thou a ter-
ror O Lord unto me (faith Jeremiah) for thou art my hope in the day 
er. 17. of evil.  If God be a terror, and the daies be evil, what will 
become of us?  It is time to fall down and make peace with 
God.

Consider of this you who are fo often in controversies with 
your Neighbors: Remember in all your controversies that 
God hath a great controversy with you; And satisfie not 
your selves in this that you are able to clear your selves before 
men, what is that fo long as this controversy continues?

It is a dangerous thing to go on long in this controversy 
with God; it is wisdom to make an end of it betime, Pro. 17. 
14. The beginning of strife is like the letting out of waters, where-
fore leave off contention before it be medled with.  The beginning 
of strife especially with God is most dreadful, if thou goest on 
but a little while, thine heart may be most desperately set a-
gainst God and for ever left to strive against him, never to come 
in and be humbled before him.  This is the reason (I verily be-
lieve) of the most horred wickedness of some men amongst us: 
we wonder at it that ever any man should dare to venture up-
on such horrid wickednesses, one after another; Surely here 
is the reason, at first it may be when they were young there 
was some dreadful breach between God and their souls, they 
fall (though the world perhaps knew it not) into some foul 
and abominable sin, and liaving made such a dreadful breach 
between.
between God and their souls then, they now go on desperately and fight against the God of Heaven in such a desperate manner as never any age can tell us any examples of such desperate fighting against God as is in this age. God hath a controversy with Nations also for their sin. Those who are to sue for God may well charge us, that the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land at this day. If ever he had a controversy with a people he hath it with us. The Lord hath a fearful controversy with us, he hath most fearful things to charge this land with; I might instance in some things that are more peculiar to this nation than to any other upon the face of the earth.

As the hatred, contempt, persecution of the power of godliness; No nation upon the face of the earth hath that guilt in this regard upon it that England hath, nor never had since the world begun, Persecution of faithfull & godly Ministers, of the same Religion holding all fundamental Truths, yea, all the Articles of Religion, every point of the Doctrine of Religion together with them; (I say) never any Nation was guilty of that persecution as we of this Kingdom are; Silencing many for trifles and toys; Persecuting for keeping the Sabbath; It is true, other countries are loose in their practice or the Sabbath, but no country upon the face of the earth hath ever persecuted the keeping of it as England hath done; and that by the countenance of those in authority. We are sinners and others are sinners, but the Lord hath a controversy with us for these things in a more special manner than with any people upon the face of the earth this day.

This controversy the Lord hath against us, is an old controversy too. I may apply that text Jer. 32. 31. that God speaks concerning the City of Jerusalem unto us, This City hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day. So ever since the Reformation hath begun have we bin a provocation to the Lord.

Thirdly, A general controversy even with all sorts, a controversy with our Kings and Princes, with our Nobles, our Gentry, our Cities, Countries, Universities, Common people
people, with wicked people, with godly people, with the Saints, with all.

Fourthly, It is the most unkind controversy in regard of our parts that ever was in any Nation; for God had dealt with us in such a loving way as he hath not done with any Nation in the world besides, he hath made us even as the dearly beloved of his soul, and yet for all this we have contended against him. This unkindness goes even to the very heart of God.

Fifthly, The Lord hath sent many faithful Ambassadors to plead his cause with us. He never to any Nation upon the earth sent more faithful Ambassadors that have pleaded his cause with more power and evidence of the Spirit than to us in England, yet we have stood out.

Sixthly, We have had as many offers of mercy as ever people had. Many a time we have been upon the brink of Judgment and the bowels of God have been towards us and he hath said, it shall not be.

Seventhly, The Lord hath been as patient, he hath staid as long as ever he did with any people before he came to execution. Where do we reade of any people that have had a hundred yeers peace? (Ours is not much less;) Never that I know of in all the Scripture.

Eighthly, The Lord hath had us at advantages as much as can be; we have broke as many treaties as ever people broke. When we seemed to yeild unto God, we have but flattered him with our lips and dealt dissemblingly with him.

Ninthly, God hath broken the backs of others with whom he hath had a controversy. He hath had a controversy with Germany, and how hath he dealt with them? Thus he beginneth to deal with us. It is reported that in Germany when the war was but twenty or thirty miles off them, they went on in their trading and followed their businesses, buying and selling and hoped that they should be safe; so it is with us, Is not some part of England at this day as desolate as Germany it self?

Tenthly, Those that knew most of Gods mind, have been
so afraid of this controversy that they have fled for fear of the wrath of God, and we have slighted, jeered them for it, thought it was their foolish timorousness and melancholly conceit; The Lord now seems to justify their fear.

The Lord is now for the present out against us in as dreadful a way of wrath as ever he was against any people of the earth. I never read in Scripture nor in History of a more dreadful wrath of God against a people all things considered, than is against us at this day. Amos, 7. 4. The Lord calls to contend by fire: Surely the Lord doth it at this day, he calleth to contend with England by fire, in a most dreadful way, and who knows what the end shall be? That he hath a most dreadful controversy against England at this day, will appear if we further take these considerations.

First, That a people complaining of bondage heretofore, yet when God offered deliverance, should be so far left of God as they shall now rather be willing to make themselves and their posterity bond-slaves. Surely God hath a dreadful controversy against us, it were else impossible that such a thing should be in the hearts of men. Men love liberty, they groan under bondage: We did groan but a few years ago, and the Lord was coming to help us, and yet we are now so left of God that we even turn again to our former bondage, and would have our ears to be bored that we might be perpetual slaves,

Secondly, It is not only that we wil turn again to bondage, but this is out of a spirit of enmity against the yoke of Jesus Christ. This is the very ground and bottom of it, in a great part of the Kingdom, whatsoever yoke they have upon them they are resolved they will not have the yoke of Christ out of a spirit of enmity against the Godly party, who desire and endeavor Reformation.

At the beginning of this Parliament, when we began to have hopes of some liberty and reformation, Oh what a joy was there generally in the Kingdom! all men agreed together, but when those that were wicked and carnal began to see that their godly neighbours rejoiced & that they blessed God for what
what was done that they had their minds; now they turn out of a spirit of malice against them, rather than they shall rejoice, rather than they shall have their minds, we will turn back again to the bondage we were in before, and we will stand and oppose that which heretofore we rejoiced in. Certainly here is the very ground of so much contradiction as there is at this day; They have therefore turned Malignants against that Cause which a man would wonder that ever rational men should be against; But there is a spirit of malice against Christ and his Ordinances, fearing a reformation; they would have their lusts, and they think if reformation come they should not have them with that liberty they have had; here is the very reason that the Gentry and others in the country are opposite; Surely God hath a controversy with us.

Thirdly, That men should so visibly desert those whom they have chosen and trusted who have been faithful, those Worthy in Parliament, who have ventured their lives for them, basely and unworthily now to desert them; it is one of the greatest judgments of God upon the hearts of men, and therefore upon a nation that ever was. If they complain of them now, they would much more have complained of them if they had complied; Suppose the Parliament had made up a patched reformation and a crazie peace that upon any occasion we had bin in danger to have had war broken out again, would not the people of the land have cried out of their unfaithfulness? But now they venture themselves and labour so hard for a sound peace, therefore to be deserted? An unworthy generation, a generation that we have cause to fear is become the generation of God's wrath and the people of his curse. People are affected according as success is, we complain of those in Parliament because of some difficulties that are in the work, yet if they had not done what they did they would have complained much more. So of Ministers, sometimes Ministers speak and stir up people because their consciences tell them they should be unfaithful to their country and to the cause of God if they did not; now they cry out.
out as they did of Luther, that they are the trumpets of sedition and rebellion; whereas on the other side if they should say nothing, then people would have cryed out that they had betrayed their Country and that they were not so faithful in their places as they should, therefore people were so bad as they were. Thus hard it is for God or man to please people.

Again. That not only people should desert them, but that so many of Nobles, and some Members of the Parliament themselves should desert their Brethren there, and joyn with Papists, French, and Walloons; When as not long since a company of vile wretches being gathered together to fight against our brethren of Scotland, and yet those vile people could not be brought to fight against them by any means; But now not the vile ones, but Nobles, Knights, and Gentry can be brought to fight against the Parliament their own Brethren; Is not here a mighty hand of God against us? Could this ever be if God had not a dreadful controversy against England?

Fourthly, That men should be so blinded as to think the Protestant Religion should be maintained by an Army of Papists, that the Laws and Liberty of the subject should be maintained by an Army of Delinquents and strangers, yea, that the King with Papists, Delinquents, French, and Walloons should better maintain the Liberty of the Subject and the Protestant Religion, than with the Parliament; That people should come to believe this, is not the hand of God upon the people of this land? Are they not infinitely besotted? can we think that men indued with reason should do this? Surely were not the judgment of God fearfully upon their souls it could not be believed that ever this should be done by people that had any rationality in them.

Fiftly, God surely calls to contend fearfully with us in that he should suffer such an ill cause to prosper so as it hath done and to get to that height as it is. It is that which is the amazement both of England and the Countries about us that such an ill cause should get so high and prosper so much as it hath done; Surely the Lord is against us or else it could not have been.
Sixthly, When there shall be such a desperate design so long a hatching, drawn forth in such a season and so driven on and now breaking forth in such violence and yet men cannot see it. The tract of the design is as clear as the Sun at noon day and drawn on from one step to another, by comparing of one thing with another we may see it as apparently as the light. Would you not think it a befooting thing if there should be a train of Gunpouder laid along in the streets from such a place to the Parliament House to blow it up and yet that men should pass by and say they see no such thing? Certainly the drawing on of the design against our Religion and State, to bring us under tyranny and slavery, the tract is as evident and plain as ever there was train of Gunpruder laid to such a place that men would willingly blow up; and yet men see it not. Surely God's hand is out against us.

Seventhly, That we should have so little fruit of our prayers as we have at this day, yea, that God should seem to be angry with the prayers of his people, This argueth a fearful controversy, and in this one particular among others; what prayers in England have been sent up to God for the Palf-graves children, and that now instead of answering our prayers God should send two Arrows as it were out of those loins to do us mischief, that it should come from them for whom England hath done so much to maintain them and sent up so many prayers to God for them, and in recompence of all they should come hither to make havoc of the Kingdom. Surely the hand of God is out against us.

Eighthly, That our brethren should be so spoil'd and our selves in such danger of drinking the dregs of the cup, yet where are our hearts? The judgment of God is upon the hearts of men that they sin not and act not like men, but they see their Brethren spoil'd before them and in the mean time all that which keeps them quieter is only that they hope they shall be the last. God's hand is upon the hearts of men this could not be else. Could one ever have thought that English men could have born this? If one had told them before that there should be an Army of Papists rise up with French,
French, Walloons, and Irish to spoil the Kingdom, to destroy our Brethren, would one have ever imagined that English men should have born it and stirred no more than they have done? You talk indeed of this and that and of going forth every fourth man, but all such resolutions and such great words of men do usually sink and fall down and come to nothing, as if men were willing and content to lay down their necks upon the block. Surely the guilt of the blood of our Brethren may justly come upon us, and God may have a controversy with us for suffering their blood to be spilt.

Ninthly, That God should put so many opportunities into our hands and we neglect all, those opportunities of mercy: this is the hand of God against us and a fruit of his controversy with us.

What shall I say more? That God himself should take away our opportunities, that when we are nigh to deliverance that God should drive us back, this is an argument of a heavy controversy indeed. Num. 13. when the people were come very near to Canaan and were even ready to take possession, God was resolved against them, that none but Caleb and Joshua should enter, they were beaten back again: now Chap. 14. 33. it is said that the people when they heard this, mourned greatly, they saw the hand of God out against them. The truth is we have been even in Canaan, Oh what an opportunity God put into our hands in the West, I say not we lost the opportunity, but there God's own hand shewed it self against us; Bristol then might have been saved, but God would not; And so when we were even at our deliverance God seemed to drive us back, as if he told us, well I like not the business in hand, for this generation, I have somewhat more to say to them, it may be to their young ones I may shew mercy afterward, but against this generation my wrath shall be let out. Surely we may be afraid in regard of the ways of God's present administration lest this should be in God's heart. Howsoever let us consider it and mourn greatly before the Lord.

God hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

It is no time now to have controversies one with another,
to be wrangling one with another, for this opinion and the
other opinion. It is time for us now to lay down all our
private controveries and fall to the making up the controver-
sie with our God. It is no time now for Brethren to strive
with Brethren, but to strive and wrestle with God in prayer.
If we have any strength with us, let it not be spent in conten-
ding one with another, but let all our strength be spent in see-
king to make peace with our God. It is said of the Romans
that they had a Temple of Concord and none were to go to
offer any further sacrifice but those that came first to offer in
the Temple of Concord. The Lord looks it should be so with
us, we should come and agree one with another, lay down all
our own controveries and then give up our selves as one man
to this great work to make up our controverse with him. If
two Chickins be fighting and the Kite come neer, they will
leave picking one another and run to the Hen for shelter. We
stand picking and snarling one at another, and many men that
say they will do thus and thus for the publick cause, but they
take exception against this man and the other man, and at
this thing and that thing, and now their private grudges come
in and that draws them away and takes them off; Oh let us
not be picking now, the Kite is coming neer, let us run and
shelter our selves under the protection of God, that cannot be
but by making our peace with him.

As for the controverse that is this day between the King
and us, we can in that appeal to God, that there is no just
cause the King should contend with us, no hurt ever intended
or done by us unto him. Only we desire to deliver our selves
from Tyranny and slavery. Our Priviledges and Liberties
are dear to us, they are our Right as truly as his Honor is his.
That which he inheriteth it was his forefathers, & that which
his forefathers, his predecessors inherited, it was at first from
the People, they set up such a family to rule and govern over
them; and certainly they never let it up for any other end but
only for the publick good, not for their misery & ruin: We can
appeal to God that we desired nothing else but to live peace-
ably and to serve God in our land, enjoying only what God
and
and nature and the laws of our land had made our own. We know the relation between him and us, and the bond it is mutual; and if there be any thing done now that perhaps cannot be justified by any positive explicite Law of the land, let men know that yet it may be justified by the very light of Nature and by the Law of Armes. It cannot be imagined but if those that ought to be the protectors of the Law should come against Law so hardly upon us, that we must have recourse then to the Law and light of nature, it is impossible this should be otherwise, and this God himself approves.

Whatsoever therefore becomes of this controversy between him and us, whether reconciliation or not reconciliation, yet we have peace in this, that what we have done in the resiling of a deluge of misery that was coming upon us, if we had not done it, our consciences would have upbraided us, the generation to come would have cursed us, the Nations about us and our very enemies would have scorned us and derided us for our base cowardliness, for our fordid spirits, for an unworthy generation that should see it self and posterity sinking into misery and brought under slavery, and out of base fear and fluggish litherness of spirit and effeminate softness, should suffer all to be brought into bondage to the humors and lusts of a few men. We can therefore with comfort and boldness stand at Gods Tribunal and plead the uprightness of our hearts and justness of our cause in this Controversie whatever becomes of it. But in the controversy that God hath against us, there we fall down at his feet and acknowledge our selves guilty before him, yea, we come with sack-cloth upon our loins and ashes on our heads, with ropes on our necks, and plead only mercy for our lives. And this is the work that we have to do in all the daies of our humiliation, to seek to make an Atonement between God and our souls and the land in regard of that dreadful controversy he hath against us. Now blessed God, because thou tellest us in thy word, Because I W I L L do this, therefore prepare to meet thy God O Israel: Thou threatenest hard, great and sore evils, and thou callest now to us, because Thou wilt do this, England, O England prepare
prepare to meet God; We come (Oh that this might be our answer) we come Lord and meet thee with our souls bowed towards thee, with our hearts bleeding that we have provoked thee to cause so much bloodshed of our brethren amongst us. O Lord our hearts are open to thee, and with trembling spirits we cry to the Lord, what wilt thou have us do? If thou proceedst against us in thy controversy we are undone, we are undone, Oh Lord forgive, Oh Lord arise and be merciful we beseech thee, for by whom shall Jacob rise for he is small? by whom shall the people arise? by whom shall the power of godliness and thine Ordinances be maintained?

How happy were we think some if the controversy between the King and us were at an end, that we might have peace. Oh if the people were happy that were in such a case, how happy the people that were at peace with the King of Heaven! If the controversy between God and us were at an end we should be happy indeed. The Lord and the Land is at a controversy, and this controversy makes us cry out unto God; but ye wo unto us, here is the misery, we yet keep our sins that make the controversy. Jer. 35. Will the Lord reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it unto the end? Mark what the answer is, Behold thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst. Thus you have said, but what is the fruit of this? You have done evil as you could. We in the daies of our Falls cry, Lord wilt thou reserve thine anger for ever? wilt thou keep it unto the end? Behold thus we speak, but yet we continue to do evil as we can. Isa. 59. 9. We looked for light (faith the text) but behold obscuritie, for brightness but we walk in darkness, we grope for the wall like the blind: We indeed grope as if we had no eyes and we stumble at noon day as if it were night. Men to this day are ready to cry out and say, what shall we do? as if the way were not clear before us what we should do; The way is clear enough if we had hearts, but we grope as if we had no eyes and we stumble at noon day as in the night. In many places of the Kingdom they roar out as bears, and they have cause to do so, For they are miserably spoiled, their wives ravished, their houses plundered, themselves imprisoned; and
for the rest of us we mourn like doves night and day, and we 
look for judgment and there is none, and for salvation but it 
is far from us; Mark what follows, For our transgressions are 
multiplied before thee, (there is the ground of all the controver-
sie between God and us) and as for our sins they testify against us, 
and our transgressions are with us. Surely my Brethren God is 
willing to be at peace with England again; the controversy is 
great and sore; yet we may confidently speak that the Lord is 
yet willing to be at peace with England, and the sufferings of 
England go as near the heart of God as ours. Oh that we 
knew then what it is that is the great make-bate between God 
and us that we might get rid of it! Would you know it? 2. 
Sam. 20. 21. faith Joab there, Deliver us Sheba the son of Eichri 
and we will depart from the City and go every one unto his tent. If 
amongst us Delinquents were punished as they ought, if the 
hearts of people were prepared to have the remainders of su-
perstition and Idolatry cast out, if they were willing to receive 
Jesus Christ as King among them, the sound of retreat would 
soon be heard, the controversy would soon be at an end; and 
except this be the foundation of our peace, either there will 
be no peace at all, or it will not hold long. In our raising of 
forces therefore to help our selves and our brethren (seing we 
pretend we will do more than before, and it is time we should 
if we be not a people designated to destruction and ruine) be 
sure we begin here, let us do more than ever we did before to 
make up this controversy with God. It is reported of Achior 
one of Holophernes his Captains that he counselleth Holoph-
erness to enquire first whether the Jews had offended their God 
before he attempted to make war against them, for if they 
had, he then assured him that that would be their ruine 
and he might go up and overcome them, but if he could not 
hear that they had sinned against their God it was in vain for 
him to strive against them. Truly it concerns us neerly to 
make up our peace with God that when our adversaries come 
out against us they may not indeed be made use of to avenge 
Gods quarrel upon us, for then they will easly improve all 
their advantages this way, and say indeed that they are not
come out against us without the Lord; Every victory they now get they are ready to please themselves in this and say that God fighteth against us, and God approveth them, they tell us the reason they prevail is because God is against us, and so we know Rabsbekah did though a foul railer, yet faith he, Are we come up without the Lord? And the enemies of David Psalm, 71. 12. Mine enemies have said, God hath forsaken him, now persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him: Thus they will be ready to say upon any occasion, now the Lord hath left them, now let us take them: And certainly if the Lord should suffer them to prevail many of them would think they do God good service to slay and to root out that generation of Gods people that is here in England, and they would be confident that it is the mind of God that they should be rooted out. Therefore we had need look to it to make up our peace with God that the controversy between him and us may not prove to be their victory.

The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the Land.

There are only two notes to be further observed hence. God having to deal with poor earthen creatures, he might presently have let his wrath out against them and destroyed them: But Mark, God is willing to have his cause pleaded with vile creatures, so that all the while he is pleading there is time and space for them to come in. This teacheth us this excellent lesson: [That men should be willing that the cause that is between them and their inferiors should be pleaded, and not stand so much upon their superiority, and scorn to humour an inferior so much as to have any matter debated between them.] As husband and wife if a controversy be between them, though the one be superior and the other inferior, think it not much to debate it between themselves with meekness and love, Job, 31. 13. profet he did not despise the cause of his man-servant when he contended with him, but he would have that pleaded and made out. Jehovah, the mighty God condescendeth to put his cause to a suit, he will not pass sentence upon poor creatures til it come to a trial. Be not furiy and scornful towards your inferiors.
Another Note, [The inhabitants of the Land] lies a little more couched. The inhabitants of the Land, what Land? The inhabitants of the Land of Canaan, a controversy with them. Mark, God fulfilled his promise in bringing them into the Land of Canaan, and now he pleadeth with them for the forfeiture of their promise. Psal. 105. 44, 45. he tells them that he had given them the lands of the Heathen, that they might observe his Statutes and keep his Laws, that was their condition. God fulfilled his part, he bringeth them into the land, but when they were in the land they minded not their part. You know God often gave them charge when they came into the land to do this and this, they promised they would do it, but when they were once brought into the land they forgot it, they forsook God. God now comes and pleaseth with the inhabitants of this land; As if he should say, I have done my part in bringing you into the land, now I come to plead with you for breaking your promise and covenant. Take this note from hence [Whatsoever mercy you have from God you are to look upon it as a fruit of God's faithfulness to you (if you be Gods) and as a ground of your obedience to him, and his pleading with you if you walk not answerable to it.

Hierome hath another note upon it, but that is further off, I will only name it. Rightly faith he are they called to answer and to judgment that are the inhabitants of the land, and do not look upon themselves as sojourners and strangers in the land; But he that can truly say with the Prophet. I am a pilgrim & a stranger here, such a one can never do that which may cause God to have a controversy against him. This is the reason men do that which causeth God to have a controversy with them, because they look upon themselves as possessors of the land, and not as pilgrims and strangers. But this is too far off.

The second part followeth. [God declareth.] A sute first is entred against such a man, when the Court day comes, there is calling for a declaration, the Lawyer declares: God doth so, and the Prophet is God's Lawyer, and here are three Articles put in this declaration, Because there is no Truth, no Mercy, no knowledge of God in the land.

First:
First in general, that there is a declaration, take these two useful notes from thence.

First, **God contendeeth not with a people without a cause.** How many are there that strive and contend one with another without any cause at all! they vex and rage, contend and sue and great controversies there are, but if we come to examine the cause we can find nothing at all; great dust is raised but whence is it? if we look to the bottom and examine wherefore it is, we can see just nothing, they themselves know no cause, they can give no rational account of all their pleading, one against another. As David said to Eliah his eldest brother, 1 Sam. 17. 29. when Eliah came and wrangled with him, faith David, *What have I now done? is there not a cause?* Eliah's spirit was up through his envy, chiding and wrangling with David; but what have I done faith David, have not I cause for what I did! Thus many have their spirits up, chiding and wrangling, but examine the cause, and they can show none at all. How many are there of bitter spirits, who even go about like mad-dogs, snarling at every one, even at those they know not, with whom they had never any thing to do, yet cry out against them, railing upon them every where! Ask them, do you know the man? can you prove any hurt against him? The truth is they know him not, they are not able to make good what they say, only there is a general noise of such and such men that they do thus and thus, and so they bite and snarl, and rage against them, but when all comes to all they know no cause. Such and such men they say disturb the Kingdom and trouble the people, a great deal of cry but little wool, the foundations of the earth are out of order, but what hath the righteous done? You would think when you hear such railing, and cryings out against such and such men, that they were the most monstrous men upon the earth, but examine what it is that they have done, there is nothing. God doth not so with you, God never contedeoth with man but for a just cause.

Secondly, **Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, but by inventing, and lying, and stealing &c.,**
From whence in the general there is this, God contendeth not against a people for little things, when God faith he hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land it is not for trifles, for ordinary infirmities, for dayly excursions, but for great notorious things. Not that little things do not deserve a controversy, but it is from the virtue and fruit of the Covenant that this comes to passe; in others that are not in covenant little things make a controversy, but between Gods children and himself they are not little things that make a controversy. But men are of froward spirits, every trifle is enough to make a controversy between them. Yea, usually the greatest controversies between nearest friends is some trifle or other. Is there a man and his wife live lovingly and sweetly many years, do they fall out afterwards? Is there a bitter controversy? Examining it, it is but about some toy. So between one brother and another. I could give you examples in Histories of great and bitter controversies that have been between nearest friends upon small and trivial grounds. I remember Camerarius tells us a story of two brethren, these two walking out in a star-light night, faith one of the brethren would I had a pasture as large as this Element, and saies the other would I had as many Oxen as there be Stars; saies the other again, where would you feed these Oxen? in your Pasture, replied he; what whether I will or no? Yea said he whether you will or no; what in spite of me? yes said he; and thus it went on from word to word till at length each sheath'd his sword in the others bowels. This verifieth that saying of James, Chap. 3. 5. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! So it is in many families, sometimes perhaps a look is the beginning of a great controversy, onethinks such a one doth not look lovingly upon him, and then he begins to suspect that things boil within him, perhaps afterward some words come forth that may seem to argue discontent, and then that word begetteth another, and that other a third, and so a miserable breach cometh to be in a family. It is an argument that these people have Gunpowder spirits that a little spark of fire can so quickly blow them up. Truly the contro-
controversy here in England the ground of it at the first beginning was little enough on our parts; Only were it not that there had been a desperate design in our adversities, it were impossible that such a little beginning should ever come to that height. But God doth not so, they are great things for which he hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.

But what is it? what is the declaration? No truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. These three especially, the first doth exceeding nearly concern us.

First, No Truth. God is a God of Truth, he is true in all his ways. He justly pleads with them that have dealt falsely with him. No truth; No reality in their Religion, that is something, but that is not all. God comes upon them for the breaches first of the second Table; for they are more convincing; we have greater advantage against a natural man to convince his conscience in those than in matters of Religion. If you speak to them concerning sins in matters of Religion, they will say they acknowledg the true God and they worship him. Well, therefore the Prophet begins first here in the matters of the second Table, concerning the want of truth between man and man: As if he should say, Talk what you will concerning your worshipping of the true God, there is no truth between one another, you deal falsely and cruelly, and are merciless to your brethren, never therefore talk of Religion and of acknowledging the true God. Thence the Note is this. [That it is in vain for any man to talk of his Religion, if he make no conscience of the second Table as well as the first.] For a man to talk of praying, and hearing Sermons, if he be cruel and hard-hearted, and false in his dealings, the Lord rejecteth all let him talk what he will.

No truth in your dealings one with another: First there is abundance of flattery amongst you. You flatter one another in your sin, you do not deal unfainly one with another. You flatter your Princes, and your Princes have little truth in their Courts. It was once a speech of one, All things were plentiful in the Court but only truth: And this is the unhappiness of great men that those that are about them usually deal falsely.
fallly with them. You shall seldom know one that deals truly with great men, they tell them that their bloodshedding and ruining of Kingdoms is but the maintaining of their just Honor and Prerogative. I have read of Dionisius his flatterers, that when he spitt upon the ground they would lick it up and then tell him that that spittle was sweeter than any Ambrosia and Nectar, the sweetest that ever they tasted, merely to please him: And so you have many that are neer to great men, though they see them do things never-so abominable; things that make never so great breaches between God and them, between them and people, yet they tell them that they do more bravely than ever any of their Ancestors did. There is no

Truth here some take for Justice. Thus it is sometimes taken in Scripture. Zech. 8. 16. Speak ye every one the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace. As if he should say, you do not execute justice upon Malignants that are in your power; you speak of raising Arms to fetch in Delinquents, but you execute not judgment upon those that you have in your hands, you will have God in a solemn manner to be blessed because he hath delivered you from them, but judgment is not executed in truth as it should be. Nor No Mercy: That is, you shew no mercy to the innocent; you talk of indulgence, your indulgence to Delinquents is cruelty to innocents, Oh how many of our brethren in Oxford and other places suffer most dreadful things because these here enjoy so much liberty and have so much favour as they have. So there is neither mercy to the Innocent nor justice to the Nocent.

But the special thing here intended is, That you are not true in your dealings nor in the trust committed to your charge; There is no equitie in your dealings. Isa. 59. 14. And judgment is turned backward, (it is turned upon those that it should not be executed upon) And justice standeth a far off. If one be greater than another, the meanest shall come under the stroke of justice and be executed, and the greater not: And truth is fallen in the streets; how comes that in? Thus, as if he should say, It is true, they that are in place of Authority will not execute judgment
judgment and justice, but are not the common people faithful in their dealings one with another. No, Truth is vain in the streets: this seems to refer to the multitude; And equity cannot enter; the word that is here translated Equity, comes of a word that signifies a thing that is just before one; As if he should say, those very things that one would think were as plain (as we say) as the nose on a man's face, things that are so evident, that are just before us, that have so much equity and reason in them, yet those things cannot enter, those things cannot be entertained, there is such a general confusion amongst the people, such a corruption among them, they are so set upon wickedness, that things that are equal and plain according to common sense and reason, yet it cannot enter into their hearts, they will not receive it. And is not this in a great measure our condition at this time?

There is no Truth, they are false in the trust committed to their charge. Oh here is a controversy indeed that God may have against us. Was there ever a time that either England or any other country knew when there was so much falseness in men in the trust committed to them? All things in Israel at this time were come to that confusion, that through the falseness of men any thing of the greatest consequence that might be was betrayed. It is a sign of God's fearful wrath upon our Nation that there is no truth in men, when people are left to the treachery and perniciousness of others; that such whom one would think one might be confident of their truth, nay venture their lives upon it, yea, such as a long time before were trustie; yea, trustie to admiration, yet at last when they think they may suffer, [their own ends are not so clear to attain to as at first] they will betray all that trust that is committed to them and venture even their own undoing rather than endure further hazard in that way of trust. Such cursed selfishness is there in the hearts of men that have not the grace and true fear of God to balance their hearts; they will even betray God himself and a whole Kingdom for their own private ends. But what an unworthy thing is this for men to betray publick trust when so much mischief may come upon
upon it meerly for their own ends; It is as if a man should set an house on fire to roast an egg: what are mens own particular ends in comparison of a Kingdom? not so much as an egg in comparison of an house. This was the complaint in Micah's time of Judah as well as of Israel here, Micah was contemporary with Hosea, Mic. 7. 5. Trust not in a friend, put ye no confidence in a guide, keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom: A mans enemies (ver. 6.) are the men of his own house. But though there are many of them thus corrupt and there is no truth in them, you cannot tell how to put any trust in them, are there not some of them better? Mark the 4. verse. The best of them is a bryar, the most upright is sharper than a thorn bedg. In evil times you shall find those whom you most confide in to be so sordward in some of their ways, to perverse, that if you go to them for shelter, they will prick you; even those men that you cry most up, those whom you think to receive most from, yet when evil times come their spirits will be so stirred that if you come to them for shelter you shall find them extream perverse: And this indeed is the day of the perplexity of a Kingdom. what shall we do in this case? Mark the 7. verse Therefore will I look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, My God will hear me; As if he should say, If I look unto man I have little help there, little comfort there, the best of them is a bryar, if I trust in men and look for any help from men, I see what they will do, verily every man is altogether vanity; therefore our condition is very sad and miserable, Lord what shall we do? I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, My God will hear me; Men cannot save me, God will hear me though they will not.

Observe. Gods controversies with Covenant-breakers, with those that betray their trust, is very dreadful. I will shew you an example or two out of the Scripture and out of History.

First that notable place in 2 Sam. 21. when there was a famine in the daies of David three yeares together, David would know what the matter was, God gave him this answer, That was for Saul and for his bloody house; because he slew the Gibeonites; Because:
Because Saul would not keep that trust to the Gibeonites that was promised them, God therefore brings a famine upon the whole land for three yere together: And I beseech you mark the aggravation here of Gods displeasure againft any that break trust; first this promise was not made by Saul, but by Sauls Progenitors, and it was made above three hundred yeres before his time, And then to whom was it made? unto a Heathenish people, to the Gibeionites; And this promise they got deceitfully, they deceived Josua and got it by craft; further it was a promise made them without asking counsel of God, so the text faith, Josb. 9. 14. Again, this promise was against the mind of the congregation, verse 18. All the congregation murmured against the Princes: Again, Saul when he slew the Gibeonites he did not do it out of a perfidious spirit, but out of a good intent, for so the text faith, 2 Sam. 21. 2. He slew them in his zeal to the children of Israel, because he thought that the Gibeonites remaining amongst them would perhaps prove some hinderance to the good of Israel. Further, this work of God comes not upon Saul then when he broke the trust, but upon his posterity afterward, and that shews it to be greater wrath. Lastly it comes so upon them as it will not be appeased till it hath their lives: you may see then how God is set upon to revenge promise-breakers.

Another example as notable as that is in Ezek. 17. 15. when Zedekiah the King of Judah had made a Covenant with the King of Babylon, and broke it, he rebelled against him in sending his Ambassadors into Egypt that they might give him horses and much people; Shall he prosper faith the Lord? shall he escape that doth such things, or shall he break the covenant and be delivered? This covenant was made with a wicked man with a Tyrant, and yet God calls it his Oath and his Covenant, ver. 18. And then with what an Emphasis doth God speak this. He despaired the Oath by breaking the Covenant when he had given his hand: yea ver. 16. God professeth it shall cost him his life, Surely faith the Lord, in the place where the King did dwell that made him King, whose Oath he despised, and whose Covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he dye: yea further,
God sweareth against him and that by his own life, ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, as I live surely mine Oath which he hath despised, and my Covenant which he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head: Then further, God tells him that all the strength that he had got to him and all his policie and all his cunning devices should not help him, ver. 20. I will spread my net upon him and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him unto Babylon and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me: And lastly, the wrath of God shall not only be upon him, but upon all those that joined with him and abet him in the breaking of this covenant, ver. 21. All his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword, and they that remain shall be scattered towards all winds. I know not two scriptures more full for Gods being set to contend with men for breach of promise. Oh take heed all you that are intrusted in any publick trust that you break not covenant.

And as you have examples of this in the Scripture, so there is also an example or two in History which are exceeding full for this purpose. I suppose that is known unto you of Rodolphus, who having set his hand to a Covenant with Henry the fourth which he afterward brake, and his right hand coming to be cut off, his conscience accused him. Oh faith he, This is that right hand that subscribed the Covenant, and now God revengeth the breach of it upon this right hand. But above all that is the most remarkable that is in the History of the Hungarians, concerning Udilasus the King of Hungary, and Amurath the great Turk; they report that Udilasus making war with Amurath, having before promised the contrary; in a battle between them the Turk had the worst of it, Amurath being there and having with him the Covenant made between the King of Hungary and him, and seeing himself put to the worst, he plucked forth the Covenant out of his bosom and with his eyes fixed toward Heaven he speaks thus, This O Christ is the Covenant that thy Christians have struck with me, O holy Jesus they have done it in thy Name and sworn by thy Majesty, and yet they have violated it, they have perfidiously denied their God; Now O Jesus if thou best a God as they say and as we guess thou art, revenge this wrong that is done unto me and unto thy self.
self upon these that have violated their faith and promise, and do those shew unto us that do not know thy Name that thou art an avenger of such as betray their trust, and then we shall know thee to be a God. Now just upon this God so ordered it that the Hungarians having the better of the day, they through covetousness of the prey broke off the fight & fell upon the laden Camels, where-upon the Turks totally routed the Hungarians, *Vdislaus* their King was slain, and a famous Victory left unto Amurath.

Thus you see how God will be avenged for the breach of trust, certainly God will follow those that have been guilty of it; we see it apparently how God follows them already. And indeed if we have to deal with men that are popish *how is it possible that we can confide in them in any thing they promise, in any thing they agree to? For we know it is their very opinion, that *fides non servenda hereticis*, faith is not to be kept with hereticks; This is their opinion they hold, that for the Catholick Cause they may break all their trust, promises and covenants. Certainly that people are befotted that shall so depend upon those that are Papists and carried away by Papists, as to lay their lives, their liberties, and their outward comforts at their feet, at their mercy; for certainly there is no truth in them. The Nations of the earth are even befot- ted in this, that they will ever make any covenant, any league with Papists who hold such an opinion that they may break all their Covenants for the Catholick cause. What a case should we be in if we lie down at the mercy of those that have no truth in them, when afterwards we shall find they break affunder all their bonds of agreement and all their covenants, & then we our selves know that this was their opinion before, and that they would enter into league and make peace with us merely to serve their own turns, and when they have what they would have then to make our estates, lives, and liberties to be a prey to them? But we must let that passe, only this in a word added to it.

*Nor no Mercy.*] The Merciful God sets himself against Un-merciful men, and hath a dreadful controversy against them; And when this controversy cometh to be pleaded, Unmerci-ful men will be confounded before the Lord; For God will
lay his plea thus, What you that stood in so much need of mercy every moment to keep you out of Hell; You that lived upon mercy continually as you breathed in the air; You who are begging at my gates every day? You who are undone for ever if you had not mercy supplied every hour, and yet You unmerciful to your brethren? This plea will stop the mouths of all Unmerciful ones. It was the controversy that God had with Sodom itself, because they were Unmerciful: Much more than hath God a controversy with the inhabitants of the land of Israel if they be unmerciful. Ezek. 16. 49. there God lays his charge, his plea against Sodom, That they did not strengthen the hands of the poor. Unmercifulness it is a sin against the very light of nature. Josephus in his 15. book of Antiquities, Chap. 12. reports this of Herod that wicked and ungodly king that we reade of in the Gospel, That there being a great famine in Judea, he melted all his movables of Gold and Silver that were in his Palace, he spared nothing of his Plate either for the preciousness of the matter, or for the excellency of the fashion of it, no not so much as those vessels wherein he was daily served at his table, but he melted them all and made money of them, and sent this money into Egypt to buy Corn, which Corn he distributed unto the Poor, and he appointed Eakers to provide bread for such as were sick, and he provided raiment for the naked, because the sheep were likewise dead and the poor had no work; yea he sent to his neighbors the Syrians Corn that might be Seed-corn for them to sow the ground with. This was that wicked Herod, and yet in time of publick calamity thus merciful was he to the poor. Surely God must needs have a controversy with Israel then, with Christians then that have received so much mercy from the Lord if they shall be unmerciful in times of common calamity. And if ever unmercifulness were a vile sin and provoked God against a people, it must needs do now at such a time as this, when there are so many objects of pity and commiseration daily presented before us: If this should but prove to be our charge, that there is no mercy in the land at this day, God must needs have a fearful controversy against us. The whole
whole land cannot be said to be charged now as at some
time it might have been. Not long since in England there hath
been crying out of violence and wrong, those which ruled o-
ver us have ruled over us with violence, rigour, and cruelty,
according to that complaint Ezek. 34. 4. With cruelty and force
have ye ruled my people. They have turned judgment to wormwood,
Amos, 5. 7. Their Courts of Juducature that should have been
for right judgment have been turned into bitter wormwood
and have been full of cruelty. What have many of them ca-
red for the lives, for the comforts of thousands, for the extre-
mitie of all misery they shall suffer, so be it their own humors
and their own lusts might be satisfied, as if all other men were
but as dogs except themselves? The Lord doth at this day
charge this upon some of them, and will charge it more. I
remember once a speech of a reverend Divine in this Citie,
now with God, whom you all honored when he was alive,
being put into that Court, the high Commision, when he
came home one day from thence he tells this story of what he
observed there. I heard (faith he) crying out much of Grace,
and please your Grace, and much crying out of peace, if there
were any noise, then peace peace, but I saw no MERCY there
faith he, nothing at all but Cruelty.
Jer. 50. 17. you may see in what indignation God doth take
it, for men though the greatest upon earth to be cruel to his
people, This Nebuchad rezzer King of Babylon hath broken his
bones; Who was this Nebuchad rezzer? A mighty great
Prince, yet God looks upon him with indignation when he
sees him breaking the bones of his people. We have a mongt
us those who as Psal. 27. 12. breath out cruelty, and indeed
they act nothing less, there is cruel hatred in their hearts and
wails, according to that Psalm, 25. 19. No marvel therefore
though heretofore our brethren left the Kingdom, because
they found such cruelty here, there was no mercy in the land;
they did but according to that which the Church calleth the
members of it to, Cant. 4. 8. Come with me from Lebanon, from the
Lyons dens, from the mountains of the Leopards. When they went
from us, they went from the Lyons dens, and from the moun-
tains.
of the Leopards; No marvel now the Lord is so severe against our Land, because there hath been so little mercy in the land. That is the second Article against Israel, That there was no Mercy.

The third is, **Nor no Knowledge of God in the land.** In the Hebrew it is, **And no knowledge;** but now *va* that is there for *and,* it signifies sometimes *qui,* as well as *et;* And so it may indeed be well rendered here, Because there is no knowledge of God in the land; the reason why there is no mercy is because there is no knowledge of God: The knowledge of God will make wicked men to be merciful men. Cruel men know not God. These two are put together and joined most elegantly in Psal. 74. 20. The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty (faies the text.) The knowledge of God will make men civil and humane at least, but when there is no knowledge of God men grow cruel and savage. And do we not find this to be true at this very day? From what places are men that do now rise up to be plunderers, to shed blood, to be cruel in most desperate outrages, from what places are these men beholden for their affillors and abettors this way? Are they not beholden to places where they are in ignorance, where they have no knowledge of God, where there is no preaching? In the Countries round about observe those Parishes, those Towns, where there hath been least or worst preaching, where they have had least knowledge of God, there you have most malignants, that are bloody and cruel. No marvel then that our adversaries are such enemies to the faithful preachers of the word of God; no marvel then they are made the But of their malice: for indeed if they bring the knowledge of God into the land they will bring humanitarian, civilitie, they will bring mercy and love, and there will be few or none that will be fit for their turns. Indeed it is their complaint of the Parliament that they set ignorant men in places, but certainly this complaint is but a pretence, for it were better for their turns that all the congregations in England had but ignorant men, had no men to bring the knowledge of God amongst people; but they know well enough what ever they say, that
those that are sent are such as do bring the knowledge of God among people; and there is nothing does them more hurt than this knowledge of God.

No knowledge of God. This is a heavy charge indeed: Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, Jer. 10. 25. Though they be Heathens and yet know not God, the wrath of God is to be poured forth upon them, surely then God's wrath must be upon Israel that know not God. And Isa. 27. 11. They are a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy upon them, he that formed them will shew them no favour. 2 Thes. 1. 8. The Lord Christ shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance upon those that know him not. What no knowledge of God? What glory then can God have from such a people? God hath done great things in the world, he hath manifested himself an infinite and a glorious God, and his end in all that he hath manifested himself in is, that Angels and men might behold this, might adore, admire, worship, fear, and praise him; but where there is no knowledge of God, there all God's glory passeth by and there is no notice taken of it, to what purpose is the world made? Such an one can never sanctifie the Name of God in any duty of worship in the use of any creature: where there is no knowledge of God, there al good is kept out, there the unclean spirit a spirit of darkness dwells: when the Crow hath picked out the eyes of the Lamb then it makes a prey upon it; As in dark vaults there are toads and filthy creatures, so in dark souls there are crawling and filthy lusts; As in blind Alehouses there is abundance of disorder, so in a blind heart, there is abundance of distemper and disorder.

No knowledge of God. The Septuagint turn this word Knowledge by a word that signifies acknowledgment, there is no acknowledgment of God in the land. People should walk so in all their ways as to hold forth the glory of that great God they do profess. If they know God to be such as he is revealed in all his Attributes and works, they should in their lives (I say) so walk as to hold forth this before the children of men. I appeal to you in this: Perhaps some of you can speak...
Chap. 4.

An Exposition of Ver. 1

Speak concerning God, and tell us what God is, and concerning his Attributes, yet are your lives in your families, in your conversations, so as that one beholding them may see written the glorious Attributes of God upon them, that you hold forth these glorious Attributes, that in all your ways you carry with you the glory of the great God holding forth your fear of this God, your love of this God, and giving up your selves to this al insufficient God who is worthy of all. There should be this acknowledgment of God as well as knowledge, and God hath a controversy with a land with a familie, with a particular soul when there is not an acknowledgment of God in their ways.

But no knowledge of God in the Land.] In the land, here is the Emphasis. Oh this is a very sad thing: What not in the land of Israel no knowledge of God? Psal. 76. 1. In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Israel. It is expected that God should be known in their land, and for God not to be known there; he was not known to any people in all the world but Judah and Israel; and here ten Tribes are charged for not having the knowledge of God in their land. Surely they refused to know the Lord, they shut their eyes against the knowledge of God, they say to God, depart from us we desire not the knowledge of thy waies. Men may live where there is the means of knowledge and yet be ignorant all their daies. How many men of excellent parts in respect of all outward affairs, in the country and Citie, come and speak to them about matters of State, they will speak understandingly about them, they have deep reaches for State affairs; speak to them about the affairs of Merchandize, of their trades, they will speak understandingly; but speak to them about God, about Christ, about the things of eternal life, how poorly, how weakly, how childishly, how foolishly shall you have them speak about those things! Men of parts and living under much means yet may be very ignorant of the knowledge of God. Howsoever the want of knowledge may seem to be a little matter, even in places where there is means, yet let men know that it is a fearful brand of reprobation for people to live under the means.
means and not to have the knowledge of God. 

If our Gospel be hidden, it is hidden to those that are lost. And it is pronounced as a great curse for a man to live without knowledge. 

2. Cor. 4. 3. They shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. Oh how many at this day do perish by the sword and die without knowledge? It concerns us now to get the knowledge of God because the sword may be nearer us than we are aware of, and what will become of us if it fall out to be our portion to perish by the sword and to die without knowledge?

But though they had some means of knowledge, yet their means did grow very short. And there are two special reasons why Israel at this time was without knowledge, why there was no knowledge of God in the land of Israel.

First, Because that Jeroboam had in the defection of these ten Tribes of Israel, set up the lowest of the people in the place of the Priest’s Office. Any man that desired to be a Priest though never so base and vile, Jeroboam would set him up. In the 1 of King. 12. 31. there you shall find it, He made an house of high places, and made Priests of the lowest of the people which were not of the sons of Levi; no mervail then they had not the knowledge of God amongst them. Thus it hath been in Ireland, and therefore no mervail so little knowledge of God there, any tradesman that scarce understood right reason, less divinity, he was set up there to be a Priest, and what horrible cruelty hath been there! So in England: howsoever some of them complain of ignorant men that are in the Ministry, the truth is they have set up men of far less understanding in former times: for a little money to a Bishops Clark might not any tradesman, any call butlar from a gentlemans house, any cast servingman, might they not come into orders and reade their prayers and so become a Priest? This hath been the cause of much ignorance. How many cast Serving-men have had places in doing what they can do, when as learned and godly Divines must be cast out of the Kingdom and denied to have any libertie to preach the knowledge of God unto his own people! Here is the reason of our ignorance.
even that which was Jeroboam's sin, the setting of the lowest of the people in the Ministrie; And now that there is an examination of men, we find what abundance of vile men there are in places, and those people in those places are alike to them, such Prophet such People, and the truth is people love to have it so. That which is complained of, in 2 Chron. 15. 3. that for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest. This Israel includeth both Judah and Israel, for sometimes it doth so in Scripture: Israel had been (saith he) without the true God and without a teaching Priest: this was a sad condition indeed that Israel should be without a teaching Priest, and without the Law; And mark how they are joyned, and without God; A people are without God that are without a teaching Priest, without the Law. If they have not means to instruct them in the knowledge of God they are a people without God. But now mark what follows upon this, ver. 5. In those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries, and Nation was destroyed of Nation, and City of City, for God did vex them with all adversity. Truly our condition comes to be almost like to the condition of Israel, at that time. And here we may see what the fruit of this controversy was, they were without a teaching Priest and without Law, and in those times there was no peace to him that went out and to him that came in, but great vexation there was, City destroying City, and Nation destroying Nation, for God did vex them with all adversity. Oh how doth the Lord even vex us at this very day! and this as a fruit of God's controversy with us, because there is so little knowledge of God in the land.

And the second reason why there was so little knowledge of God in that land at that time, is this, because the pure Worship of God and his Ordinances were shut out of doors, and men's inventions were brought in in the room of them. For so it was, after the ten Tribes defection from Judah, then they left the right worship of God, to worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, and they set up their Calves in Dan & Bethel, and so brought in their own inventions.
inventions instead of the true worship of God; And no mervail though there came dismall darkness upon the land when this was. That is certain my brethren, "When ever the "pure Ordinances of God and the right way of his worship is "shut out from a Kingdom, there will come woefull darkness "upon that Kingdom. The right knowledg of God vanifheth "when mens inventions in his Ordinances come to be honored. 

As painted glafs in your windows hindereth the light, you may daub your glafs by paint, but you will have the less light by that; so the more inventions of men there are in Gods worship the less light comes into the heart of the people. As some not contented with ordinary plain letters they make such flourishes about them that you can scarce tell what they are; you shall have some write their names with such flouri-

shes that you cannot tell what to make of them; so many men that will not content themselves with plain Ordinan-

ces, with the Ordinances of Christ, but they must have flouri-

shes of their own inventions, at length you know not what to make of them, they come to darken the right understanding of the mind and truths of God. To the Law and to the Testimo-

ny, (faith the Prophet) if they speake not according to these it is be-

cause there is no light in them. If they will leave the Law and 

the Testimony and will go according to their own inventions in Divine Worship, it is because there is no light in them; they are in darkness, and they will bring darkness upon the peo-

ple. Colos. 2. 22. it is said of the rudiments of the world and 

the Ordinances of men, that they perish in the use; that is, 

there is no efficacy at all in them to do any good unto the 

souls of men. Our adversaries call Images and Pictures lay-

mens books to teach them; but the Scripture tells us they teach 

a lye; And if they be lay mens books, there are many Errataes in them, they are full of Errataes in every Page and more 

Errataes than true lines. The best that we can say of any 

Ceremonies brought into the Church by men, (because peo-

ple would strive and study to excuse the first Reformers) that 

they thought at that time there was some use of them in re-

gard of the dulness of men, for so they say, in the Preface to 

col...
the Common Prayer Book, that it was to stir up the dull minds of men. But mark, if it could possibly be imagined that there could be any use of them at the first, in the first Reforma
tion (which indeed there was not, but rather they did hurt and made men's minds more dull, as I dare appeal to you, those that have lived continually under such inventions of men in God's worship.) But if possibly (I say) there could be imagined any use of them at the first, the best is that they were but as Horn-books and fullcues for the childhood and infancy of the Church. They say themselves that they needed such things, but to put the best gloss on them, they needed them but as children need Horn-books and fullcues. And is it seemly always to learn upon them? What knowledge shall be got if when you set your children to learn to read they shall be kept ten, twenty, or thirty years to their Horn-books? Now thus would our Prelates have debased people to keep them continually to learn the knowledge of God by their Horn-books and fullcues.

Now take these two reasons together, Un-teaching Priests, and Mans Inventions, they keep out the knowledge of God from a people; And they are brought on purpose to bring blindness, because that is most fit and fuitable to the design that men have to bring people under slav'ry. So it was here, Jeroboam at that time when Hosea prophesied, his design was to bring the people under slav'ry, to keep them from the house of David to be his slaves, and what course doth he take? He first sets up the basest and lowest of the people to be their Priests: and secondly he introduceth false worship, and that brings in blindness and ignorance, and so by this means he knew he should soon bring them under slav'ry. And nothing is more clear than this, that it hath been the design of many that would have been Rulers of the Church, they have labored with all their might, (as servicable unto others) to bring blindness and ignorance into the Land, that so they might bring the land under slav'ry; and there is nothing hath vexed them more, than that there is so much knowledge in the land, therefore their spirits were so enraged at peoples flock-
king unto Sermons? it was even matter enough to silence any
Minister to have people flocking to hear him preach; so they
were enraged at peoples repeating of Sermons in their private
families, because it was a way to bring in knowledge. Any
thing that was a way to bring in knowledge, their hearts were
enraged against it, why? Because they knew knowledge would
keep men that they would never bear slavery; And truly it is
a very strange thing, that though in some Countries (as in
Wales and in other places) where men have not knowledge
they are contented to come under slavery; but that in these
parts where there is, though not so much as should be, yet such
a degree of the knowledge of God as there is, one would think
it impossible that men should suffer themselves to be brought
into slavery here; and that they fear most. We reade of the
Philistims that when they had taken Sampson, they put out his
eyes, and then they made him to grind in the Mill. So these
men would fain make us to grind in the Mill, (as it is said,
some have threatened to make the Dames of London to work for
a peny a day in Bridewel.) They would fain make you al slaves,
but first they would put out your eyes, they would take away
knowledge and then they know they shall soon make you
slaves. Well, the Lord hath promised, Isa. 25.7 That he will
destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that
is spread over all Nations; And mark: In that day (ver. 9.) it shall
be said, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save
us. O come Lord Jesus, come quickly and destroy the cover-
ing, the veil that is upon the eyes and hearts of a great part
of the people of this Land. The work would soon be done if
the Lord would but destroy the vail of darkness that is upon
the eyes and hearts of people, and we should triumph in our
God and say, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and
he will save us, yea he hath saved us. And thus much for
that third Charge of this people here, That there was no know-
ledge of God in the land. Now we come to the second Verse.
Verse 2.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

You see what a Catalogue of gross sins are here mentioned. And indeed when Idolatry doth prevail in any Country, there will be all manner of wickedness. We found it so here in England, that the more Superstitions were prevalent amongst us, the more abominable wickedness there was generally spread about the country.

First, For Swearing. The word here translated Swearing, it is of נָשַׂא and signifies Maledicere, Execrare; and likewise Perjurare. It signifies the three things, to Curse, and to be Perjured, and to Swear. Any of these three this word importeth. And likewise it signifies sometimes to howl out, עָנָה, Joel 1.8. Lament like a Virgin girded with sackcloth &c. It is the same word, Lament, or howl out. So that the same word that signifies cursing and swearing and forswearing, signifies to howl and cry, for God hath a time to make cursers and swearers and forswearers to howl and cry out. An Oath is a sacred thing, a part of God's worship, and therefore the abusing of this is a dreadful sin; Especially if it be abused to swear to that which is false. Paulus Phagius, in his Comment upon Genesis, 42. faith it is reported of the Egyptians, that if any man did but swear by the life of the King, and did not perform his Oath, that man was to die; and no gold or any thing in the world could redeem his life, so did Heathens hate that sin of perjurie. Yea we have found others that have not had much Religion in them, yet have extreamly hated the sin of ordinary swearing. I have read of Lewis the 9. of France, that he punished that sin by fearing the lips of swearers with an hot Iron; which Law being executed upon a Citizen of Paris, some said it was too cruel, which he hearing of, gave this answer, I would to God faith he, that with fearing mine own lips with an hot Iron, I could banish out of my Realm all abuse of Oaths. He could be willing to fear his
his own lips that he might banish the abuse of swearing. Chrysostom in some 16. Homilies together if not more, whatsoever his text was he always concluded against swearing, as being such a vile and notorious sin: And amongst other things because some pleaded custom, he putteth them upon this faith he, if you would but punish it thus, that if there were an oath sworn in your house, he that swore should but abstain but from one meal's meat; that that servant or that child that swore an oath should not dine that day, that would do somewhat, yet faith he, the command of God will not do so much as that. Divers other expressions I might name, but I must hasten. That place Jer. 23. 10. is remarkable for this and suitable to this text, For because of swearing the land mourneth, the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

It is a sin that hath more malignancy in it against God by how much the less the temptation is unto it. I verily believe that if God had never made the third Commandement, there would never have been so many Oaths in the world, but it springs from a meer malignancy of spirit that is in men against God because he hath forbidden it; For there is no profit that can come by it.

If men be guilty of this sin meerly thorough a vain custom, what high indignitie is this against God? what slighting and neglect of God is there? As if sinning against God were an argument of no more weight but that the using of a thing without any reason, when nothing can be got by it, could down-weigh that argument. Custom indeed is enough to prevail in things that are of no moment, as now, some man that hath by custom gotten such a kind of porture of his body, or taking hold of his beard and the like, such a kind of gesture he hath gotten by custom and he cannot leave it, why? because the thing in its own nature hath no great consequence in it, and so custom prevaleth; But that custom should be enough to be set against the high displeasure of the blessed God, or be set against his solemn profession that he will not hold that soul guiltless that takes his name in vain, this argu-
Chap. 4. An Exposition of Ver. 2.

...with a most insufferable vilifying his sacred Majesty.

Secondly, To swear that thereby the words of men may be graced, this is more horrid impiety: As if the polluting of the holy Name of the most holy God were the best ornament of thy speech, as if the dis hononour put upon God were the best grace to thy language.

Thirdly, To swear out of a conceit that this argueth bravetness of spirit, a braver spirit than other men have, a spirit of valor and courage, as if according to the fulness of mouthing of Oaths there were a bravetness of spirit, this yet is more hideous wickedness: As if that were the courage and excellency of our spirits to fly in the very face of God. Whence it is that many men if any anger them, what do they do? they fall a cursing and swearing, that is, when others displease them they will fly in Gods face, that is the language of it though you will not dare to say so, but that is the language of your practice, others displease and anger me and I to revenge myself will fly in the very face of God. A hideous wickedness there is in this that you do not think of. You that are passionate spirits when you come home and your wives and children or servants anger you, you fall to cursing and swearing, Know you do no other but this, this is the language of your practice, they displease me and to revenge myself I will fly in the very face of God; And whence it is that Gentlemen and Noble-men and those that belong unto them are such great swearers, because they imagine that it is an argument of some bravetness of spirit, and that thereby they express a spirit of a higher strain than other men. Oh hideous and abominable wickedness! This is all the valour that many men have that they dare sin against the glorious God and never be troubled at it; whereas a godly man is described in Scripture, Eccles. 9. 2. To be a man that feareth an Oath; but for these it is not for them to fear, it is for timorous melancholly poor spirits, but they are men of brave spirits, and they would have men know that they can swear and not be troubled at it, they have stronger spirits than other men have. Thus is the blest God dishonored by this sin more than we are aware of.

There
There is a fourth sort that are higher than these, and those are they that swear that they may not be accounted Puritans or of the number of such a faction; Because where they go if they be but suspected to be favorers of such kind of men as were heretofore named by that nick-name and now are by another; (I say) if they go into company where they think they may be suspected to be inclined to that partie, what do they? They do, to give evident demonstration to the contrary, swear lustily, and rap out Oaths one after another. Oh what horrible opposition unto God and unto the Spirit of Christ is this, Christ faith, That our light must so shine before men that they seeing our good works may glorifie our heavenly Father; Now they let their wickedness appear before men that they may be known what they are: And hereby they give testimony that they can be brought to yeild unto any thing, that is the very ground of it, they do (I say) by that give testimony to the other party, that they can be brought to yeild unto any thing and that they can serve their turns; and this is the reason why willingly they would entertain no other than such as these, for if they hear a man swear lustily then they think thus, such a man surely either hath no conscience at all and then he is fittest for our turn he will not be a scrupulous fool, or if he have a conscience he hath broke his conscience and now his conscience cannot prevail over him, therefore now let us put upon him what we will if it may sute with his own ends and with his own profit, this man will do it; but as for your Puritans that are so conscientious we cannot have our own ends by them, therefore we will have none of them, that is the reason why they do so much hate them, and others that they might be entertained by them and give full testimony that they are fit for their turns, therefore they will swear. Oh how black are mens mouths at this day by their cursed Oaths, new execrations newly invented, that the world never before heard of! Wherefore then, though God might make these men as scorpions for a while to scourge us, yet if our spirits were up we need not fear them, for certainly they are the people of Gods curse, those that are so full of curses in their mouths.

mouths. Thus much for the first.

It follows, By swearing,

—and Lying.] These two go together: There is no man that makes not conscience of an Oath, that can make conscience of a Lye; though the world would think to part them and say, Oh you will not swear but you will lye; but God faith otherwise. Swearing and Lying go together, those that will swear, certainly will lye. But for Gods own people, God frees them from this sin, from lying though the world would cast it upon them, for there is no sin more against godliness than lying. 

Ps. 63. 8. faith God of his people, Surely they are my people, children that will not lye. God engages himself for his people, these are the people that will not lye faith God. Are you in profession any of Gods people? God doth engage himself for you in this, that certainly you will not lye. It is said of the Devil, that he is a Lyar and the father of lies. And women that carry false tales up and down and are flanderers, in Scripture they are called Devils, 

1 Tim. 3. 11. Women must be grave and sober, not flanderers; Diabolus, not Devils; A women that is a flanderer, that carries false tales up and down to the prejudice of her neighbor, the Scripture calls that woman by the name of a Devil; And the word that signifies Detractor in the Hebrew it is Rachil, and some think our English word Rack-bel comes from that word, one that makes no conscience to speak falsely.

This sin of Lying is the breaking of all society, there can be no converse between man and man where this is. Augustine writing to his friend that sent to him to have his Judgement concerning an Officious lye (that is, a lye that tends not to the hurt of any but of him that tells it) he writes back his answer, That a man must not tell a lye to save the whole world, If it were (says he) to save thy father or thy mother out of Hell, if possibly it could be, thou must not tell a lye; if it were to save Kingdoms from destruction, thou must not tell a lye. That is his opinion: And certainly there is a truth in it, for God will never be behol- den to the Devil to do good through his means. Surely then thou must not tell a lye to gain a groat, or to gain a shilling,
or to gain a good bargain, or to prevent the displeasure of thy Master or Militi, but rather willingly open the truth than to think to cover the fault by a lye. The ground of that is Atheisme that servants and children when they have done a-miss seek to cover it by a lye. God is exceedingly displeased with this sin, and hath a controversy against a Nation, and against a family, and against a particular person for this sin of lying, and therefore Prov. 6. 17. and so on, you shall find if you read divers verses together, that the Lord faith, That six things he hateth, yea seven is an abomination unto him; now amongst those seven things you shall observe that he repeats lying twice, though under several terms; And that place is Opened, famous that we have in Rev. 21. 8. that lyars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; Take that home with you, you servants, and children, and tradesmen that will tell lies for gain; God doth rank and chain up lyars together with notorious sinners that shall all have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death.

There are none in the world that make such advantage of lying as the Antichristian party doth, either to draw a party to themselves or discourage those that are against them, inventing all manner of lies that possibly can be. And because they invent so many themselves, whatsoever is said against them, you presently hear in malignants mouths, That's a lye; they think all men are lyars because they are conscious unto themselves, that they themselves are continually so. And no marvel that the Antichristian party are so full of lies, for the very Doctrine of Popery, take the lump of it, it is altogether call'd a lye, 2 Thes. 2. 7. God gave men over that did not entertain the truth in the love of it to believe a lye that they might be damned. Do you ask the question why so many Learned men, Schollers, understanding men turn to the Popish party? Mark the reason here, because they entertain'd not the truth in love, God gave them over to believe a lye; A lye, what is that? that is the Doctrine of Popery; So the very quintessence of it, it is a lye. That being therefore the great lye in the world.
world it must have a company of little lyes (as I may say) to 
underprop it, to uphold that great Lye of Popery, a compa-
ny of lesser lyes, Eze. 28. 15. they make lyes their refuge. It is a 
text as notable for our times as any I know, it shews the pra-
\[...

And that is 
their policie, to spread abroad lyes as much as they can, and 
especially to invent lyes of those that are most eminent and a-
\[...

And those in Jer. 20. 10. do fully set out 
The condition of these men; I heard the defaming of many (faith 
The Prophet) how? Report say they, and we will report it. This 
was their plot against Jeremiah; the truth is we must defame 
Jeremiah, we see he hath got a great deal of credit and pre-
\[...

As now, if a company of Malignants get into a Tavern, there they will talk against this Mini-
\[...]
Chap. 4. the Prophesie of Hosea. Ver. 2. 

bow for Iyes, and ver. 5. They have taught their tongue to speak Iyes; They are now become artifical in it, and they do it rather because they know it will please some great ones. It was so in former times, Pro. 29. 12. If a Ruler bea ken to Iyes all his servants are wicked; If any Officer, or any that are about him see that it will humour him to raise ill reports against Gods servants, the servants of such a Ruler will be wicked and raise Iyes enow. And among other places that is famous, Hos. 7. 3. the text saith there, They make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their Iyes. It is spoken of Jeroboam and the other Kings that followed him, that set up false worship; How there were a great many in Israel whose consciences would not give them leave to follow that way of false worship; upon that there were a company of Protectors and Apparitors and Baylifs, and some Courtiers, they would invent Iyes against those that would needs go up to Jerusalem to worship and would not content themselves with the Calves that the King set up; Now when they had invented Iyes of some of the most zealous men amongst the people, they brought these tales to the King, and said thus, Did your Majesty hear such a thing? There are such men in your Majesty's dominions that dwell in such Towns, and they are so scrupulous, they will not be content with that Religion that the Law hath established, but they must go up to Jerusalem to worship; yea, and at such a time they get into a corner and there they commit such and such wickedness, and they live in these and these wicked ways; And thus they came and told the King tales of them, and the text saith, They made the King glad with their tales, the King was tickled with it and rejoiced at it, and he gave them his hand, gave them encouragement. Certainly amongst there hath not been wanting men that have endeavoured this, that would have accounted this their happiness to get a tale to tell of a Puritan or of a godly Minister, though it were never so false. Thus we have briefly past over this second charge in this second verse, Swea- ring, and Lying.

The next follows. The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabi-
bitants of the land for Murder, for Killing. Murder, that is a
provoking sin, God seldom suffers it to go unreavenged in this
world. Whence are all those discoveries of Murders; scarce
any one but can tell strange stories of the discovery of murder.
We have a vain distinction of murder & man-slaughter as 'tis
called, that if a man be angry and in a passion kills a-
other, this is man slaughter and no murder: God will not
own that distinction, for if you shall by your passion make
your self a beast and so kill a man, God will require this at
your hand, for Gen 9. 5. God saith that he will require the blood
of man at the hand of every beast, much more at the hand of a
man that by his passion makes himself a beast. The life of a
man is precious to God and God will not suffer any creature
to have absolute power over it, he keeps the dominion of mens
lives unto himself. Mr. Ainsworth upon Gen 9. 6. citeth the
the Jewish Doctors, affirming that a Murderer though it were
possible for him to give all the riches of the world, yet he must
be put to death, because the life of the murdered is the posses-
ion of the most holy God; this is their argument. Certainly
it is not in the power of any man upon earth to save a murde-
er, be he what he will be. The greatest man upon earth
hath no liberty from God, no prerogative to save a Murde-
er, but he that sheds blood by man must his blood be shed.
God avengeth the blood that Manasseh shed a long while after
his death, 2 King. 24. 4. And for innocent blood that he shed
which God would not pardon. Though Manasseh did repent and
so we have cause to hope well in regard of his soul and his eterna-
estate,* yet the Lord came upon the Nation after his daies
and would not pardon his shedding of innocent blood. What
adoe do we find in the Law concerning the killing of a man?
When a man was found dead in the field, nigh unto a City the
Elders of that City they must come to the dead body, wash
their hands over the heifer to be slain and take a solemn Oath
that they had no hand in the murder and so clear the City
from the guilt of it. This shews how precious the life of man
is in Gods esteem, and that God hath a controversy with a
land for shedding of blood.

*Though Calvin seems to be of the contrary opinion.
Deut. 28.
And if this be so, what a controversie think you hath God against many in this Kingdom at this day? How fearful is Gods controversie against some that must feel it for that blood that hath been shed in Ireland? There is upon record one hundred and forty thousand that have been murdered there since the beginning of this rebellion, and every body will say, it is plain murder. And they whosoever they are that have had a hand in this, and abetted it, and strengthened the hands of the Murderers, what will they be able to answer unto God? Shall the blood of one righteous Abel cry loud in the ears of God and never leave crying untill it hath had vengeance, and shall not the blood of one hundred and forty thousand innocents? (I mean innocents in this regard, in regard of the cause for which they were murdered :) We now in England begin to be somewhat sensible of the guilt of Murder what it is to have it lie upon a Nation. In the last Declaration of the affairs of Ireland, the Parliament giveth an intimation of some fear they have that possibly the guilt of the blood of King James may some way be upon US. God hath a controversie for murder where ever it lies, if it be not punished accordingly. And for all that blood that hath been shed here of late, where ever the cause lies, God will find it out one day. Oh the blood that will be upon the head of some! Jer. 51. 35. The violence done to me and to my flesh, be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitants of Zion say, and my blood upon the inhabitants of Caldea, shall Jerusalem say. So let all Christians (they may do it and they have warrant from God to do it) let all Godly people in this Kingdom that have had their Husbands kill'd, their Children kill'd, their Apprentices kill'd, their Friends kill'd in these unhappie wars, let them say, the violence done to my flesh be upon the Babylonish party, the Popish partie, and the blood that hath been shed of our husbands, of our children, of our servants, of our friends be upon the inhabitants of Caldea, the inhabitants of the Popish partie that are risen up and shed so much blood as they have done. Oh how vile and cursed are mens hearts even in this thing, that are so set upon their designs, that to attain them they will go thorough streams
streams of blood that lie in their way, and no matter for the lives of thousands of men so their lusts may be satisfied! How are men vilified in this thing, that their lives and bodies must go to be servicable unto the lusts of a few others! Certainly God never made such a difference, he never put such a distance between one man and another.

But now in the ways of execution of justice there we must not account the shedding of blood to be killing. God hath not a controversy with a land for blood shed in the execution of justice; nay on the contrary the Lord hath a controversy against a people when there is not shedding of blood that way. Jer. 48. 10. Cursed be the man that withholds his hand from blood, such a case may be. And 1. King. 20. 42. when Ahab let Ben-hadad go, the text saith that a Prophet came to him, in the name of the Lord saying, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand, a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. So when we have men in our hands whom God hath appointed to destruction, who are guilty of death, who have fought not the blood of some few but the massacring of a City, if for private ends of our own we let them go, God may require our lives for theirs. And this is the cause it may be amongst others, that there is so much blood shed at this day amongst us, because there is no execution of Justice upon offenders, and God requires the blood of many for many. It is true, Papists for their Religion are not to be put to death: that we acknowledge, but the Lord because he intendeth the ruin of that partie, will leave them to those waies that they shall be guilty of death by the Law of the Land, and by the Law of Arms, and then the putting them to death in that kind is the execution of Justice and not the breach of the sixth Commandement.

But will some say, Oh killing is a grievous thing, we never were acquainted with killing as we have been of late; were it not better we were all at peace than that still so much blood should be shed?

God forbid any of us should be bloody men or desire the shedding of blood. No; let us all labour to have peace that there:
there may be no more bloodshed. Take this speech barely considered and it is a good speech, and we are all I hope of the same mind. Curfed be that man I say that shall not yeild to this. But certainly peace though upon hard terms, it were to be desired, if that peace would have blood; though half our estates went for it; But what if it prove that that peace we talk of should be a means of more bloodshed? If you should let in such men into your City as bloody Papists, French, Walloons, and Irish Rebels, and that meery upon their bare word that they would do you no hurt, do not you think if they were once in, that you would every night be in danger of massacring? and would there not be much more bloodshed than yet hath been? Therefore let not men say that those are bloody men that will not yeild up their throats to bloody men, that will stand up to defend their brethren from being murdered; but they stand up and take up Arms, not to shed blood but to prevent the shedding of blood: For certainly if the Citie and Country had in the beginning of these wars rose up as one man and gone into the field, they might have saved abundance of blood that hath been shed. Many thousands that have now lost their lives might have been preserved if you had took up Arms to more purpose sooner than you did: But when every County looks to it self, and the enemy goes to such a County and there sheds blood, and then to another and there sheds blood, and you sit still and do nothing, God may require the blood of your brethren at your hands; and you cannot clear your selves from being guilty of the shedding of the blood of your Brethren when you do not appear to the uttermost you are able to subdue the power of those that shed their blood. We cannot see any way to keep the blood that is now in our veins, but by subduing the Malignant and Antichristian partie that have already tasted so much of the blood of the Saints, that they are like the Country-mans dog....

And so those Irish Rebels that in Ireland have tasted so much blood, and now are come over hither to joyn with Papists, you cannot in any way of sense and reason imagin any safety but by subduing that partie. Is that a way to prevent the shed-
ding of your blood to lay your necks upon the block, for that which commeth under such a specious name, may be in truth no other but a laying your necks upon the block, and giving up your wives and children to be a sacrifice to their malice.

The Lord hath a controversy for Blood. We know when we have to deal with Papists what they have been of old, and therefore we hope God hath a controversy with that partie, that as they have drunk the blood of the Saints, so they shall at last swell and burst themselves in pieces. In France they had as good terms of Agreement as we can expect in the time of that Massacre, and yet Histories tell us of more than ten thousand Protestants that were murdered in one night in Paris, and that at that time when they were in as fair a way of peace as possibly could be, and there was a Marriage solemnized and a great deal of rejoicing for the Union of one partie with another, and yet (I say) in that night so many were slaine; and you may expect no other if the Malignant partie get power. You will say, They have not done so to other Cities which they have taken. No, they have not got the day yet, they are but in their design yet, if once they get this City, then they have got the day, and having gotten the day, you may expect all manner of cruelty from them. And this Massacre in France went on to other Cities, for within a few daies after there were fourty thousand more computed to be murdered. I remember that Historie of France tells us of that King Charles the 9th by whose Commission this was done, that afterward God struck him with such a disease, as that there issued out of his body at several places nothing but blood, so that in that sickness he would sometimes fall down and walk himself in his own blood. Be men great or small, yet being guilty of blood, at one time or other the Lord will manifest that he hath a controversy against them. And so much for that third Charge:

The fourth follows, and that is, [Stealing.] God setteth the bounds as to mens habitations, so to mens estates, and he will not have one break in upon another; no not so much as to
covet that which is anothers. In seeking therefore an encrease of our estates, to get in any sinful way, in that we do as it were say Gods care is not over me to provide needful things for me, seeing I cannot have them from God I will see if I can have them from the Devil. This is the language of all kind of gain that we get by any unlawful way; you do not say so in words indeed, but this is the language of your actions. Saith a poor body, well, I see I am in want, I want bread for my family, and cloaths, and many outward comforts, money to pay my Rent &c. I see in Gods providence he doth not provide for me, well, I will go unto the Devil then, I will see whether the Devill will do more for me than God; I cannot have it by Gods allowance, for if I might have it by his allowance I might have it by lawful means, therefore faith he I will have it whether God will or no. This is the language of all kind of healing; And the curse of God is upon that that is got so unjustly, and all the repentance in the world is not sufficient for such a man as hath gotten his estate unjustly, unless he make restitution of it again to the uttermost of his power.

And this stealing is not only meant of your Pilferers or Robbers by the high way, or such as cut purses, but any wrongful gain that is gotten by way of trade. If I were preaching of this argument at large, much might be said to those that live by a way of trade. But for the present take that one Scripture, Ezek. 28. 18. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; Let Merchants and Tradesmen that have gotten any thing unlawfully, take this text home with them, Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries, by the iniquity of thy traffick. It may be by trafficking unjustly you have gotten such an estate, and you come to Gods sanctuaries as if you were very holy, and nobody should suspect you for your false books and gettings that way, God faith in this Text that you defile all the Ordinances by the iniquity of your Traffick. Perhaps you think after you have gotten unjustly, to give somewhat to adorn such a place as this tis well enough; but you do defile them.
So for all kind of oppression, that is meant by stealing too. Latimer in one of his Sermons before King Edward, faith, that the greatest man in the Kingdom cannot hurt an oppressing man, so as a poor widdow may; and with what arms I pray faith he? Can he bring the Judges skin over his ears? The arms are there, the tears of the poor run down from their cheeks and go up to Heaven and there cry for vengeance. So that the text here speaks not of the meanest but of the greatest theves. Faith Calvin upon the place, those that had the most power by their honor and riches and were oppressors of the people, they are the theves here spoken of. And Isa. t. 23. 

Your Princes are rebellious and companions of Theeves. And Isa. 33. 1. When you shall cease to spoil you shall be spoiled: This is a text for our spoilers at this day, it may be God will let them go on till they have done their work, and then God cometh upon them, and then, not at the first, when they begin to spoil, but when they have done spoiling they shall be spoiled. Oh this controversy seems to be upon England that was threatened and was upon the people in that place we reade of, Isa. 42. 22. This is a people robbed and spoiled, they are all of them snared in boles. If they had come into the field, perhaps it had been better with them, but they crept into holes and they are snared and spoiled: They are a prey and none delivereth them; they are for a spoil and none say, restore; Who amongst you will give ear to this? Mark what the text faith, Who will hearken and hear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob to the spoil and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom you have sinned? for they would not walk in his waies, neither were they obedient unto his Law; therefore he hath powred upon them the fury of his anger, he hath set them on fire, and who hath laid it to heart? We are a people robbed and spoiled, and it is upon this, because we have not walked in the waies of God, nor been obedient to his law, and the Lord hath powred his fury upon England at this day, and his fire burneth, and who hath laid it to heart? No body stirs, because the fire is not kindled in the City you lay it not to heart and you suffer your brethren one Country after another to be spoiled. Take heed, if you stir not more than you have done,
as many of you may answer for the blood of your brethren, 
so for the spoiling of their goods, because you do not lay to 
heart this heavy judgment that is upon the land at this day,
The execution of this controversy.

But yet in times of war you must know, that the taking away 
of all men's goods otherwise than meerly by the positive Law 
of the Land, is no stealing, nor no breach of the eighth Commandement, for it is against common sense and reason that in 
times of war we should be wholly tied to those positive Laws 
of a State that are made for times of peace: But it is accor-
ding to the Law of Nature, to the Law of God, to the Law of 
Arms that our enemies should be deprived of what may 
strengthen them against us. Therefore let none cry out of 
stealing and robbing in these times; Indeed it is not fit that 
any should be suffered to be as robbers, but yet it is just that 
those that will not be on one side should be taken as enemies 
to the other; and (I say) it is agreeable to the Law of Nature, 
and to the Law of God, and to the Law of Arms, that in 
times of war, when the war is just (in which I hope you can-
not but be fully satisfied) that what may strengthen the ene-
my, may be taken away. Indeed they plead for Law who 
wholly break it themselves, because they would have all the 
priviledg they can to strengthen themselves by our goods and 
the goods of others; but certainly God giveth us allowance, 
being in a lawful war, to strengthen our selves by the estates 
and goods of those that appear enemies unto us, without 
breath of peace or the positive Law of the land, or his own 
Commandement. Thus much for the fourth charge.

The fifth is, [Committing Adultery.] The generation of a 
rational creature who must live unto all eternity, is a work 
that God challengeth a special hand in, to appoint it to all 
at his pleasure, therefore the breach of Gods Order in this, 
and the casting filth upon this to satisfy the brutish lust of a 
man or woman, it is a most cursed evil, against which God 
hath a most dreadful controversie. It is a breach of the bless-
ed Covenant of God, and a sin that is most opposite to Gods 
Nature. And take that text all you that are guilty of this;
for perhaps many seem not to be guilty, that are professors of Religion and live fairly amongst their neighbors, & yet may be secretly guilty of it too; take that text home with you, Prov. 22.14. That the abhorred of the Lord shall fall into the pit of the whore. Go thy waies in that condition wherein thou art, thou canst know no otherwise by thy self but that thou art the man or the woman that art abhorred of God. Thou art beloved of thy Whore, but God abhorreth thee. And Tertullian speaking upon that place Eph. 5.6. Let no man deceive you with vain words; he that expression which I confess I would not dare to have; These are (faith he) vain words, he that preacheth of repentance to adultery, especially adultery in a forcible way, be deceiveth men with vain words. You may see how he apprehended the sin; we dare not justify what he saith in that, but only shew you how dreadful he apprehended the sin to be. And in another place, speaking of the sin that is unpardonable, in Heb. 6. he hath this expression, We never read (faith he) or ever knew a second repentance promised to an adulterer or fornicator. These were his thoughts of Adultery. The Athenians made a law, That if any man found his wife in the act of adultery, he might presently kill her. And I have read of a people among the Heathens, that have punished this sin for the filthiness of it, by putting the adulterers head into the panch of a beast where the filth of it lay, and so stifled him. If Heathens hated it so much, surely God must have a controversy with those that profess themselves Christians because of this sin. And the greater controversy because it is so little punished by men. And though many great ones can get beyond punishment by man, yet they cannot get beyond this controversy. I remember Mr. Cleaver reports of one that he knew that had committed the act of uncleanliness, and in the horror of conscience he hung himself, but before when he was about to hang himself, he writes in a paper and left it in a place, to this effect, Indeed faith he, I acknowledge it to be utterly unlawful for a man to kill himself, but I am bound to act the Magistrates part, because the punishment of this sin is death. God would have that sin punished with death, but the Magistrate did not punish it accordingly,
accordingly, therefore he in horror of conscience lays violent hands upon himself. We justify not his act, but it shews what a controversy God hath with men that commit this sin. Thou committedst that abominable sin, and thou hast some pleasure and delight in it, Go thy way, thou art a dead man in God's eyes, look to thy self, one way or other God may bring death upon thee, and though man's Law take not hold upon thee, God may thou knowst not how soon. I have read of a King of Navarre that by adultery had weakened his body very much, and in regard of that, his Physicians caused his body to be wrapt about with a Cercle cloth in Aqua-vitræ, and the party that sowed the Cercloath, having done, went to burn off the thread with a candle, which presently took hold of the cloath and consumed both it and the King.

And as God hath a controversy for this sin which is so little punished by man's Law, which by God's Law is death; so the rather hath God a controversy for this sin if it be committed by men of knowledge, by learned men, by men that are in publick places, by men that carry a shew of holiness, by men that are in the Ministry. If they commit it God hath a dreadful controversy with them in a special manner. Jer. 29. 23. The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the King of Babylon rosted in the fire, because they committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbors wives. It was a proverb, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and Ahab whom the King of Babylon rosted in the fire: This was not King Zedekiah and King Ahab, but two false Prophets that were called by opened that name, and they were unclean wretches, and though it were the King of Babylon, a Heathen, yet he so hated that sin of adultery that he caused them to be rosted in the fire; for that was the punishment of that Nation for capital offences, to burn or rost the offenders in the fire. Therefore those who are Ministers that are learned men, that have any shew of holiness more than others, if they be guilty of this sin God hath a most dreadful controversy with them.

And see how we should have a controversy too against this sin of uncleanness, especially when it is in a forced way. Judg. L
20. 27. you shall reade there that there was four hundred thousand men, all men of war that were raised up as one man, and they all said (ver. 8.) we will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house: And upon what did all these men rise? Chap. 19. the cause was only this, that there was a Levite that had a Concubine, which Concubine had plaid the harlot and had gone from the Levite, he going to fetch his Concubine whom the men of Gibeah a City of Benjamin, came in a violent way and ravished his Concubine until she died, upon this, the Levite took the dead body and divided it into twelve several pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, and wist them to consider what is done. Upon this the hearts of all the men of Israel were raised as one man, and covenanted among themselves that they would none of them turn into their houses until they had brought those Delinquents that had committed that horrible offence to condigne punishment. Mark now, that the hearts of people should be so set upon it and think it cause enough to gather an Army of four hundred thousand to bring to condigne punishment those that had but ravished a whore (for she was no other) and resolved never to go home til those Delinquents were punished. Have not we heard of worse than this amongst us? Oh what adulteries, what rapes have there been wherefover the Soldiers come! what horrible villanies are committed that way, taking not mens concubins and whores, but grave matrons and on purpose those whom they think to be most godly, and defile them before the eyes of their husbands, and then when they have done murder them! And yet we fir not for all this to fetch in these Delinquents. Now we have rapes and ravishments of thousands amongst us, and yet our hearts fir not, though no question the same thing is intended against us here that is done to our brethren in other Countries, for you can expect little else from such as these, Judg. 5. 20. it is the speech of Sifera's Mother, Have they not divided the prey, to every man a damsel or two? They aim as much to satisfy their lufts upon you as upon your goods, you must not think your lives will satisfy them, but their lufts must be
first satisfied; Yet O Lord the deadness of mens hearts, that though there hath been such horrible villany committed in Ireland, in England, which certenily if there were no more but that, God requireth the people of the land should rise up to avenge such a thing as that is, that there should not be such horrible wickedness committed in Israel, but that the offenders should be brought to condigne punishment. If you regard not your lives and estates and liberties, yet regard such a horrible villany as this, as is committed in the open heavens. These here resolved not to go to their tents nor to turn into their houses till this was done; "Be content to shut up your "hops for a while, and to leave your trades and to lie in the "fields untill you have brought these Delinquents to their "just punishment. Be not discouraged with a little ill succ-
cess; there were forty thousand of the better side slayn here, "before Israel got the victory, until they had thoroughly humbled "themselves, and then they had the better of it. Though our adversaries meet with success in their waies, let us not be dis-
couraged, they that flood to defend this horrible wickedness of the Men of Gibeab, they got the first day and the second day; yet they went on in their way till they had brought the offen-
ders to condigne punishment; We should resolve never to follow our business, nor regard our houses and private estates untill we have got this wickedness punished in this land and wiped off the guilt from the Kingdom. So much for that fourth charge. A word of the last.

They break out and blood toucheth blood.

They break out.] Erumpunt; That is, like the erruption of waters; As waters break over the banks when it hath been kept in a while, so they break out thus, they overflow all bounds. When sin is not mortified, though it be restrained for a while, it will break out: As many young men that have lived in good families and have had good governours, then their sin was restrained, but afterward when they come to live at their own hand, then they break out, Erumpunt then; sin groweth to that strengt that nothing can restrain it, like that man that had an unclean spirit and lived among the
graves (Mark, 5.) no man could bind him no not with chains.

Secondly, Breaking out is a great aggravation of a man's sin. It argueth strength in sin, impudence in sin, desperation in sin. And this breaking out of sin is not breaking out only as water in an overflowing time or tide or so, but like breaking out of the fire indeed rather, or if you will like water breaking out of some fountain; now you know if a water break out of a fountain, there is not the less water in the fountain, but rather an increase of it. And as the fire when it breaks out, the breaking out makes it not less but more, as when an house is on fire, it will keep in a long while, but when it breaks out at the roof or so then it flames the more and increaseth with more violence; So it is no diminution to sin that it breaks out, as many foolish people are ready to say, that will speak horrible wickedly in their passion, I will let it go, as good out as in; they foolishly think there is so much less corruption within, and that is a diminution of sin, but it is an aggravation of sin, and noteth impudence in sin:

And blood toucheth blood.] That is, as some will have it, one gross and abominable sin, that is accounted a bloody sin, follows another. But some take it thus, one murder follows another, one oppression follows another; Blood toucheth blood, now thy wickedness is broken out there is no end of it, but one murder follows another. Parenthetheth it hath reference to those times in the 2 King 15. where you may read what murders there were and how blood touched blood at that time, as if the Prophet here had said, they being used to murder, there is now nothing but murders, you hear of murders in this place, and in that place, and in the other place. Thus we may soon have it amongst us, if the Lord did not raise up means to keep in and subdue the rage of ungodly men, if it get head and overcome the opposition that it hath, blood will then touch blood, one messenger shall not have done his relation of one horrid and cruel murder, but another messenger will be at his heels to tell you of another more horrid and vile than that. So it is in some countries, there comes one
and faith in such a place such a man and all his family were murdered; there comes presently another and tells you in such a Town such a friend of yours was murdered: Thus the messengers come at the heels one of another and tell the relation of blood touching blood. So some carry it.

But I rather thus, they defile themselves incestuously (So that this is somewhat more than bare adultery) not regarding the nearness of blood, but blood toucheth blood, they that were nearest in blood one to another they mingled themselves one with another in filthy and abominable lusts. So the Septuagint they translate it μίστος they mingle; so Jerome Sanguis sanguin · tetigit, they mingle and touch blood with blood, those that are near of kin yet they come near one another in filthy lusts. Now this was a sin that God cast the Heathen out of Canaan, out of that good land for, and therefore well may God have a controversy with the people of the land now; for God cast out the Heathen even for this very sin; As you may find it Levit. 18. 6. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him to uncover their nakedness: And so in many verses afterward he shews what degrees of consanguinity we must not come near, and then ver. 24. Defile not your selves in any of these things, for faith be in all these the Nations are defiled that I cast out before you, and the land is defiled, therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land it self vomiteth out the inhabitants of it. This the rather still hath God a controversy with a people for this sin, because there is so little punishing of it. I would but know at this day what punishment there is for Incest, or for any uncleanness among us, only the man must keep the child; And what ever punishment hath been it was that which did as little good as nothing at all, they were to come to the Court and that would enjoy them a white sheet which they could take off with a very little money. That was the most then; and little it is that is now, and in that regard we may fear that Gods controversies is so much the more against us, and pray to God that speedily the land may deliver it self from this guilt by having severe Laws for the punishment of this horrible wickedness lest God come and punish it himself, and then woe unto us.

Now
Now it follows upon all this charge; Thus God hath declared: and then follows, the Land mourneth. Well may a land mourn when God hath such a controversy with it.

Verse 3.

Therefore shall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

4. Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another; for this people are as they that strive with the Priests.

5. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me; seeing thou hast forgot the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children.

You have heard that God in this Chapter commenceth a suit against the ten Tribes. He putteth in his Action, and he declareth, and then judgeth. The Articles of his Declaration or Charge against them we had some of them the last day. Hereupon Judgement is past, upon this Declaration, Therefore shall the land mourn.

Jer. 12.4. How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? The beasts are consumed and the birds, because they said, he shall not see our last end: I warrant you as long as his eyes are in his head he shall never see that fulfilled that he speaks of, therefore shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither. And likewise when a place is left desolate of people that were the beauty of it before, then it is said to mourn.
Hosea 4:3

Chap. 4. the Prophesie of Hosea. Ver. 3. 6

waies to Zion mourn, because none come to her solemn feasts. As now in time of Plague, the streets of your City may be said to mourn because they are desolate, they look in a desolate way when the grass grows between the stones; her gates shall lament and mourn. The end of this expression here is, to upbraid the hardness of the hearts of the ten Tribes. As if God should say, Notwithstanding all their dreadful sins that should break their hearts and make them howl and cry out, yet they will not mourn, therefore their Land shall mourn. When God will upbraid men for flopping their ears and refusing to hear, and that they were not obedient, he calls to the Heavens, Isa. i. 2. Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth: to upbraid the deafness of men that will not hear: And Jer. 2. 12. Be astonished O ye Heavens: because men will not fear, therefore for their upbraidning God calls to the Heavens to be astonished; so because mens hearts are hard, therefore God calls to the Land to mourn, yea saies, it shall mourn: The ugly gsftly face of your sin (that is the meaning) shall appear in the miserable desolation of your Country. There is an ugly face of sin, and it were well if you saw it as it is in your own hearts, the guilt that you have brought upon your own spirits? but seeing you will not apprehend that ugly face of sin in your own hearts, you shall see the sad face of it in all things of the land. God will have sin appear vile and ugly unto us one way or other. The Lord this day is making our Land to mourn because we have not mourned, because we do not mourn. Many Countries know what this expression meaneth, their Country mourns, their Land mourns. The very sight of the dreadful effects of sin upon many parts in England is that which would break any mans heart: As it hath been formerly in Germany, Travelers that have travelled there and have seen Towns and places of great riches and traffick, now to be over-grown with nettles it breaks their hearts, they see the Land to mourn: And it beginneth to be so amongst us in many places of England, in Yorkshire, and so in the West. "Oh that we all could mourn in the bitterness of our spirits, that our land might no further mourn, that our Cities might not mourn." But wee must not
not give liberty to our selves in pathetical or affectionate waie, but keep our selves as neer as we can to an Explanatory course.

And every one shall languish.] That follows. The word translated languish here, signifieth the withering of a flower, or the withering of hearbs and trees; And so it is in Nahum, i. 4. The flower of Lebanon languisheth; it is the same word with this here. Every one shall languish. and the signification of the word doth hint us this useful Note, That all the glory and the pomp of the men of the world it is but as a flower, and even as soon as a flower withereth so soon doth it pass away.

Again, Times of affliction they take down the jollity, and bravery of mens spirits, and make them fade, wither, and pine away.

The word it is translated by some, infirmabitu, they shall be made weak. When wicked men are in prosperity their hearts are stout and strong to sin, they can stand out against God and against all threats, but when the hand of God is upon them then their spirits are poor, they are weak, they are presently down. Oh the difference between the jolly, brave, stout spirits of wicked men in their prosperity against God, and their poor, weak, withered, dejected spirits in the time of their adversity, in Ps. 39. 11. When with rebukes thou correct'st man for iniquity thou makest his beauty consume away like a moth, surely every man is vanity, Selah.

And a notable expression we have of the withering, the languishing of the spirits of wicked men in the time of their adversity, that whereas now in their prosperity their tongues are their own and they must speak and will speak, who is the Lord? &c. they are loud then in their Oaths and blasphemies, but mark now in their adversity how they are, Eze. 21. 4. Thou shalt be brought down and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. This is the fruit of the languishing of their spirits in the time of their trouble. As many a riotous and boisterous gallant that would so mouth it when he was in prosperity, yet let God but lay his hand upon him in sickness and his conscience
Conscience then accusing of him, he whispers and speaks low out of the dust. It follows,

With the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of Heaven, yea the fishes of the Sea shall be taken away.

Hieroe here allegorizeth it, and would not take it literally, but to be the expressions of several sorts of men suitable to this. But we must not stand to that, but rather take the words as they are literally. Only for the reading of them a word or two first.

With the beasts of the field.] In the Hebrew [Be] which is translated with, is as much sometime as, for, in that tongue, for the beasts of the field; so it is in the 5. chapter and the 5. vers. Israel and Ephraim shall fall in their iniquity, or, for their iniquity, there it is Be too. So that if we should translate it so, for the beasts of the field, then we might have this Note; "Here we "may see the poor condition that we are in, that when but "the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air are destroied, "our comforts are gone quickly." The comforts of natural men depend upon poor things, upon the beasts of the field, the fishes of the Sea, the fowls of the air, if Gods hand be but upon them, they languish for them; Now the cups are taken from their mouths and their full dishes from their tables, now they languish. It is otherwise with a gracious heart, according to that in Habak. 3. 17. Although the figtree shall not blossom, nei- ther shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. A gracious heart doth not languish because the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air are taken away: let them be taken away yet he can rejoice in God, his spirit will be kept up.

Another word in the reading is to be observed, [they shall be taken away.] The word in the Hebrew is, they shall be gathered, for it is observable both in fowls and in fishes when they per- ceive any thing noxious unto them or that they are in any danger, they gather themselves together; And that is the reason that fishes at some time of the year are in such holes as they
they are; they going from one place to another, finding one place noxious and hurtful and perceiving some danger, they gather together: And so it is observed in countries where there are fowls, that in the winter time they go to some other place. I have heard many in Holland say of the Storks that in one week they all of them go away together, they gather themselves in the space of a week or there abouts and go away from that countrey, gathering first al together and so fetching their flight: from thence I take the word here, they shall be gathered together, that is, there shall be such times of danger, and there shall be such infection in the air, and in the very waters of the Sea, that the fishes and fowls shall perceive it and so shall be gathered together, as they use to be gathered (when they perceive any such thing) to go away; and being so gathered together they shall be destroyed. "It is good for men in times of danger to gather together and to joyn one with another and not be scattered one here and another there, as the creatures many times use to do in the time of their danger. This only for the reading of the words.

The scope of the holy Ghost here in the threatening the taking away the beasts and the fowls and the fishes, it is this, To shew the severity of Gods wrath against the ten Tribes, that as a King doth not only execute a Traytor but pull down his house and burn all that is in it, so the great wrath of God shall be upon these ten Tribes, that he shall not only destroy them but for their sakes he shall bring even destruction upon the creatures. And this seems to be a threatening of greater wrath than God let out when he destroyed the world: In destroying the old world the wrath of God was not so great as that here threatened against these ten Tribes, for then the fishes of the Sea we do not reade of any hurt unto them, but here the beasts of the field the fowls of the air & the fishes of the Sea shall be taken away. It referreth unto some fearful plague, wherein not only the air but the waters are pestilential and the cattel and the fish die. So it hath been in other Countries, even in England, in the time of Edward the third, our Chronicles report of such a pestilential quality that was in the:
the air and water that birds and fishes were found with botches upon them, And then there were in one Church-yard in one yeers space (I think it was about the Charter house) fifty thousand buried of pestilential diseases. Such advantage hath God us at and can let out his wrath by such waies as these, and such plagues are very fearful fruits of Gods wrath upon a Countrey. What cause have we to bless God that he hath delivered us from the infection of the aire! If God should have but brought a plague upon London the last year, Oh it would have been a plague indeed, we had been in a sad condition; it would have been the heaviest plague that ever was upon any Kingdom in the world, if we had had but such a plague that should have caused men to have fled and the Parliament not have set and even by that should have been dissolved, and so all the Kingdom would have been in a lamentable estate at this day. Bless God for that.

And the fish of the Sea.] I remember upon this text a Jesuite that wrote but very lately; Cornelius a Lapide, hath a most audacious lye, faith he, since Scotland and Ireland hath departed from the Catholick faith (that is from Popery) Gods judgments are out against them, and whereas they were wont to be such plentiful countries for fishe, God hath cursed their very waters, and now their trade of fisheing is nothing like to what it was wont to be. Upon this text he observeth such a judgment to be upon those Kingdoms, he observeth it not of England at all, for he was one that wrote lately, and he had it seems some hope that England was coming to them again. But through Gods mercy both Ireland and Scotland and England have found it otherwise in this regard.

But for Observations from hence, thus.

First, The good or evil of the creature dependeth on man; because it Observ was made for man, man is punished or blessed even by the creature, and the creature comes to feel good or evil according as mans behavior is towards God. Let then mercy & pity toward the creature be an argument to keep us from sin. If you have not cruel hearts towards the creature keep from sin, for you do not only undo your selves but undo the world, undo the
creature by your sin. And when at any time we see the hand of God out against any creature, let us reflect upon our own hearts, and say, My sin is the cause that this creature feels that evil that it doth, and say as Juaah said unto Tamar, She is more righteous than I. So do you say of the creature, Indeed God's hand is out against it, but the creature is more righteous than I.

**Obs. 2.** Secondly, God when he is in a way of wrath can cause his wrath to reach to those things that seem to be most remote from him; As the fishes in the Sea seem to be most remote, therefore this is named here, yea and the fish in the Sea also: As if he had said, my wrath shall burn, burn fiercely, and shall reach not only to your selves and houses and Cities and your Land and Cattel, but to the very fish in the Sea. God can let out his wrath as far as he pleaseth.

**Obs. 3.** Thirdly, No creature can help man in the time of God's wrath; Why, for every creature sufferas as well as man doth. How vain then are the hearts of men who comfort themselves in hope of the enjoyment of comfort from this or that creature in the day of God's wrath; If you cry unto the mountains and hills and say, help us, they will give an Echo, help us, for they had need of help as well as you, their Echo will be, help us too, for the wrath of God is upon the creature in the day of his wrath, therefore the creature cannot help in the day of wrath.

**Verse 4.**

Yet let no man strive nor reprove another, for this people are as they that strive with the Priest.

Yet] The Hebrew word is, in, *Vere*, as if he should say, truly. It is in vain for any one to stand striving or reproving his neighbor, or seek to convince or admonish him, it is in vain: for one friend to meddle with another, for they are so violent in their wicked ways, they are so far from hearkening to private admonition, that they will contend with the Priest, even with him that is set by God, and designed by special office to teach and reprove. Some carry it thus, They are so vile as no man,
is fit to reprove one another, being their wickedness is general no man is fit to reprove his brother of his sin. But I rather take it the other way.

It doth first import thus much unto us in the general, That sin cannot be got from men without striving. Such is the perverseness of mens hearts, that they take fast hold of deceit Jer. 8. 5. and you cannot get them away without striving; like men in a frenzy, you cannot get them off from that which will mischief them without struggling with them. When you admonish and reprove men for sin, you must make account aforehand that they will strive with you, struggle with you, yet afterwards perhaps they will bless God for you; If you come indeed at the first you shall have rugged usage, What you come to judge us, as they said to Lot? Who made you a Ruler? So you have very ill language usually from men at first when they are reproved, yet be not be discouraged, they will bless God for you afterwards, they will say as David unto Abigail, Blessed be God, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou for thy counsel.

Secondly (which is employed in the former,) Even private men, so long as there is any hope, they should strive with their brethren by way of admonition and reprehension to bring them from their sin. We must not say, Are we our brothers keepers? that is the language of a Cain. There is much striving and contending one with another for our own ends; Oh that there were more striving and contending for God and his glory! It is a sign that the Glory of God and the Souls of our Brethren are not precious in our eyes when we can so strive and contend to have our own wills, and though God loseth his Glory, and our Brothers Soul is like to perish, we cannot strive and contend there, not even those that are too too full of strife otherwise.

Thirdly, It is a great aggravation of sin and a forerunner of destruction to a people, not to regard the strivings, admonitions, and reprehensions of others. Let no man strive; It is in vain to strive now, (that is the meaning) Indeed so long as there was hope there might be striving, but now they are past striving. This was their height of wickedness that they were
were grown unto, and the fore-runner of that wrath of God that was now ready to fall upon them, because they were now past all reprehension and admonition. I will give you for that two or three notable texts of Scripture to fasten this upon your hearts, that it is a most fearful thing for people to stand out against admonition and reprehension. That place in 1. Sam. 2. 25. is a notable one, the text faith of Elia's sons, that they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, why? Because the Lord intended to destroy them. Oh you children do you hearken to this Scripture, turn to it, read it over, you that are your rebellious children, and your parents they are reproving you for your sins and admonishing you, but you will not hearken to them, and in the pride of your hearts and stoutness of your spirits you refuse admonition; but if you read that Scripture and believe that it is the Word of God, Oh tremble at it. They hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them. Here is a stubborn child, regards not the voice of his father and mother reproving him, it is a fearful argument that God intends to destroy that child. Another text you have in 2 Chron. 25.16. it is a speech of the Prophet to Amaziah; when the Prophet came to rebuke him for worshipping the gods of that people whom he had overcome in battle (Here is the infinite vanity and sottishness of Idolators, Amaziah falls to worship those very gods that could not deliver themselves nor their people out of his hands;) when the Prophet (I say) came to reprove him for it, in what a rage was he? One would have thought that there was so much the more reason for his spirit to have yeelded to the Prophet's reproof, but faith the King, Art thou made of the King's Counsel? forbear, it may be he hath other fetches, other intentions, what have you you to do to meddle? The Prophet did forbear indeed, but mark what he faith, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel. Here was his collection, because the King would not regard admonition and reproof, certainly God had a purpose to destroy this King; here is the forerunner of his destruction. And it is observable of this King, that he should now
now stand out so: for in the Chapter before you shall find him seem to be of a yeildable spirit though he was a naughty man; when he had hired an hundred thousand out of Israel to joyn with him in battel, and had given them all pay; yet when God did but send to him by the Prophet to send them back and to loose those hundred talents that he had paid the Soldiers withal, upon the very word of the Prophet he sends back a hundred thousand of his Soldiers and looseth all their pay; and yet this Amaziah that was so yeildable at that time how stubborn was he against the Prophet at another time! And therefore at that time when he did so yeild to God, God prospered him in the battel, and he overcame his enemies and had a glorious victory, and after that victory he falls a worshiping the Idols he had overcome, and was stout against the Prophet, and so soon after he was destroyed accordingly. The last Scripture is that in Pro. 29. 1. He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. It is a dangerous thing to stand out against reproof and admonition.

Again, Let no man strive with his brother.] You may see that this people were grown to a worse pass than they were before, for in the second Chapter of this prophesie, Say to your brethren Ammi, and to your sisters Ruhamah. There those that were godly amongst them were admonished to speak to their brethren and their sisters, though they were naught yet the godly that were dispersd amongst them must be admonishing those they lived withal; but now it is come to such a pass that there must be no more striving, no more admonishing. Here we may take this note, That sin doth increase in places where it is let alone. Those that were capable of admonition one while, going on in sin and hardning their hearts, grow quickly past all admonition.

Fifthly, "There is a time when men may, yea men should Obs. 5 leave their striving and admonishing and reproving of others, when they should let them alone. Especially in these two cases; when those that they should admonish scorn their admonition, when they grow scorners; when they trample their
their admonitions under their feet as swine, or turn again upon them and rend them as dogs. There are two sorts not to be admonished or reproved, Swine, and Dogs. When they grow to be swine and dogs then you may leave, yea you ought to leave admonishing them. For admonitions and reproofs are precious things, they are pearls, they must not be cast to swine, Mat. 7.6. Give not holy things to dogs, neither cast pearls before swine; they are holy things and precious things; For I do not take that place to be meant of the Sacrament only, it may be by an argument a minori ad majus applied to it, but that place, Give not holy things to dogs, and cast not pearls before swine, is meant of admonition and reproof. So that admonition is to be looked upon as a holy thing, as a pearl, you are to prize it and therefore not to be angry when we come to admonish you, but you are to look upon the holiness of God in it & to reverence it, and look upon it as a mercy of God and bless God for it. There are many in Heaven now blessing God for the admonitions which they have received from others, as David blessed God for Abigail and her counsel. Many think it a great happiness unto them that they can reject admonition and counsel, and when they are gone from such as have admonished them and are among their companions they can boast and say, Oh such a one came and reprehended me, but I said thus and thus to him, and so rejoice how they have rejected admonition. But if they knew all they have cause to mourn, it is a great misery for them when as it comes to that, that God shall bid those that have to deal with them to strive no more with them; when as men have rejected the admonitions of others, that they think they have stopped their mouths, I'le warrant you say they, such a one will never come to me more; Oh your misery is the greater. For.

First, You have deprived your selves of a special Ordinance of God. Admonition and reproof, even brotherly admonition and reproof is an Ordinance of God.

Secondly, Those who strive thus, who admonish and reprove you, they must give an account unto God what becometh
meth of their admonition and reprehension. You must give an account to God one day, and so must they give an account unto God too; yea they should do it for the present, thus, After they have done they must go to God and tell him how it hath sped, for they have done it in his Name when they have done it right; And when they go unto God if their admonition and reproof have prevailed with you, they are to return to God with blessing, to bless God that he hath been pleased to bless their admonition to such a one. And on the other side if you reject their admonition they are to tell that too when they go unto God, they are to fall a lamenting of your condition and to intreat God to look upon you, and to tell God, Lord I have been thus and thus admonishing such a one, it hath been in thy Name, but Lord he contemns it, he rejects it: When you are laughing at it that you have rejected such a friends admonition, then he that hath been faithful to you he is telling God of it, and do you not think there will come somewhat of this one day?

Lastly, You are left to Gods driving and rebuking, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It is better when God driveth with you by men than that he should come and drive with you himself. As now, if a father send his servant to go and fetch in a child, to rebuke a chile, and he comes and tells the father, he cares not what I say; No faith the father, I will go my self, and then it is worse with the child, the child then smarts for it; So God sends thy brother to rebuke thee, and to fetch thee in, thou carest not for him, thou lookest upon him as thy fellow-creature, and so thy brother goes to God, Lord he doth not regard what I say, No saies God? I will rebuke him my self, and Gods rebukes in this case will be furious rebukes; Ezek. 5. 15. When I shall execute judgments in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes, Mark it, furious rebukes; The rebukes of a brother are loving rebukes, but if thou reject them Gods rebukes may com and they will prove furious rebukes, The rebukes of a brother are out of love but Amos 7. 4. The Lord calls to contend by fire. When Jobs friends did strive with him they could not prevail, but
Job. 38. 1. God calleth out of the whirlwind to answer to him, and who is this that darkenth words without counsel? The Lord out of the whirlwind calleth to contend with Job and so overcometh him. If thou regardest not friends contending with thee, the Lord himself out of the whirlwind may come and contend with thee. Take heed how thou rejectest the strivings of a brother with thee, for God may not only say he shall strive no longer, but my Spirit shall no longer strive with thy soul.

This people are as one that striveth with the Priest.] That is the reason why they must not strive one with another. Here are only these two things by way of explication;

Quest. 1. 1. Why it is said with the Priest rather than with the Prophet?

Quest. 2. 2. Why it is said, For this people are [as] they that striveth with the Priest? did not they strive with the Priest? why then is it not said this people are a people that strive with the Priest?

For the answer to these two briefly.

Answ. 1. First, It is said that they strive with the Priest rather than with the Prophet, though the Prophet did rebuke them and strive with them, upon this reason, Because the Priest was a standing office in the Church of God; the Prophet that was an extraordinary office, and they could not be sure of the Prophet whether he were a true Prophet or no but according to the event of the Prophecies; but the Priest they acknowledged him to be an officer of God, and that is the reason that the Priest is here named rather than the Prophet.

Answ. 2. And then, As those that strive with the Priest. It may be the Priests were generally so bad that there was scarce any Priest that did strive with them at all, those Priests being Jeroboam's Priests they did joyn with them in their wickednes; therefore he could not say they did strive with the Priests, but yet thus their hearts were as vile, God saw this in their hearts that if there were Priests to strive with them they would strive with them.

Or secondly thus, As those that strive with the Priest; because indeed those Priests of Israel at this time they were not such.
as were called of God, for in 1 King. 12. 31. the text faith of Jeroboam, that he made Priests of the lowest of the people which were not of the sons of Levi, and chap. 13. ver. 33. Whosoever would, be consecrated him, and he became one of the Priests of the high places. But the people received them as Priests still, for indeed they thought that the Kings authority was enough for all, because the King would have them to be Priests they would receive them, as if the King had the absolute power to make all Church Officers, if they were sent by the Kings Authority they must be acknowledged to be Church Officers. So it was then, and that may seem to be the reason of that expression, as those.

Now from hence the Notes are these, for you must take in that this is imploied here, that suppose there were Priests faithful and godly that did strive with them, yet their hearts were so hard that they would strive against those Priests, and this lets out the grossness of the hardness of their hearts. Take then the sense thus and here we may have these Notes.

First, That it is the work of the Priest to contend against men for their sin. That is the proper work of a Priest, to strive with men against their sin. They are the salt of the earth and so they should have some acrimony in them. In 1 Tim. 3. 3. It is said indeed of the Minister of God that he should be a striver. A Minister of God should be one that is in office to look to the souls of people and he should be no striver; How will you say then that he should strive? That is, he should never Opened strive with men, for his own ends, for his own waies, no brawler, no striver, no adulterer but one of a quiet and gentle spirit, that should pass by wrongs done unto himself; but when he comes for God he should be a striver; “All faithful Ministers should be strivers when they come in Gods cause.” Oecolampadius writing to his fellow Ministers, I remember he hath a notable expression, Let not our zeal and anger (saith he) burn when we are scorned our selves and reproached our selves, but when the Truth is in danger, and the Name of God is in danger, then let our heat arise, then let us strive. This indeed is the Character.
of a true godly Minister, that he is in his own cause, gentle, yeildable, but when it comes to the cause of God, the heat riseth in his face, and there he hath zeal and fervencie, there he will strive and contend with men in the waiies of their sin.

Secondly, When Ministers do reprehend and strive with people, they must expect to be striven withal by people. These are as a people that strive with the Priest, they have such vile hearts that had they never such faithful and godly Officers that were set over them by God, they would strive with them. And indeed all faithful Ministers must expect that if they strive with men for their sins, men will strive with them. If there had at any time any faithful ones been sent amongst them by God, they would have been ready to have cried out of them and have told them, "You are the cause of our misery, for "you will not yeild to Jeroboam, you are so strict and precise, "and 'tis you that make this disturbance, you threaten us that "there will judgments come upon us but you are the cause of "our misery, were it not for you we should have all the people "yeild to what the King hath set up, but you stirr up the peo- "ple against it and so our disturbance comes from you. Thus no question but they would be ready to strive with the Priest at that time. And thus they did with Amos, chap. 7. ver. 12. Go to Judah and prophesie there; they strive with Amos that was contemporary with Hosea, prophesying at this time unto this people, the land say they cannot bear Amos his words, let him go to Judah, he were best be gone, he tells us we are a superfluous people, and that we do not worship God in the right manner and in the right place, let him go thither, we wish he were out of the Country; he and such as he is raise a fire in the land. Thus when Ministers discharge their consciences shewing people their sins and the mind of God, this is ordina- rily the recompense that they have. Thus it was with Jerem- iah, chap 15. ver. 10. Was me faith he, that my mother ever bear me, for I am (faith he) a man of strife and of contention to the whole earth, and every one curseth me. Jeremiah a grave and holy Prophet, yet a man of contention to the whole earth, and eve- ry man cursed him: A strange thing that he should meet with such
such hard dealing, and yet he appealed to God in the matter of his sincerity, he desired not the evil day, and he prayed for the people so long till God bid him pray no more; when they were railing upon him he was praying for them. This was the ill condition he was in for that respect. And so it was with other Prophets besides him. I might name other texts in Jeremiah, as chap. 20. ver. 7. 8. I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me, for since I take I cried out, I cried, violence and spoil, because the Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me and a derision daily: After I threatened that there should come some judgment upon the Nation I cryed out of the violence and upon that they for the present made in the Nation, and then they mocked and scorned me. The like we have in Esa, he had the same dealings from the people. Esa, 28. 13, 14. But the Word of the Lord was to them precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken. You will say, how do they strive against the Prophet in this? I take it this Scripture is often mistaken, and the scope of these words are to shew how the people did jeer and mock the Prophet in his preaching. But the Word of God was to them precept upon precept, that is thus, they scornd at Gods Word, What we have nothing but precept and precept, one precept after another, in a scorning language, the word of the Lord, and Commandement one after another, and one Prophesie after another, a line upon line, and now you would have a little more; it is spoken in a contemning way: And I rather take it to be thus, because in the Hebrew the sound of the words do carry it in a mocking, in a jeering way, as thus: trar lelar, kar lekar; precept to precept line to line. As mocking people will jeer in the nose at men, so they did at this time with the Prophet, the very sound of the words in the Hebrew is such as noteth a mocking and jeering of the Prophet, and they pronounced the same words again and again, as mockers and jeerers use to do, nothing but precept and precept, and when will the fellow have done? And I take this to be the meaning because the threatening follows after, that they might fall backward and be broken and snared.
red and taken, wherefore (faith the text in the very next words) bear the word of the Lord ye scornful men; They manifested a scornful spirit in such kind of expressions, retorting upon the Prophet in such a manner; And God's anger riseth in his face Wherefore hear ye the word of the Lord ye scornful men. It is the usual way of many scornful men that if they can get anything that Ministers speak and get a sound of it, they will by sounding of it double express their jeering and scorning. So did they with the Prophet who was one of the most admirable elegant, and eloquent Prophecies that ever was, a man that spake in his time so as never man spake, for he spoke in a most high sile, he was himself of the Kingly race, a great man, a Noble man born, and a most admirable eloquent man, yet when he came to prophesie to this people in the name of God, thus they jeered and scorned him. And Esa. 30. 10. Which say to the seers, see not, but preach smooth things to us, tell not us of such and such things as these are. Thus they contemned him. Yea and in Christ's time we find that when Christ himself preached, one time as soon as ever he had done his Sermon the people got him up to the brow of a hill that was upon the side of the City and would have thrown him down and broke his neck; that was the reward he should have had. And Paul that was one of the excellent Preachers that ever was (It was one of Austin's wishes that he could but see Paul in the pulpit) yet when he came to preach, What will this babler say? and, he is a pestilent fellow, one that is of a furious spirit and an incendiary, and where ever he goes he turns the world upside down. Such kind of entertainment had the Apostles. And Luther I remember hath such an expression, Quid est predicare Evangelium? What is it to preach, unless it be this, to derive all the fury of people upon one's self? If one would preach conscientiously. And Mat. 5. 12. there Christ tells his Disciples what they were like to meet withal, how they were like to be reviled and persecuted, for so faith he persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. Acts, 7. 53. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted? Thus those that are in office those that are sent to speak unto the people,
they must expect if they would be faithful in their administrations to be striven withal.

But though wicked men do strive, yet as Samson said unto the men of Judah that came to bind him that they might deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, Do not ye fall upon me yourselves. It were well if faithful Ministers were not striven withal many times by those that are godly. It is not so much for a faithful Minister to have wicked and ungodly men to strive with him. Though they bind them, Oh brethren do not do not you bind them: after that in conscience of their duty and in love to your souls they have hazarded all the hatred and malice that may be of the adversary, even to stand in the fore-front as the But to their malice, yet in requital of all, even many that are godly, if they see them grow troublesome, they are ready to strive with them; because wicked men are exasperated by the Word of God preached, therefore they could wish that even such Ministers had never come amongst them, and this even such as make profession of godliness do. Is here a requital of the hazard that faithful Ministers undergo? I appeale unto you, Are there any people in the Kingdom that stand as a But against the malice of the Adversary, so much as godly and faithful Ministers do? Do not think that it is out of that precipitancy, that rashness that we do not consider what danger we stand in in doing what we do; yes, we consider it beforehand, "But out of conscience of our duty and "in faithfulness unto your souls we hazard our lives, we hazard all the rage and malice of the Enemy. Now when we have done all this, we expect a far better requittal from many people than we find. When Moses and Aaron came unto the people of Israel when they were in Egypt, to deliver them, (for that was their message) but because for the present their bondage was increased and the wrath of Pharaoh more incensed, therefore they were weary of Moses and Aaron, and they fall to striving with them as if they were the cause of their misery. Why 'twas better with us before than since you came, if you had never come amongst us it would have been better with us. So it is now, because those that are faithful, out of conscience:
science, labor to declare to you the mind of God, and to draw you to those duties that God calls for, (this indeed enrageth the adversary, they are the more incensed when you follow what your Ministers teach,) and you are ready to think, they have brought us into this way, they have kindled the fire, they have told us it is the Cause of God, they have exhorted us to come in with our Estates, and now the King is exaspered against us, and our adversaries are enraged against us and we are like to be in some misery; And so even all the strivings of the better sort are ready to devolve upon the Ministers, and they strive with them as the only incendiaries and troubleurs of the places where they come. Well, howsoever Ministers may meet with hard dealing from some, even from professors, yet their way is with the Lord, and their judgment is with the Almighty: As there is a most admirable promise to help those that have been most forward to rebuke sin & in a zealous way for God, though men are enraged against them. Isa. 49.2. He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me. This text is true of every faithful Minister: Mark it, He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; why if I did speak smooth things I were not like to be in so much danger, but if speak sharp things do not I hazard my selfe much? I shall incur the rage and anger of all kind of people; but mark, He hath made my mouth as a sharp sword, But in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me. Ministers whose mouths are as sharp swords they are in a great deal of danger, yea but let such be comforted, here comes a promise presently, in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me. So that those Ministers whose mouthes are sharpest in the Name of God, and who speak but the Truth of God, those are under Gods protection more than any other Ministers that have held their peace, they are in more safety, they are hid in Gods hand, in the shadow of his hand more than any other. So God comforted Jeremiah, Chap. 10. ver. 15. after he had cryed out, wo is me, I am a man of strife, wel faith God, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant, I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction. It may be many of you think it is a weaknes in
in Ministers to appear so much as they do and discover themselves, for they endanger themselves, and cannot they be quiet as others are? there are many of more moderate spirits, and deal wisely for themselves, they keep in and say nothing, and so they may escape of either side, looking which side will prevail; May not these escape? No, they are in more danger than the other, for the other are under a promise, these are not, they are so dudious for themselves and for their owne safety that God will take no care of them. Our Savior Christ takes care to encourage his Disciples against the strivings of people with them; we have in Luk.6. many blessings pronounced, blessed are the poor, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are they that mourn &c. But they that understand the Original shall find that the word [ye] is not in, only blessed are the poor, and blessed are they that mourn &c. But when he cometh to his Disciples vers. 22. there is an Estē put more than in the other, Christ speaks more particularly to his Disciples: when as people shall speak evil of them and cast out their name as filth, then there is a blessed are ye, with an estē, more than there was in all the other blessednesses; That shews God hath a special care of his Ministers when men speak evil of them and strive with them. But on the other side, Wo to you when all men speak well of you; It is meant most of Ministers, it is true indeed of all Christians, but I take it that the scope of Christ in that place is concerning Ministers that were to go and preach, and wo to you when all men speak well of you. The word that is translated well, it is παρέξεσθαι, that speak of you so as to commend you for a spruce curious neat Teacher; I there are such and such fiery men, but here's a Preacher, a quaint man, an Eloquent man, a dainty man, a man that hath brave language with him, and they will never persecute such as these. The other are pronounced blessed when they are reviled and cast out as evil.

These are they that will strive with the Priest: The next Note is this, That though the Ministers of God must expect striving withal, yet to strive with those that come in God's Name to reprove, it is a great aggravation of sin and a basning of judgment. God expects when
he sends his ministers that you should obey them in the Lord and not strive with them. 2 Chron. 25. 12. God took it ill that King Zedekiah did not humble himself before Jeremiah the Prophet; and in ver. 16. of the same chap. it is said; They mocked the Prophets, and condemned them until the wrath of God arose against his people and there was no remedy; No remedy when once they strive with those that God sent amongst them. Those that are sent by God they are the special witnesses of God: Rev. 11. It is said of those two witnesses that if any do them hurt and contend with them, fire shall go out of their mouths and devour their enemies. Those that are sent by God and come in God's Name they have the power of Jesus Christ with them, Mat. 28. All power is given to me &c. Go and teach &c. As if he should say, know as I have all power given to me, it shall go along with you to do good to those that obey your Doctrine and to execute revenge upon all those that strive with you. The Apostles were to shake off the dust of their feet in contempt of those that condemned their Doctrine.

But you will say, May we not in any case strive with the minister?

I confess in Popery they would so exalt their Priestly Office as that all people must be brought into a blind obedience unto them, and the people must receive whatsoever Doctrine they preach; The Priest's lips only must preserve knowledge, the people must not so much as examine it, they must obey and not contradict whatsoever is laid; It is one of the Popes Canons concerning him, that though he should carry down with him by heaps souls to Hell, yet no mortal man must presume so much as to rebuke him or find fault with him, for he being spiritual as they say (for so they abuse that Scripture) he judgeth all men and no man judgeth him; and in a proportion all their Priests would fain have that power. And this certainly hath been the policy of our Priests of late to bring the people into ignorance that so they might not be able to contend with them let them do what they will. They cry out there was never such a time when every Taylor and every Shop keeper hath had so much knowledge that they can contradict...
tradiqt their Minister as now, and try the Doctrine of their Minister. They vex at this that poor men have so much knowledge as to be able to trye their Doctrine they preach, they would fain so preach as that you must be led like a company of sheepe what way they would lead you and beleive what ever they preach. Certainly so many gross errors and doting conceits of Popery could never have prevailed except they had prevailed with people in their blind obedience. Therefore there may be some striving with Ministers and that according to God, though here their striving is forbidden; As thus, Christ requires that his sheep should know the difference between his voice and the voice of a stranger: Yea we know that there is a charge that if any preach any other Doctrine he should be accursed; even people should look upon those that come to them to preach any other Doctrine as accursed; Therefore they are required to know; And they are commanded to try every thing and not to beleive every spirit, yea not to bid them good speed that bring other Doctrines, And they are to say to Archepus, Take heed to thy Ministry which thou hast received that thou fulfil it; so far people have leave. Yet still it must be done in waies of respect to them. If they look upon them as true Officers (whether they be or no yet if they look upon them as such) the rule will take hold of them, Receive not an accusation against an Elder without two or three witnesses, You must not be so ready to strive with those that you look upon as Officers. And rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him as a father; It must not be in a malepert way but with respect and reverence; And when you have done that, contended by witnesses, and spoken to them with reverence as owning the place wherein he standeth, you have liberty then if he bring ill Doctrine, or if his life be naught, to strive with him and contest with him in the Name of the Lord, and not to suffer your selves to be under such bondage as to beleive what ever they would have you, and they never to be called to any account at all. There was wont to be crying out of people if they went from their parish Churches (as they called them) Oh it could not be suffered, and yet they
themselves would be away a whol yeer together, as if the relation were not mutual, and they bound as much to continue with their people as the people tyed to keep unto them; If the Minister may have leave to go away, certainly the people may have the same freedom; whereas indeed neither of both ought to go away, so long as the one is looked upon as an Officer and the other as under that Officer. But I speak of that bondage that they would have brought you into whereby in time they would wholly have freed themselves that you should have had nothing to do with them in Church power. And then they would be the Clergie, whereas it is an absurd thing that they should be accounted the Clergie, for the Scripture speaking of the people in distinction from the Ministers, calls the people the Clergie, Let them not lord it over God's Clergie, so the word is there. But they would be accounted the Church and the Clergie, as if the people were no part of the Church at all, all Church power must come into their hands. And then they endeavoured to free themselves from all Civil power too, as the Papists you know do, so they aimed at it and were going many steps in it; therefore they would send forth things in their own names, and in time they would have wrought themselves free from all Civil power and have had all Church power in their hands, and so indeed you could not strive with them. Bless God for the deliverance he hath now given you.

Yet further, If publick means prevail not there is little hope of private. Why should one man strive with another, these are they that strive with the Priest? Though they had never so good publick means, they resist that, surely then they will resist private. Therefore publick means is to be preferred before private; When a man can speak as an Officer to another, that is more to be regarded and will be more efficacious to those God hath a love unto, than private means. If this be so, let parents take heed how they teach their children to deride publick means: When you have been at a Sermon, perhaps you will despise what you have heard; It is just with God they should despise your admonition and reproof, for you have taught them to despise publick means.
Again further, to reject those that we look upon in Office, though their calling be not good, yet it is a wickedness that God will revenge, (I say) though their calling be not right, if you look upon them or think them to be true Officers, so long if you despise what they do that is according to God's will, so long God will avenge it. If they come in God's Name and you know nothing to the contrary but that they are true Officers, you must not oppose them, so long as you have any apprehensions that they are true Officers, though perhaps if they were examined they have no true calling, yet if you cannot see but they have a true calling, you are to have such reverence and respect unto them, that you are to be subject to them.

Verse 5.

Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

Mark, Though private men are here bid not to strive one with another, or reprove one another; yet Hosea he goes on in his striving and reproving. Therefore shall they fall in the day and the Prophet also shall fall with them in the night. So that those Officers in office must go on though they be striven against; so long as they remain in office they must still go on though people strive against them. It is a speech I remember Latimer hath in one of his Sermons, Many Ministers (faith he) they will not preach, and if they be asked the reason it is this, because they can do no good to people; Oh this (saies he) is a naughty answer. Certainly so long as you continue in that place whether you do good or whether you do not good, you must go on in your work.

Therefore shalt thou fall. He directs the judgment to the particular, Thou, every particular of you, in the singular number. Perhaps some might think, well though the generality suffer I may escape; No, look to your selves every one of you. Observe, When a threatening comes to particulars then it works.

The word translated, thou shalt fall, it is a word that signifies the falling of a man by stumbling in the dark, suitable to their sin, they
they had no knowledge therefore they shall stumble in the dark.

Thou shalt fall in the day, Thou shalt stumble as a man in the dark, but it shall be in the day to thee, and yet thou shalt stumble. [In the day:] that is, First in thy prosperity, for in the latter times of the second Jeroboam (which was a little before the destruction of the ten Tribes) they were in a better case than they had been in before, yet from thence they began to fall. I say, not long before their ruin they were in more prosperity than they had been in many yeers before, therefore it is here said, thou shalt fall in the day, even when thou art in a prosperous condition. Or secondly, thou shalt fall in the day, that is, you shall see your misery before you yet you shall fall; you shall not be able to prevent it; it shall be in the day time, at noon day, you shall see plainly where your misery lies, yet you shall be as if you were in the night you shall stumble and fall.

Oh my brethren this is a Scripture that doth nearly concern us here in England as much as any I know. If England falleth and perisheth now, it falleth and perisheth in the day. We see apparently our evil before us; we see means to prevent it; God doth not bring night upon us in this sense, that is, he doth not bring misery so upon us as that we do not know how it comes or by what means, or how we should prevent it. No we are not so in the night, but in the day; we have seen the misery that hath come upon us by a continued design, we know almost the very bottom the very beginning of that design, how it hath gone on by degrees, step by step; we see now the reason of the breaking of it out, because the stream is stopped it violently breaks out: We know who are the causers of our evil, what their counsels, intentions, what their waies are notwithstanding all their protestations, we see what we are like to be brought into if we do give but a little way and do not appear to quit our selves like men; And we see apparently what God would have us to do; we see waies to help us and power to help us if we will, we have power to help our selves, and direction to help our selves too; we all of us know or may know clearly what we should do, and what
what in an ordinary course of providence would help us.
Yet Lord how do we fall, we fall notwithstanding this, we
fall even in apparent day-light: so that if this Kingdom of
England be brought into slavery, it will be the heaviest wrath
that ever fell upon a Nation. There was never any Nation
fell in a clear Sun-shine day as we are like to do if we perish
now having such means for our help.

Again, *You shall fall in the day*] Hodie, that is, soon, pre-

tently, your destruction shall not be long.

*And the Prophet shall fall with you in the night*] There seems to
be some difficulty in this. How cometh this in, you shall fall
in the day, and the Prophet shall fall also with you in the
night?

First, *The Prophet shall fall with you*] The blind lead the blind
and they both fall into the ditch. You gave your selves up
to false Prophets to be guided by them, and here is all the
good you shall have, both you and they shall perish together,
the Prophet shall fall as well as ye. This is observable here,
"The falls of the Prophets are the falls of the night," For in
the captivity of the ten Tribes they had no Prophets, nor ne-
ever had since. Judah was carried into captivity yet they had
Prophets among them, as there was Ezekiel, and Zechariah, and
Haggai, they had Prophets to direct them though they had a
great deal of misery. But Israel shall be carried into captivity
and shall have no Prophet to help them. Here is a Note of great
use from hence, "It is a most sad judgment for a people to be
in affliction and to have no Prophet at all among them; no
Prophet to tell how long, to tell them any part of God's mind.
Look to your selves that you regard the Prophets of God
now, otherwise when you shall be brought into misery under
the power of your adversaries, you shall have no Minister am-
ong you, none to shew you God's mind, none to open his
will. It was so with Israel, they never had any Prophet since
the captivity to tell them the mind of God.

Thus the Prophets shall fall, but why in the night? Some
therefore because they think hard of the different expression,
they read it thus; *You shall fall in the day with the Prophet, in
the*
the night your mother shall be destroyed, and so do but point it differently. It may be fairly read so, You shall fall in the day with the Prophet, in the night your mother shall be destroyed. But I had rather read it as we have it, You shall fall in the day, and the Prophet with you in the night. Upon these two reasons, the Prophet shall fall in the night, false Prophets, so they are meant, they shall fall.

Obser. "First, Because God would inflict a greater darkness upon them in his just judgment, than upon the people." Those that abuse most light they come into most gross darkness, and therefore it is a usual expression in Scripture when Prophets are threatened, to threaten, that darkness shall be upon them, Micah 3.6. To you (faith he, speaking of the Prophets) it shall be dark, night shall be upon you, the Sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be darkened over them; over the Prophets in a special manner. And Zech. 11.17. His right eye shall be utterly darkened, the chief understanding that he hath, the pregnancy of parts that he hath he shall be besotted in, even in his very parts. Do we not see it even at this day that the Prophets fall in the night? There is more darkness upon wicked Ministers at this day amongst us than upon ordinary people. Ordinary people they understand more what God would have them to do than ill Ministers. Ill Ministers God doth besot them in their very parts and abilities, and they do nothing but cry out still for that which will bring themselves and us into slavery. Were it not for them, people would see competently well what to do, and the great darkness that is upon people commeth from the Prophets, they bring darkness upon the people, therefore their darkness is more than the darkness of the people. In divers Towns are there not many people that know the mind of God and see need of, and desire a Reformation in God's worship? and yet notwithstanding wicked Ministers will see no need of any Reformation.

But there is a second reason and that is more evident yet, [The Prophet also shall fall with you in the night]. That is, the distress that shall be upon the Prophets shall be greater than shall be
be upon other people, it shall be night to them indeed, not only shall there be more darkness upon their understanding, but more darkness in regard of their afflictions, they shall be in greater horror of conscience and distress than any other people, for they shall see that they have brought you into all misery. And the truth is at this day the great misery that is come upon England it is through false Prophets, through wicked Ministers, through that Doctrine that they have taught. We had never been in such a condition as we are had not they flattered at Court and told at Court that all was at the King's power and pleasure, and there ought to be no resistance, and that whatsoever he would have, to refuse it is rebellion. Had they not taught such things as these we never had had such times. Now if this Kingdom be destroyed, it may be God may bring horror upon their consciences, however they would put it off unto others, yet those that have any light remaining in them, the Lord will cause horror to be in their consciences and distress in their spirits as the cause of all that evil that shall be upon us. They shall fall in the night, a black dismal night shall be upon them when judgments cometh. Therefore in times of publick judgment, God's Ministers are to look upon God's hand as especially against them, and more horror and distress of conscience shall be upon them than upon others.

I will destroy their mother] They boasted of their mother as the Papists do of their mother the Church, that is, their Church-state and Civil state shall be destroyed, and so there shall be no hope of this people, both children & mother shall be destroyed; it seems to have some allusion to that in the Law where we are forbidden to take the dam with the young ones because of the preservation of succession; but here faith God my wrath shall be so hot, that I will not only take the young ones, but the dam, they shall be destroyed together with their mother.

The word that is here translated destroyed is a word that signifies shall be brought to be silent, for indeed this word signifies silence, as noting thus much, in times of God's judgments wicked
wicked men shall have nothing to say for themselves, but their mouths shall be stopped, and they shall be forced to lay their hands upon their mouths and be silent. It follows.

Verse 6.

My people are destroyed for want of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge I will reject thee, &c.

For want of knowledge] As if he had said, if they had the knowledge of God they might have prevented all this, but they were ignorant and fottish people and this was the forerunner of their misery and destruction. The Heathens were wont to say, If their god Jupiter would destroy one, he would first besot him; so these people were first besotted and then destroyed: "Ignorance is not the mother of devotion but rather the father and mother too of destruction." How diametrically cross is the language of the Scripture and the Doctrine of Papists! Ignorance is the mother of devotion say they, Ignorance is the mother of destruction say God, they perish for want of knowledge. In the beginning of this Chapter we have the sin of ignorance set forth, here we have the danger of ignorance set forth. There we had the charge, that they had no knowledge of God in the land, here we have the judgment, that they are destroyed for want of knowledge.

Ignorance is not only the deformity of the soul as blindness is the deformity of the face, though a man or woman have never such a comely visage otherwise, yet if they be blind it mars their comeliness, if they have but one eye it takes away their beauty; so ignorance takes away the beauty of the soul, and not only so but it is dangerous; it is destructive; And that in these regards.

The rational creature is very active of itself and will always be in motion, always working, and it is in the midst of pits and snares, if then it be blind how dangerous will it be for it! As now if you have a mettled horse that is in the midst of deep snares and pits, and blind, and he will be curvetting and dancing and will not stand still, in what danger is he?
he? no creature is so ful of activity as the rational creature is, 2
he will be active in the world, and then wanting knowledge, in what danger is he?

Further, Mankind's way is for eternity, and there is but one way that leads unto eternity of happiness, and that way is in the midst of a hundred cross ways and by-paths. If he have not light, if he want knowledge what shall become of him?

But you will say, Though he be dark himself yet he may have some others to guide him and so he may do well enough.

Therefore consider in the third place, That man is not only going unto eternity and in dangerous & by-waies, but he must go with his own light. All the light of all the Angels in Heaven nor of all the Ministers in the world cannot help a soul in his journey to eternity, except this light be conveyed into his own eyes. It is true, a man that is corporally blind he may have help though it be but by a dog, but the soul that is ignorant no Angel in Heaven can help it, except it be an instrument of God to bring light into his eyes, so far it may. But (I say) he must have light otherwise or he must perish, for he must go in his way to eternity by his own light.

Fourthly, The work we are to do about our souls and eternal estates it is a most curious work; the most exact piece that ever was done in the world, and we must do it by our own light. Surely if a man were to make a most curious piece of work, as a curious Watch or the like, he need have light, put such a one in the dark and what can he do? The work of grace, God must enable us to do it, but we must work together with God; God enableth a man to make a Watch, he gives him skill, but he must work with God: so it is with the work of grace, we must have light in our own souls, therefore ignorance is dangerous.

Further, "Blindness in this world makes men objects of pity and compassion, but this ignorance and blindness makes men to be the objects of hatred and the curse of God. When you see a poor blind man here, what is he loathsome in your eyes because he is blind, do you hate him? No, you pity him. But now the blindness of your souls makes you abominable in
the sight of God, and it is that which God will be avenged on you for. But you will say, How can we help it? We have put out our own eyes, God gave us light at first and we brought ignorance upon ourselves.

If ignorance then be so dangerous that people perish for want of knowledge, How vile is it to deny the means of knowledge unto men meerly to satisfy the humours of others! How many hundred congregations are there that have been deprived of their Ministers; for a Surplice or a Cross, &c.

But you will say, Obedience unto a Church is a great matter?

The answer is, Therefore it is the fault of a Church or governors, to require such things as God never required, and after the requiring of them it is a greater fault for them to stand so much upon them as that many thousands must perish rather than their humours must be not satisfied.

If this be the ground of perishing for want of knowledge, then though divers countries have felt the hand of God most fearfully, yet we hope that England shall not perish, for the knowledge of God is begun to shine among us, and never since the word began hath the knowledge of God and of Christ shined more brightly upon a Kingdom than upon us. We hope therefore though God intendeth to chastise us we shall not perish.

Because thou hast rejected knowledge,] Only let us take heed that we do not reject knowledge and despise it. The word [reject] signifies contemning, despising, thou hast cast it off with despight and contempt, it is, Ignorantia non mere negationis, sed præbus dispositionis, affected ignorance. Thou hast rejected knowledge; these two ways. First when the means of knowledge is rejected then knowledge is rejected. Secondly when the directions of our knowledge are rejected, when we refuse to be guided by our knowledge, upon this our knowledge doth decay and so knowledge is contemned.

Now this is a great sin in any but especially in the Priests. When others think that the knowledge of God and his truth is too slight too mean a thing to take up their thoughts, this is.
When Merchants and Tradesmen shall think they must busy their heads about some other matters, but for this knowledge of the Scriptures, it is no great matter, they may be happy without that, let them have their tradings and bargains and houses and comings in (and that is that which is suitable unto them) let them have their tables spread and their dishes full, and for this Scripture and these points of Religion these are too mean things for them: These men now despise knowledge, for so the word here signifies, it is rejecting with a vile with a contemptible esteem of knowledge. But I say when the Priests shall reject knowledge, the Priests that should have laboured to have filled their souls with knowledge, if they shall seek to live bravely, to be gallant, to grow rich, to pamper the flesh, and care not either to have the knowledge of God in their own souls or to bring the knowledge of God unto the people, but look upon them as not worth the regarding, this is in a more special manner a most grievous sin. How many are there amongst us at this day that study to get preferment &c. and then sell away their books and never after any more mind knowledge! And others if they have knowledge and learning and prize it in some respect, yet in this they contemn it, they prize knowledge meerly as servicable unto their lusts. It is not for the beauty and excellency of the knowledge of God that they prize it so much, that sweetness that they find in the knowledge of Christ that they do search to know, but that they may be accounted ScholerS, understanding men, learned men. This is to despise knowledge when we seek for knowledge but in a way of service unto our lusts, and such men may be charged for men that despise knowledge.

But further, These Priests and such as were eminent in Israel rejected knowledge, because they had their houses and goods and comings in amongst the ten Tribes. (I beseech you observe it for this concerns us) I say the Priests that were amongst the ten Tribes, they were settled there and had their houses and incomes and their estates there; but now there was this taught, that we must worship God at Jerusalem, at the Temple, they rejected this knowledge especially, they say that
that if they did embrace that truth of worshiping God in his own way, then farewell our incomes, farewell our livings, farewell our houses, we must leave our brave dwellings and all our maintainance and go from Samaria, and we must go to Judah, and how shall we live there? Upon this they shut their eyes against the knowledge of that very truth that should have brought them to the true worship of God; Rather than they would lose their estates they would reject that knowledge; And that I think to be the meaning of the holy Ghost here, They despised as other knowledge, so that knowledge of the true worship of God; so it is turned by some, Scientiam illam, that kind of knowledge they rejected; For they knew that these truths were suffering truths, “Now suffering truths are truths that will hardly go down with men nor with many a Minister, they had therefore rather be ignorant of them; as the holy Ghost in Ezekiel speaks of men that shut their eyes against the Sabbath, so they shut their eyes against those truths that should have brought them to the true worship of God. And in this case it is not enough for a man to say, God knows I go not against my conscience, if my conscience were convinced that such and such things must be in the worship of God, if my conscience told me than this were the Word of God, I would obey it: But the reason they see this not to be the Word of God, why their consciences tell them not so, is, “Because they have no mind to know it, they reject that knowledge, it is against their ease and preferment, and it is suffering truth, and therefore they shut their eyes against it. This is no excuse, Mark the judgment follows upon this.

Therefore I will reject you.] You despise knowledge, I will despise you, so the words may be read as well as read you; God scorneth wicked men as much as they scorn him, with the forward he will deal forwardly, and with the scornful he will deal scornfully, that is, he will laugh them to scorn: What do you look upon Gods ways and worship as a vile thing? Are the truths of God vile in your eyes? You are vile in Gods eyes, God looks upon you and your spirits as base and contemptible as you can look upon his Worship and his Saints and
and Ordinances. You despise knowledge and I will despise you faith God.

And I will reject you.] The word here translated reject, that is for despising, it hath a letter in it more than it hath in any other place in all the scripture. It is a Note of Tremelius from thence, there is a letter in this word in the Hebrew that is redundant, that is beyond the ordinary form of it, and this is his note upon it in his Comment upon this Text. It notes faith he, the extraordinary manner of God's rejecting them, he will cast them out of the hearts of his people; as he doth apostate Ministers, above all others God casts out apostate Ministers out of the hearts of people: There is a peculiar way of God's rejecting wicked Ministers, an extraordinary way, more than despising and rejecting any other, and there is that shame and contempt cast upon them more than any in the world; That is his note upon this: he will reject them with contempt: Yea for ever. You heard before in Luke 6. that Christ pronounced his Disciples, faithfull preachers, blessed when their names were cast out as evil, when they were vilified by men. But now mark, when a Minister goes on faithfully in declaring the mind of God unto people, and there be shame cast upon him, blessed be that Minister; but if the Minister be wicked and there be shame cast upon him, that shame is a part of the curse, for then he is cast out as unsavory salt and men tread upon it sates Christ. Wicked men would cast out the godly, but God and Gods Saints they embrace them, and they bless God for them; but if you be wicked and men cast you out as unsavory salt, then men contemn you, then you are troden upon. Yea so rejected as never to be received again. Ezek. 44. 13. the Priests there that did forsake the Lord when Israel forsook him, must never again come near unto God, no not so much as near unto the Priests Office. A notable text that concerns you to know for your direction about receiving in wicked persons that have been wicked in ill times. "Perhaps now they preach good Sermons, but you are to enquire what they were when others were superstitious and evil, and although we are not utterly to reject them, yet
yet until there be further evidence of their repentance they are not to be received." God threatneth an utter rejection of those Levits that forsook God when Israel forsook him.

Now the observation that I should have noted from hence is this, That unfaithfulness in service provokes God to cast us out of service. I cannot stand to set an edge upon it.

And then another Note is this, That it is a great judgment to be rejected from the Priest's Office, from the Office of a Minister. I will reject thee that thou shalt be no Priest to me. To be rejected from any employment it is a great judgment, 

Neb. 5. 13. So God shake out every man from his house and from his labor that performeth not this promise. It is a judgment to be shaken out of our labour, but to be shaken out of such an office whereby we draw so nigh unto God as to be the mouth of God unto the people, and the mouth of the people unto God again, this is a fore evil.

Again, whereas it may be said, Israel had no true Priests therefore it was no judgment for them to be rejected out of that Office. But to be cast out of what we seem to have, that is likewise a judgment of God, Luk. 8. 18.

—Seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of God, I will also forget thy children.

You have forgotten the Law.] You live so as you shew that you never think of the Law; of the holiness, equity and authority of it, and the threats annexed unto it, for if you remembered these you could not go on so quietly in a sinful way, but you have cast off all the remembrance of the Law, it is even worn out of your memory. The book of the Law of God was lost for a long time in Judah, surely in Israel much more.

I will forget] Etiam Ego, even I. It is a sad thing to be forgotten by our friends when we are in misery, Oh that such a dear friend, such a father or such a mother should forget me! but how sad a thing is it for God to forget you!

Yea, I will forget your children] That is, there shall be no succession in the Priestly office. This was threatened against Eli his house 1 Sam. 2. 20. "It is a blessing for children of godly
"godly Ministers being godly to succeed them in the Office; and the contrary is a judgment." Your children shall not succeed you in this Office, but they shall be forgotten by me. The families of wicked Ministers through God's judgment are many times forgotten. You have forgotten me, I will forget you and your children. I will not here speak how the child may suffer for the fathers offence, we often meet with it; Only now as it concerns the posterity of wicked Ministers, they are thorough God's judgment often forgotten. But let not the families of Godly Ministers especially if their children be godly too, Oh let not them be forgotten. It is a judgment threatened upon these wicked Priests that God would forget their children, therefore though men forget them it is not so evil; but if there be any that have been faithful Ministers, God forbid their children should be forgotten after they are dead. This City hath been honored for their respect to godly Ministers, but have you never forgotten their children, their families that have been left behind? When they were with you and preached among you, you seemed to give mighty respect unto them, but are there not many that belong unto their families now with you that live in a hard condition, yea their children and families that are godly, their widows too? how are they forgotten! "If the children of godly Ministers that are godly too, should go unto God and complain thus, would it not be a sad thing? Lord thou threatenest Idolatrous Priests that forget thee that thou wouldst forget their children, but Lord my father in the City was a faithful Minister, he remembred thee, and he was a faithful remembrancer for thy people, yet we are forgotten, is this according to thy Word? shall the judgment that is threatened upon the children of Idolatrous Priests be the judgment upon us that are the children of faithful Ministers that we are thus forgotten though our fathers forgot not thee? Look therefore into the families of godly Ministers, look after their children for their fathers did not forget God, do not you forget them; let not the judgment that is threatened upon the children of wicked Ministers be upon them but let there be a distinction made
between the children of faithful and godly Ministers and the children of Idolatrous Priests.

Verse 7.

As they were encreased, so they sinned against me; therefore will I change their glory into shame.

The Lord is here further charging these ten Tribes, but especially their Priests, he aimeth at them most in this his Charge. They had before rejected the knowledge of the Lord, and the Lord threatened rejection of them. The knowledge נוֹדֶד that knowledge, Scientiam illam, that knowledge of God in the way of his worship, that he was to be worshiped at Jerusalem alone, that truth was a suffering truth, therefore that truth they did reject, they rejected others but especially that; And in this seventh verse here is some ground of their rejection of the knowledge of God, As they were encreased, so they sinned against me. God had encreased them, they were grown first into a great multitude, and as their number encreased so their sins encreased. But especially that which I take to be the meaning of the holy Ghost here is, "As their prosperous condition encreased; they were grown up to an height of prosperity, and that was the thing made them sin against God and reject the knowledge of God.

The first is not to be rejected viz. As they encreased in multitude: κατὰ ποιμίνιον: so the Seventy turn it, according to their fulness. And it may be turned both ways, fulness of number, or fulness of their prosperous estate. It is a usual thing where there is encrease in number to be encrease in sin. The more meat there is in the pot the more scum ariseth. So in great Cities what a great deal of filth is there, filth of sin, moral filth: Where there is any confluence of people at Fares and Merkets in the Country, or in any Corporation, what abundance of filth is there continually? As there is any encrease in number usually there is encrease in sin. In Churches, though when they are but small, at their first beginning, a few called Saints, they can agree well together, and go on sweetly in their way.
way, but ordinarily as they increase in number, when Churches grow to any number, they begin to corrupt and increase in sin. They should increase too much the more in godliness, but this is the corruption of man's heart, every one bringing in some corruption. Therefore as there is an increase in number, so in sin.

But because that is not the scope, but the second, to speak to that a little; As they increased in their prosperous estate. For we are to know that at this time the ten Tribes were in a very prosperous condition; they were grown rich and great and so they were increas'd, and especially the Priests for they had the favour of Jeroboam and of the Princes; For their main design was to uphold their false worship, and the Priests served for their turns most, therefore they countenanced those Priests of Dan and Bethel, the Priests of the Calves, and they flourished at this time in the Court and in the Country, and were much increas'd in their prosperous estate; And as they increas'd so they sinned. This is man's vile disposition, that increase of mercies should be the increase of their sin. Thus was it with the Church, when the Church was in a lower condition, then there was more holiness and more sincere love to the truth, when it began to flourish in outward prosperity it began to decay in true Piety. And therefore Ecclesiastical histories tells us, that when the Church received their donations from Constantine of great preferments, then there was heard a voice in the air: Hodie venenum insunditur &c. To day poyson is poured forth into the Church; when great livings and great estates were given to the Ministers of the Church, then poison was poured forth into the Church.

It was a good speech of Boniface the Martyr, when one asked Boniface, him whether it were lawful to receive the Communion in wooden Chalices, his Answer was, Time was when in the Church there were wooden Chalices and golden Priests, but now there are golden Chalices, but wooden Priests. And the answer of Aquinas was fit for this to Innocent the third, when he hewed him a table of gold and silver saying, we have no need to say as Peter once did, Silver and gold have we none; Aquinas answered,
red presently, neither can ye say, Arise and walk, as you have
more money than they had, so you have less gifts than they
had, you have not so much of the Spirit of God as they had.
It was so in the encrease of the prosperity of the Church; And
usually it is so in the encrease of their prosperity. As it is
with the spleen the greater it grows the less the body is, so the
more prosperity the leaner and lanker are the spirits of men.
Deut. 32. 15. Thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art
covered with fatness, then be forelook God which made him and lightly
esteemed the God of his salvation. How many when they were
low and poor in their estates were more holy and gracious
and more spiritual than now they are? It is true in particu-
lar persons, in Churches and Countries, but most true in Mi-

nisters. It was once a complaint that was made to a Prelate
here, that he had a kinsman that was a very zealous preacher
in the Countrey, well saies he, I'le silence him, and his silen-
cing was this, he gave him two livings and that stopped his
mouth; when he came once to have fatted livings then his
zeal quickly abated. And Hierome in the life of Malachus
bath this expression, when the Church faith he came to Chris-
tian Princes, and there had countenance, we may well say.of
it that indeed it was fatted with riches but it was les a great
deal in vertue and godlines.
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ters of Zion are beauty &c. therefore there shall be destruction upon
them; and ver. 24. There shall be burning in stead of beauty, and
instead of well-set hair, baldness, and in stead of their brave dressing,
sackcloth. If any will glory in parts, the Lord justly brings
shame upon them, blasting of their parts, as it is said of Al-
bertus Magnus that great Scholer, that for five yeers before his
death he did dote and was so ignorant that he did not know
letters, he could not reade. God can soon blast the parts of
men that glory in them and turn that to shame. If any glory
in riches, God can soon turn that into shame too. As histo-
ries tells us of an Earl of Exceter that married the sister of King
Edward the Fourth, and yet Philip de Commines reports of him,
that he was seen begging of his bread in the Low Countries
barefoot. God can soon take away the riches of men and
turn that their glory into their shame. And then if any boast
in honor, glory in that, God can soon turn that into shame,
as in that example of Herod that gloried in the applause of the
people when they cried out the voice of God and not of man, and
presently he was consumed by worms.

And much shame comes unto men that glory in these
things, Mark it, according to the glory of men in external
things so is their shame when God takes them away. Here is
the difference between the Saints losing these outward things
and wicked men. When the Saints lose these outward things
there is not much shame comes to them, because they did not
much glory in them when they had them; but carnal hearts
because they know no higher things than these things are
therefore when they are taken from them there is much shame
comes upon them, for their glory was in them when they had
them.

Secondly, God makes the very things they glory in to turn to their
shame. He doth not only take away their parts and bring igno-
rance and durance instead of their parts, but he makes their
parts to be their undoing, he makes use of their parts to
bring them to shame. He makes their very riches and honors
to be their shame, and their glorifying in their success, he
makes that thing turn unto their shame; As now, when men
shall glory in this that they had such success such a victory upon such and such a time, and upon this they gather an argument, surely God is with us and blesseth us and owneth us; in this they glory; well, God turns this into their shame when he comes to be against them, and blasts them that they shall not have success, that it shall appear unto all that though they have outward means for advantage yet they go by the worst; now where is the argument of Gods owning their cause, where is the argument of glorying with them if that were a good argument that God was with them because of their success? Those that shall make that the only or principal argument that God is with them, how doth God turn their glory into shame when he doth apparently deny them success and that when they have most outward advantages for success? The Saints shame is turned into glory, but the wicks'ds glory is turned into shame. When the Saints suffer any shame for God, they can glory; the Apostles they account it their honor, they rejoice that they were worthy to suffer, that they had the honor to suffer dishonor, so the words in the propriety of them signify, they gloried that they bore about them the marks of the Lord Jesus. Thus what the

But it is especially meant of the Priests, for so the Prophet is speaking of them. God will turn their glory into shame. The Priests though they did reject the knowledge of God and their duty, they never regarded to do that wherein the true glory of their office was; That blessed knowledge of God that might have made them glorious indeed, that was despised by them, and the faithful administration of their office, that was neglected by them; Yet they would glory for all this, they would bear it out as if they were THE men; why, they were countenanced at Court, they had good livings and they could lord it over their brethren; and they gloried in that. It is usual with wicked Priests if they can have but countenance from them that are in publick place, and can have but estates and livings, though they be never so negligent of their office and
and never so ignorant, yet to glory. How hath it been amongst us thus of late? How have they carried their heads on high and accounted themselves the triumphant Church, and all must be made to come under them; The land was not able to bear the pride of Prelates and Prelatical men. It is a speech of Cyprian, *Ambition and Pride doth sweetly sleep in the bosom of superbia Priests; And there are none indeed so much puffed up with vain pride as they are, and as such as are most ignorant and do neglect that which is the true glory of their office. God threatneth to turn their glory into shame, that is, the glory of their Priestly office, for that I think especially to be the meaning of the words, to cast shame and contempt upon the Priests. And God doth take much delight in this, to cast shame and contempt upon wicked Priests and Prophets, therefore in Esa. 9. 15. God faith, *The Prophet that speaks lies is the tail, he speaks contemptibly of them; And Malac. 2. 9. Therefore I will make them (speaking of the Priests that had been partial in the Law and had not kept the ways of God) base and contemptible before all the people; And Rev. 3. 16. I will make them out of my mouth, as loathsome. And Mat. 5. 13. When salt hath lost his savour, it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be troden under foot of men, as a contemptible and vile thing. Thus God casts shame upon wicked Priests. So much for that seventh verse. It follows.

Verf. 8.

They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

They eat up the sin of my people] There is some difficulty in these words. To eat up sin, to eat up the sin of people, what is that? There is much in this to be learned.

The word here translated Sin, in Scripture hath three exceptions.

First, It is used for that which is properly sin, the transgression of Gods Law. That I need not give you any Scripture for.

Secondly,
Secondly, It is used for the punishment of sin; He shall bear his sin, his punishment of sin. Christ was made sin. And

Thirdly, It is used for the sacrifice that was offered for sin, Levit. 10, 17. Why did you not eat the sin in the holy place? So the words are to be read, that is, the sin offering.

The observation from hence (by way of allusion at least) that one hath is not to be neglected: Let Priests bear this, They did not eat the sin-offering in the holy place: Let those Priests that spend their time in playing, in pleasures of the flesh, in Taverns, and make their houses to be very sinks of vice, Let them hearken unto this. They should eat the revenues they have by their Office in an holy place, that is, by way of Analogy and proportion, their houses in which they spend the allowance they have for their office, should be holy places; for the offerings of the people were such as the Priests had in lieu of their office, and they were to eat them in an holy place. So Ministers now should eat their means they have coming in, in holy places, their houses should be Sanctuaries, and not Taverns or stews, or sinks of wickedness and sin. (But that by the way.)

For the meaning here, They eat up the sin of my people.

Where lies the Charge?

First here, in that they did flatter them in their sin, and so got advantage thereby: So Gregory hath it, Why or how are they said to eat up the sin of people, but because they do nourish the sins of those that are delinquents for their own advantage? So all your Court-flatterers and others, that flatter men in their sin for their own advantage, they may be said to feed upon the sins of the people.

Secondly, They eat the sins of the people in this regard, Because they were negligent in their office, and took all the profits, the advantages that came in by their office, but neglected their charge, and so let people go on in their sin, and cared not what became of them in that regard, so that they might have their tythes and means coming in they cared not; These Ministers may be said to live upon, or to eat the sins of the people, and to wear the sins of the people, their very backs are
are covered and their tables spread with the sins of the people.
A Writer upon this place relates a story of one in Charles the
fifth's time, a Prelate, that inviting his friends unto his house
and preparing good cheer, they did not eat of it; What faith
he, wil you not eat of dainties that are bought at so dear a rate?
this meat which I have prepared for you and you wil not eat,
it is like to cost me the pains of hell: He was convinced in his
conscience of the neglect of his duty, and so looked upon his
very dyet that was on his table as the sins of his people, and
that which was like to cost him eternal misery.
But further, to open it far more clearly, [They eat up the sins
of my people] That is, the Sacrifices which were offered for sin.
But you will say then, how is this so deep a charge that they should
eat of the sacrifices that were offered for sin? for God allowed the
Priests to eat the sin offering, as that place Levit 10.17. shews.
This therefore was the evil that was in it, that they were Answ.
greedy of the peoples sacrifices, but why? Not that God
might have honor, but that themselves might have advant-
tages. It is true God had honor by the peoples offering of sac-
rifice, but they looked not to that so much as unto their
own advantages. Hence they put on people as much as they
could to sacrifice, teaching them to rest in their sacrifices, and
indeed making light of their sin; though you sin, Come, and
I will offer for your sins and they shall be pardoned. But as
the Papists do at this day, they teach the people though they
sin yet by so many Mages, and Pater-Noles, and Indulgences, and
Dirges they shall be delivered; and by this means they get the
wealth of Kingdoms and eat up the sins of the people. The
Priests in those times were images of the Papists now.
Again, They were glad when people did offend and sin a-
against God, why? because then their sacrifices must be multi-
plied, and so their gains would be encreased: And so it is a
rebuke of the covetousness of Priests. It is a most abomina-
ble thing for those that are to watch over souls that they
should regard their own profit and sensuality more than the
good of souls; Just like your Chancellors and Commissaries
Courts that were wont to be, they cared not what offences
there
there were, they rejoied at long presentments, all brought
griest to their Mill. And Bernard in his 77. Sermon upon the
Canticles quoteth this place, (It seems there were such then in
his time) and faith he, They eat upon the sin of my people, as if he
quasiicit, should say; they exact the price of their sin, but take not due care for
the sinners. And again, Give me (faith he) any one of those
that are Governors in the Church that doth not watch more
to empty peoples purses than to save their souls: How many
Commiflaries and Chancellours of late grew extraordinary
rich, and went up and down in their silks and satins and in
their Coaches, and all this was the sins of the people.

It is then a most cursed thing to desire or rejoice in the sins
of others because of our own advantage. That is the special
observation here. How many are there that watch for the
falls of their enemies, and rejoice in their sin? I appeal unto
you, had you an enemy to you, when you heard of his fall,
though it were a sin against God, yet if it tended unto his
disgrace, did not you rejoice in it? were you not glad of it?
because the more an enemy is disgraced the more you think
your self justified and honored. Oh this is horrible! Oh be
humbled before the Lord for this, and feel unto God that if it
be possible he may pardon the thoughts of thy heart in this
thing. What, to rejoice that the infinite blessed God is dishonored because thou thy self hast an advantage, it is a most
horrible cursed thing. How many are there that looking up
on the professors of Religion whom they think to be adversaries unto them, do rejoice when they see them fall, why?
because they think by their disgracing themselves to be thereby
justified. This is to feed upon the sins of people. You shall
have vermine and swine rooting in filth and in dung, so there
are many that feed upon the filth and dung of others, upon the
filth of their sins. It is a vile and cursed wickedness to be glad
of the afflictions of our neighbor for our own advantage,
much more to be glad of his sin. When thy neighbor falls
into affliction thou shouldst not rejoice at his affliction though
thou hast advantage by it: but when thy neighbor falls into
sin to be glad of it for thine own advantage, this is a most
cursed
cursed thing indeed. For a Chirurgeon to be glad of ano-
other man's wounds and to prolong the healing of them be-
cause he thereby shall have some advantage, would not every
one cry out of him? And truly this were wickedness. So for
Soldiers to love war, and to lengthen out war, and care not
what becomes of the lives of men and the woful miseries of a
Kingdom so they may have long pay, (I say) for them wil-
lingly to lengthen out war because of their own advantage,
this you will all account a great wickedness: But this is not so
bad as to be glad of the sins of people for our own advantage.
Certainly as Chirurgeons that shall lengthen out the afflic-
tion of their Patients for their own advantage may be said to
feed upon the matter and filthy stuff of the wound; and Sol-
diers that shall lengthen out war for the encrease of their own
pay may be said to drink the blood of people; those cups of
wine that go down so merrily and those dishes of meat that
they are so jovial with, may be said to be the flesh and the
blood of people; but this is not so bad as to feed upon the
sins of others. Thou that feedest upon the sin of thy brother
do thou know that this diet of thine must needs breed diseases,
It is no wholesome diet to feed upon the sins of people, it is such
a diet as will breed Worms, breed the worm of conscience
one day, and thou wilt get such a surfeit as will need a strong
purge of humiliation to purge thee from that surfeit. It was
once an expression concerning a Prelate that was very fat, one
being asked the reason why such a Prelate was so very fat? why
surely (saith he wittily) he grows so fat by so often eating
of his own words; but no mervail though men grow to have
fat hearts that feed upon the sins of people. As this is the or-
dinary diet of many, meerly to feed upon the sins of others, so
especially of Ministers, and for Ministers to feed upon the
sins of people so as to keep them alive by their flatteries & con-
nivence, that is evil; but if by their faithful preaching they
did first slay the sins of the people and then receive maintai-
nance for their work, this is allowed by God, and this they
may do: when God bad Peter arise and eat, he first bid him
slay, Arise Peter slay and eat: so Ministers if first they would a-

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rife and slay the fins of the people by their preaching, they may eat, that is, they may comfortably then receive maintenance and allowance for their work; but if they keep their fins alive, then their diet is ill diet for they feed upon their fins.

What, is there such wickedness in the hearts of men as to rejoice in the sins of others for their own advantage? Oh how much more then should the Saints rejoice in the graces of God in others for God's glory? In Ezek. 8. 17. you have an expression that seems hard to be understood. God chargeth the people there as with other notorious evils so with this among the rest, that they did put the branch to their nose; In these words the people are charged with a most notorious wickedness, this may be often read and little understood what it is, I conceive the meaning to be this, It is a charge of this people for Idolatry, that they worshipped the Sun, or Vesta the goddess of the earth, either of both, because by them the sweet flowers and branches of trees came forth from the earth, they attributed the flourishing of trees and of the plants wholly unto the Sun whom they worshipped as a god, or unto Vesta whom they worshipped as a goddess, and when they worshipped either of those in the acknowledgment of the honor due to them, they took a branch and put to their nose, thereby shewing their respect and their homage unto them as rejoicing in that good and sweet fruit that was caused by the Sun or by Vesta their god or goddess. So that God chargeth them here for so rejoicing in these creatures as to worship the Sun or the earth as the cause of it. To apply it to our purpose; As Idolaters because they looked upon the Sun or the earth as causes of such flourishing of plants and sweetness of branches and flowers, did put them to their nose and delighted in them and thereby shewed their honoring of the Sun and of the earth, so should we take the graces of the Spirit of God in our brethren that are the fruits of the Sun of righteousness, for the Sun of righteousness causeth them to flourish in the hearts of our brethren, and we should put them to our nose, smell at them, account them fragrant and thereby do honour unto Jesus.
Jesus Christ as the Author of them, this is quite contrary to this of rejoicing in the sins of people. Thus much for that phrase they eat up the sin of my people.

And they set their hearts upon their iniquity.] The words are not. They lift up their hearts, every one's heart. Calu. It may be interpreted either of the heart of the Priests or the heart of the people, both ways, and according to the scope of the Spirit of God either way.

First the heart of the Priests, they lift up their hearts to the iniquity of the people, so it may be understood, for so this phrase, lifting up of the heart to a thing, doth note in Scripture the earnest desire that there is in the heart for the attaining of such a thing; as in Deut. 24. 15. speaking of poor men He is poor faith he, and sets his heart upon his wages. A poor man that wants provision for his family, he sets his heart upon his wages. Oh when shall I have my wages that I may provide for my family! now the word is here in this text of the poor man, he lifteth up his heart to his wages, Oh my wages that it might come. And Jerem. 22. 27. the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return, that is, the land whereunto they lift their hearts; so the word is the same here in the text, they have an earnest desire unto the land; And Ezek. 24. 25. I will take from them the desire of their eyes and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters; it is spoken of their love unto their children, they lift their minds or their hearts to their children. So that then it notes thus much, the earnest desire the Priests had unto the sins of the people, that they might have the greater advantage by them; As it is noted of some who are of poor servile spirits and whose greatest means comes in by burials, that they are glad and rejoice when they hear the bell ring, and they are ready to desire the death of men out of respect to their own fees, because the more die and the richer they die the more advantagecometh in to them. So the Priests at this time they desired the multiplying of the sins of the people that they might have the more sacrifices thereby.

But I rather think, according to other Interpreters, the
scope to be more principally in regard of the lifting up of the hearts of the people, that the Priests did lighten the hearts of the people, that is thus, that they might have the more advantage by their sacrifice, they do make the sins of the people nothing & encourage them in their sins, & lighten their hearts; they lift up their hearts above their sins, persuading them that if they offer sacrifice all should be well, they should be fully cleared, they need not be further troubled: Whereas indeed the Priests ought to convince mens consciences of the evil of their sins, when they came to sacrifice they ought to have shewed them how they deserved death for their sins, whereas this poor beast dies, and you are to lay your hands upon the head of it, know that your sins deserve the death of your souls eternally; and they were to instruct the people how the sacrifices typified the blood of Christ, they were to tell them, you come now to offer sacrifice and to have the blood of the beast shed, this typifieth out the Messiah that is to come into the world, the Son of God that is to be made Man and to shed his precious blood to pacifie the wrath of God for your sins, and you are to exercise your faith upon this Messiah that is to come: they should have told them that no sin could be pardoned but by the blood of Christ, they should have loaded their consciences with their sins, they should have made their sins heavy upon their consciences, but they lightened their minds by putting such apprehensions into them that if they did but offer sacrifice all would be well, they might take their liberty then, and though they committed sin again yet still there was a sacrifice for it, and so they lightened the sins of the people that way.

This was a most abominable sin of the Priests, Calvin upon this place brings in Plato himself that Heathen, inveighing against the absurdity and ridiculousness of peoples offering sacrifice thinking thereby to pacifie their gods and then take liberty to sin again, Even Plato thought it an abuse of an Heathen god for people to think it enough to offer sacrifice. And yet is not this the distemper of the hearts of many people amongst us, that they commit sin and take liberty to themselves.
It is true, we are all sinners and we must repent, and so sin, and repent, and sin and repent again, and so make repentance that should be the death of their sins a means to nourish their sins. The Priests here did abuse the type, the sacrifices, they lighten the hearts of people by telling them that there was a sacrifice to expiate their sin, and have you not at this day many that abuse the Antitype as much, that tell the people with such kind of expressions as these, "Sin as fast as you can, there is a sufficient sacrifice for sin, it is but to believe in Christ, Christ hath shed his blood for the greatest sins of all, and sin as fast as you can; yet there is a price paid for sin. It is true there may be some truth in the words some matter in them without cloathing them with such absurdities, that is, that there is a sacrifice for the greatest sin, but now to speak to people upon this in such a manner, sin as fast as you can there is a sacrifice for sin, for it is the manner, the Modus, that doth either encourage or keep back people from sin. I appeal unto you, whether have you not many that do reveal Christ in such a way and manner and open the rich and glorious free grace of God in Christ as is an encouragement to people unto sin. It is true when they come to be examined they deny it, no God forbid, they do not encourage men to sin, they only tell them of God's free grace: Yea but they tell them of it in such a manner without such cautions as prudent wise conscionable Ministers use to do; And therefore you find that all your lewd and looser sort of Professors clothe with them because they have such a way of preaching of free grace. It appears that in Hierome his time there were such a kind of people Ierom as ple, for he hath this expression of some in his daies, when they saw any to live wickedly they would say thus to them, you sin and offend, but God requireth nothing else but only abide in the truth of the faith, do but believe and that is enough.
nough. And again he hath a further expression, which faith if you do but keep God doth not so much regard your lives what they are, only looks that you do beleve: And by this means faith he men repent not neither are they humbled, but they walk up and down with a stretched out neck; you shall find them by their very gate, they walk so pearly abroad and cast up their heads, because they think they hold the true faith and so take liberty to sin. The Church hath been continually troubled with this generation, and no mervail there be such men now amongst us, for there being not yet a full Reformation (for we are but in the way tending toward it) and all things cannot be reformed at once, therefore some kind of liberty for the present is permitted to such men, and therefore I say no mervail that we have such among us that are of such spirits to abuse the free grace of God and lighten the hearts of men in their sin by telling of them there is a sacrifice in Christ's death sufficient to pay for all. And so much for this eighth verse.

Verse 9.

And there shall be like people like Priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings.

The Lord threatening of the ten Tribes, especially points his threats against the Priest; as the great cause of the evil both of the sin and punishment of the people, as ever they have been; Evil Ministers in a countrey have been a chief cause of the sin and of the misery of the Countrey. Divers of Gods threats against them we saw before and still it follows.

There shall be like people, like Priest.] Here is a mixt threat, both against Priest and people. They have made themselves like one another in sin, God will make them like one another in punishment. They joyn themselves together in sin and were alike there; God will joyn them in judgment and they shall be alike thereto. There is a likeness between people and Priest upon two grounds, I mean in evil especially.

First,
Chap. 4. the Prophesie of Hosea. Ver. 9. 113

First, They are like in sin one to another usually from the just judgment of God upon people. When people dislike the powerful Ministry of the word, when their hearts cannot bear a spiritual and lively Ministry God in just judgment sendeth unto them Ministers according to their very lusts; Ministers that shall be suitable unto that very disposition of their hearts to harden them in it. And this is a fearful judgment upon a people. They may rejoice and bless themselves in it and think themselves now quiet and in safety, and say they have got a very honest man, a brave man, a quiet man amongst them; but while they are rejoicing the wrath of God is in a most dreadful manner let out against them, in sending them a Minister according to their lusts; As God threateneth in Ezek. 14.4. If a man set up an Idol in his heart, God will answer him according to his Idol; so when people set up Idols in their hearts, their hearts are bent unto such and such lusts and wicked ways, God in his just judgment will answer them according unto their own hearts and lusts, they shall have such Ministers sent amongst them as will harden them in those wicked ways.

Again secondly, [Like people like Priest] In evil in regard of the great influence that there is mutually from the Priests to the people and from the people to the Priests, so they come to be like one another in evil. Sometime from the people to the Priests. If people be Malignants and superstitious and loose and vain, the Priests that are among them being carnal, they will seek to humour them; they love to be made of by them and therefore they preach such things as may suit with such kind of humours. But this is a very vile thing. It is an extreme dishonor to the Ministry of the word to subject it unto the lusts of men. It is this that makes it so contemptible in the eyes of wicked men. Though they be pleased with it yet the truth is the suiting of their lusts makes the Ministry of the word contemptible. How is that you will say, they are pleased with it, commend such men and like them well? While they commend the men and like them well, yea like what they say yet they condemn the Ministry, upon this ground, because
because they come to see that even their ministry is under their humours, and it is to please their humours; upon this they look upon themselves and their lusts as above the Ministry, and so despise any authority in it. They are pleased with the suiting of it to their lusts, but they despise it in regard of any authority, for they see apparently it is under their humors. In Revel. 19.10. When John did but fall down to worship an Angel, the Angel cometh to him and faith, O see thou do it not, why? for I am thy fellow servant and have the testimony of Jesus. What you a Minister that have the testimony of Jesus to fall down to an Angel; An Angel, what is an Angel? The glory of an Angel it is to be a fellow servant with you and to have the same testimony of Jesus that you have. A Minister must not in his ministry fall down under the lusts of any man living, upon this ground, because he hath the testimony of Jesus with him. It is true those that are Ministers in regard of themselves should be willing to be under all servants unto all for Christ; they should say be willing to put their persons under every man for Christ, but they should keep their Ministry above every man. Their Ministry and the authority of that is to be kept above the greatest and that for Christ too.

Again, A great influence as from people to the Minister so from the Minister to the people. Look how Ministers are, so usually the people are. Like Priest like people, especially in evil, they have an influence there. You know it almost in all places where you have malignant superstitious Ministers you have accordingly such kind of people. Jerem. 23.10. The land is full of adulterers (faith the text) then in the next verse, For both Prophet and Priest are prophane, that is the reason. And again verf. 14. I have seen (faith God) in the Prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing; they commit adultery and walk in lyes; they also strengthen the band of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness. Here we see how they harden others in sin, they walk in lyes, they tell people we need not be so strict, we may take more liberty, it is but the fancies and humors of such and such men, they walk in lyes and so they strengthen mens hands.
hands in wickedneſs and none returneth from his wicked
waies. And then verse 15. From the Prophet there goes prophane
quite thorough the land; if they be prophane and wicked they
have an influence quite thorough the land to make the whol
countrey wicked and prophane. And on the other side, there
is a great influence in the Ministry of the word upon people
for good many times. If Ministers continue painful, faithful,
conſcional, it is very rare but that they bring people to
some kind of obedience or other. Very few godly, conſcional,
powerful Ministers that have lived any time in any
place but they leave some favour of their spirits behind them,
that in their people you may find the favour of such a Minis-
try. It was wont to be said, Da Ambrofios et habeimus Theo-
dosios let us have Ambrofes and we shall have Theodosius’s. Let
us have godly Ministers at Court and we shall have godly
Princes; that is the meaning; The reason why Theodosius
was so good, it was because he had an Ambrofe. So we find it
in 2 King. 12. 2. that Jeboafs so long as Jehojada the Priest liv-
ed, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, so long
as he had a godly Minister with him that intrusted him, he
did that which was right in the eyes of God. No mervail
then so much evil at Court and other places because we know
what kind of Ministers they ever have had. And because of
the influence that a Minister hath upon people, hence it is that
the evil and malignant party ever desire to nourish these Mi-
iners; and the force of their rage and malice is against godly
Ministers, for like Minister like people they think; and indeed
supposing their principles it is but that which is prudential
for their ends; for when they cry out and say that these Mi-
isters are the cause of all, they say true, & there is some kind
of truth in it, that is, they are the cause to discover to people
their evil and wicked waies, and to cause those to whom they
preach to cleave to the truth, and that is it their spirits do
vex and rage at, that they see the Ministry of the Word pre-
vail so much upon the people as it doth. Therefore I remem-
ber a policie that I have read of Xerxes, that when he was in
straights by reason of Agifelam who prevailed much in his

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country, he took this course, he sent men with good store of money to corrupt the Towns in Greece, and they went and corrupted Athens and Thebes, and so caused great disturbance in Greece, by reason of which Agiselaus was sent for home to look to his own Country. They went especially for the Universities Athens and Thebes and there corrupted the Orators and so thought to prevail much. It hath been the policy of our men in these days to corrupt Universities much, thinking by Scholers and others there to prevail most. There is a story of the Wolves that they would make a league with the Sheep, but they would by any means have one article granted, that was that their Shepheards must be delivered up unto them and then they would be at peace with the Sheep and do them no hurt. I make no question but if our adversaries should come to article with us, there is no one thing they would stand more upon than the delivery up of the Shepheards and then there would be good peace between the Wolves and the sheep. Like people like Priest. They are like in evil and they shall be like in punishment, they shall be involved in the same punishment, I will make the Priests as contemptible and as miserable as the vilest of the people; their places exalted them above others, and their sin hath made them as vile as others, and so they shall be dealt withal accordingly. You will say, what great judgment is here threatened that like people like Priest? Yes certainly to them the judgment was very bitter and grievous, was most against the hair, for the Priests have at all times been puffed up with their callings, so that they looked upon themselves as above the people abundantly, looked down to the people with scorn and contempt. The Pharisees in John, 7. 49. This people (say they) who know not the Law are cursed, this same vulgar sort are they that are accursed; so these Priests here, though the truth is they were made of the vilest of the people (as they were in Jeroboam's time, for it is spoken of those) yet being once got up into that place they were puffed up as if they had been of another kind of mould than the people were. It is usual for wicked Ministers though never so base and vile other
ther waies either in birth or breeding, yet when they get up a little and are come to preferment, to look upon others as very contemptible in their eyes. This is a Master-design in Popery, to advance Priesthood and make them to be great above the people; and we know what a way they were going in of late; what were your Gentry in the Kingdom but even slaves and vassels to every Popish Priest in the Countrey, but especially unto Prelates; And we cannot imagine (but we must look at the hand of God in his dreadful judgment beftoring men) why the Gentry should desire to have prelacy come in again, knowing how they were contemned and despised of them before. There was scarce any Vicar in the Countrey but if he were Filius Ecclesiae as they called him, a child of the Church, a ceremonious man but he was able to vaunt himself above any of the Gentry whatsoever; and it was an evident argument of the coming in of Popery upon us, a too much extolling of their Priestly Office, although that where in the true honour of their office consisted, the faithful Preaching of the word, was not regarded. I have read of some of the Papists, (to give you an instance or two that you may see what way they went, just as they did here of late) one Ricionius hath this passage, The Priest excelleth the King as much as a man a beast; yes as much as God is above a Priest so is a Priest above the King; these very words he hath. And Pope Innocent the second, he would have Lotharius the Emperour painted in his pallace as a vassell lying down at his feet. And to Becanus he calls the Pope the chief Priest, their Shepheard, and Emperors and Kings; are their Dogs and Curs faith he, and if they will be faithful and be at the hand of the Shepheard well and good, they must be made of, but if they will be lazie and troublesome, they must be removed. Is it possible now that Kings and great ones should ever love Popery and think to bring in that for their honor when as they do advance their Priesthood far above themselves; only for the present they would puff them up to procure what lies in them an Arbitrary government, but fill that that Arbitrary government of theirs must be Arbitrary under them, and then it suits very well
well with their ends. There is a spirit of fornication (as follows afterward) upon men, or otherwise it were impossible they should be so besotted as they are.

But though they lifted up themselves above the people thus yet faith God, I will make them in punishment like to the people. God is no respecter of persons, to spare any for their place above another; So neither should we, we should not say, Oh it would be a disgrace unto the calling, therefore it must be past over; rather because he is a Priest or because he is a Magistrate, let him be what he will be, let him be in place of Magistracy or Ministry or of Parliament, yet proving to be a Delinquent and an enemy unto the State, certainly he must be dealt withal and be made an example in judgment as well as the meanest of the people, and for those that be under to be executed and for them to be spared in that regard, God forbid ever such a thing should be. God is no accepter of persons in regard of place neither should men be.

Quest. Yea but it may be you will say, Like people like Priest, one would rather think that God should say, I will make their judgment greater than the judgment of the people, for the sin of the Priests is far greater than the sin of the people.

Answ. 1. To that I answer first, It is true the sin of the Priests is greater than the sin of any of the people, but it is not greater than the sin of the whole Congregation. In Levit. 4. compare verse 3. with verse 13. and you shall find that the same sacrifice that was offered for the sin of the whole Congregation, it is offered for the sin of the Priest, so that the sin of the Priest it is equivalent to the sin of the whole Congregation. So there is a parallel here, like people like Priest, that is, I will deal with the Priests as with the whole Congregation.

Yet further for a second answer, As the condition of the person aggravateth the sin, so the condition of the person aggravateth the judgment. It is a greater punishment for a man of an high condition to suffer the same thing that a man that is of a lower condition doth suffer.

And I will punish them for their wives.] The reading you have in your books of punishing them for their waives, it is otherwise
wife in the Hebrew מַעְטָא I will visit them for their waies, and so it is I think translated in some of your books, Super vites eijus: I will visit them upon their waies, or visit their waies upon them, so the words are. God hath his days of visitation wherein he will narrowly enquire into the waies of men, and call to Observe an account for sins long before committed; that's the Note from thence. Exod. 32. 34. In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them; I will spare them for the present, but I have a day to visit, and then I will come upon them even for this sin. God spareth sinners now, why? because the day of his visitation is not yet come, but when that is come then look to your old sins; look that now your repentance be thorough, for otherwise you may be spared a while, but when the day of visitation comes then all your old sins shall be call'd over. In some mens visitations of late, the more conscientious men were and godly, the more were they aimed at, and it alwaies went worst with them in their visitations; But it shall be otherwise in this visitation of Gods, God will visit the visitors, and visit them for their visitations, and then as Esa. 10. 3. What will you do in the day of visitation? You knew what to do in the day when you your selves did visit, but what will you do in the day of Gods visitig of you? As Mic. 7. 4. The day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh, now shall be their perplexity. Certainly those visitors did begin to be in perplexitiie, for their day was coming, and we hope their day is yet coming.

But in the day of Gods visitation mens own waies will come upon them; that's the second Note. I will visit their waies upon them. Men may have shifts to put off God for a while, but when God shall visit, then they shall see that all the evil that is come upon them it is from their own waies; And that will be the very torment of the damned in Hell, that they shall clearly see that all the evil that is upon them it is but their own waies. As it is reported of some birds that lime is made out of their dung by which they are taken, so out of the dung of mens sins doth God make his limetwigs to take them withal, that is, the judgment that comes upon them it is no other but their
their own ways, they have procured this unto themselves.

And reward them for their deeds.] The word that is here translated deeds, it signifies Cognitiones, studia, their studies, their thoughts as well as opera, their works: From whence there may be these two Notes, First that God will call men to account for their thoughts; the uncleanness of your thoughts, the vanity of your thoughts, the envy, the malice of your thoughts; you must look to your thoughts, they are not free before God; that's the first point. Then, that studied

Obs. 1. wickedness, thoughtful wickedness is the worst wickedness; when men shall plot wickedness in their thoughts, that is the wickedness that above all wickedness God will come to visit.

And reward them.] There is a great elegancy in these words that in your English you pass over very lightly. Reward them their doings: We know that God will reward every one according to their doings; but I say in the Original in the Hebrew it signifies Redire faciam, I will make to return your doings, that is the propriety and elegancy of the word, I will make your doings return back upon you. From whence there

Obs. is this Note, "Sin passeth away in the act of it with much sweetness, but God will make it return back again in the guilt of it with much bitterness." As Gideon said in Judg. 8. 7. unto the men of Succoth, When I return, (faith he,) I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars; How many men and women have past over the act of their sins very pleasantly, but within a month perhaps or a quarter of a year, or it may be within a year or two or sometime seven years after, God hath made their sin return upon them, and it hath returned as Gideon did return upon the men of Succoth and hath torne them with briars and thorns that they have lien roaring in the anguish of spirit for the horror that hath been upon them for their sins. You sinners that have not returned unto God in the way of repentance, do you expect that all those pleasant delightful sins of yours will one day return upon you and that in a dreadful way.
And from the propriety of this word *Redire faciam*, I will make to return, I may give a hint of a meditation the other way too. Surely the good works of the Saints shall return upon them, return upon them with comfort and peace. It may be you have some troublesome afflictions in the flesh in some works and services you are exercised in, yet know they shall return with abundance of peace and joy. Do not think that what you do for God shall be quite lost and that there is an end of it. If you venture any thing of your estates for a good use in the cause of God, as never since you were born nor since your forefathers were born, that there was a more full opportunity to glorifie God than is at this day; that which is called upon you to venture for the calling in of our brethren the Scots into the Nation, it is such a thing that hath so much in it, such an opportunity of serving God, that you never had nor never are like to have the like so long as you live. For it is not the bringing in of so many men into the Kingdom, but the engaging of a Kingdom for us; and not only an engagement, but the greatest testimony of the goodness of our cause before all the Nations that are about us; for though now the Nations about us know not which part to take there having been such protestations on both sides, but when they shall hear that such a Kingdom that heretofore did carry themselves so loyally though being here in *England* with an Armie yet went away in so much peace, so that the King himself by proclamation declared they are his faithful and good Subjects, when these I say that had such an opportunity in their hands, yet have shewn themselves so loyal and so faithful, shall now engage themselves on one side, certainly this will be a mighty high witness before all the Nations about us, and no question cannot but gain many amongst our selves. Therefore I say, it is the highest and largest and fullest opportunity for the service of God and good of your countrey as ever you or your forefathers had; And though you have done somewhat and much already, yet you never had such an opportunity as this is which you may bless God you are imploied in. And do not think now that what you do
do is quite gone and lost, Oh no, the Lord will make it return, you shall have a good return for it. You that are Merchants are you not willing to venture your stock at Sea upon expectation of a good return? you will venture the winds and waves and seas and venture your servants that may prove unfaithful. You never ventured anything in all your lives that you could have such assurance of a good return as what you venture in such a case as this is. It is not adventures, God will certainly make your good works to return as he will make the doings of the wicked return upon them. It follows.

Verse 10.
For they shall eat and not have enough.
Some would carry these words, They shall still grow worse and worse in eating the sin of my people, and so would refer to the eating of the sin of the people in that sense you heard before, that is, they shall never think they have advantage enough from the sin of the people; they desire the sin of the people for their own advantage, well, they shall eat their sin in that respect, but they shall never have enough, they shall never be satisfied, but still desire that people may sin more and more that they may have more advantage by their sacrifices.

But I rather take it thus, more plainly according to the words, They shall eat and not have enough, howsoever they think to provide for themselves by that which they get in such a base sinful way, yet they shall find no satisfaction unto themselves in it, they shall be deceived. The truth is, if they should find satisfaction, it were a great matter, seeing they shall come to answer for it afterwards; but they shall not only be judged for it afterwards, but for the present they shall find no satisfaction in that that they promised unto themselves satisfaction in, They will get an estate perhaps, get money and get riches this way, and be brave in the world, but I will curse that which they have got. Take goods that are lawfully got yet there is a vanity in them, a vanity in goods got by good means, though we have them we cannot enjoy them except God give us to enjoy them, God is the God of all consolation,
consolation, it is the mercy and goodness of God conveyed thorough creatures that can bring any comfort in the use of them. If a man should think to fill his belly with wind, it were a poor satisfaction; but it were worse if he should open his mouth to fill his belly with air infected with the plague: When thou thinkest to satisfy thy self with goods never so well got, it is but opening thy mouth to the wind, but when thou thinkest to satisfy thy self with goods unlawfully got, it is opening thy mouth to draw in pestilential air, there is no satisfaction there. Eccles. 5. 10. He that desires silver shall not be satisfied with it. Howsoever men think with themselves if they had such an estate what brave lives should they live; but when they have it they find it otherwise. Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be satisfied, but they that hunger and thirst after anything in the world they shall find it to be an empty thing unto them. It is true, there is a kind of satisfaction that God gives sometimes unto wicked men, but it is a cursed satisfaction, a fearful judgment of God. Prov. 14. 14. Wicked men shall be satisfied with their own ways, that is, they shall have enough of them; as when a man will go on in his own ways and he suffers much for it, we say, what have you not enough of it, enough of such a course, so he shall be satisfied, he shall have enough of his ways, that is he shall find such plagues and miseries that follow them as he shall be satisfied, he shall be filled with them. It is spoken of an Apostle, a backslider in heart, one that will apostatise from God and think to provide for himself better in the ways of his Apostasie, he shall be satisfied but it shall be with his own ways.

And they shall commit whoredome and shall not encrease.

If we understand this of bodily whoredom, then the sense must carry it thus, that God will cross them in that, even in the way of their whoredom, they shall commit whoredom and not encrease. You will say what great judgment is that, Whoremasters do not care for encreasing? It is true now whoremasters do not desire encrease, only to satisfy their lusts,
and in this thing they resemble evil and wicked Ministers as much as in any thing; as many Ministers desire only to please the fancies of their Auditors and never look after begetting any unto God; they are like harlots or whoremasters in this, they love to please the fancies of men and their own fancies too, but to get children unto God, that they look not after; as whoremasters & harlots when their lusts are satisfied, they have their ends, for to bring forth, that they care not for. This is now, but in former times, in the time when the Prophet did prophesie, encreasing in a numerous off-spring was a special thing that all gloried in; therefore they sought it any way, not only by marrying many wives, but by their concubines and whores too. But God threatens to send out a curse upon them that they shall not encrease. And for this it is very observable (for you may take it more general) Gods curse upon a man in any thing he undertakes unlawfully, he can never expect to prosper in it; that is the Note from it, Whatever a man undertakes unlawfully he can never expect to prosper in it. And that is very observable for this one particular concerning Solomon, you know he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, a thousand in all, yet we reade but of one son that Solomon left behind him, and that son was but a foolish son neither, Rehoboam, whom the Scripture calls a child when he was above forty years old, 2 Chron. 13. 7. When Rehoboam was young and tender hearted, he had a childish foolish heart though a rugged and churlish heart. Solomon was not blessed with a numerous progeny notwithstanding he gave himself liberty to satisfy his flesh so much as he did. But on the other side, of all the fathers in the old Testament we reade of Isaac from whom came the promised seed that were to be as the stars of Heaven and as the sand of the sea shore for number, yet he had but one wife, he took not that course that many of the Patriarches did to marry many wives, but contented himself with one wife and yet from him came the promised seed so many as the stars and the sand for number. From which we may infer that it is the best way for us to keep to Gods Ordinances, we shall prosper more in what we would have.
have, to keep to God's ways than to go out into our own sinful ways.

They shall not increase] The words are read otherwise by some. Hierom
Hierom hath this Note upon it, they have committed whoredom and have not cease, so he reads it, his note upon it is this (I think that which hath been delivered unto you is the main scope, but I will only present what he notes upon it, and it is of good use) that he, they have committed fornication & whoredom till they have spent all their strength yet they have not ceased, their hearts are still that way; just as it is with many old whoremasters they have committed whoredome and spent their strength in their young time, yet they cease not, they have unclean hearts, their lusts boil within them notwithstanding their strength is spent. And if you read the words so and then either take it for bodily or spiritual whoredom, they have committed whoredom and have not cease, that is, they still go on and on in the ways of Idolatry, Idolaters seldom come in and return.

Tarnovius he hath another expression in the reading of it, Non per rumpant eximent legibus aut panis, they shall not break forth, for so the word in the Hebrew doth well carry it, that is, they think to take liberty in their whoredom and idolatry, they break forth from God's Laws and punishments and think still to escape Laws and punishments, to break forth from all bonds whatsoever, no faith God, they shall not break forth, God will lay fetters upon them that they shall not break forth. But I take the first to be the more special, and so we shall leave that expression, they shall commit whoredom and shall not increase. Why?

Because they have left off to take heed to the Lord.

There is a great deal of elegancy in this expression. They have left the Lord to take heed (so you may read the words, ad custodiendum) to keep themselves within any bounds of the Commandement of God. They run wild (as if the Prophet should say) and have left off to take heed of God or any of his ways. Perhaps they have not left the Lord wholly, for they will worship God in some external ways of worship.
worship, but God cares not for that; they have left the Lord in this to take heed of him. Though we think to follow the Lord in any external duties, if we leave to take heed of God in all his ways, he takes no notice of it: that may be one Note.

But the special thing is this, [They have left off to take heed to the Lord.] At first though temptation may prevail against a man, yet the Truth of God will be working in his conscience (I speak to one enlightened and a professor of Religion, as these were) Though at first a temptation prevail against a professor of Religion, yet he having an enlightened conscience the Truth of God will be working still in his conscience and in his heart; but now if he still give way to that lust, at length his lust will so far prevail as that he will wholly leave minding and regarding that Truth of God that is against his sin and give himself fully up unto the ways of his own heart; and this man's condition is very dangerous. Oh take heed of this, take heed of this not taking heed; you that begin to decline and you find some secret lust prevailing in your heart; wel, yet you have the Truth of God boiling and bubbling in your hearts and will not let you go on quietly, but yet your lusters strive against that truth, well, if this lust be not mortified, if you give way to it that it continue a while, you will come to be weary of that truth that is against that lust and you will turn your eyes from it, and you will leave off to take heed further to think of that which should make against your sin; and when you are come to this pass your condition is very dangerous.

They have left off to take heed.] The way to keep the heart and life in order, in ways of obedience, it is, to take heed to the Lord, that is the special Note, to take heed to the infinite glorious blessed Majesty of the holy and great God, to mind God in his sovereignty, in his authority, in that infinite worthiness that is in him of all obedience from all his creatures, to look upon God the only Jehovah, the high and eternal God: This is the way to keep our hearts and lives in order, to take heed of God thus, to have God in our thoughts and hearts and to heed him diligently and his ways.
But yet there is a further note from hence and that is especially intended. The evil that they are accused of is, *That they did leave off to take heed of God in point of worship,* for that is the thing that God especially charged them for, that they did corrupt his worship, and they did leave off to take heed of God in things of his worship, that is thus, that kind of worship that they thought to be most suitable to their own reason and politick ends, that worship they set up; but now to take heed to God for the rule of worship, to look up unto God, that whatsoever they had in his worship should be ac-

Obser. cording to the rule he setteth, that they left off, they minded that no more now but altogether what was suitable to their own ends. And that is an evil thing in any Kingdom that men should leave off so to take heed; as it is almost come to that now. I make no question at first but that for the go-

vernment of the Church the primitive Christians had a speci-
al eye to the rule, to Apostolical institution, but it is come to pass I know not how, it is almost a general conclusion a-
mongst men, yea amongst good men, amongst Divines and good Divines, that we can scarce have a rule, a rule of insti-
tution, they think it needs not at all, and we can find no such thing at all in the word, and so they have quite left off so much as to examin things in the word: I say they have done so. It is an evil thing for any in matters that concern the worship of God not to take heed of Gods word in it: Though in civil things we are left to prudence and reason, but when we come to matter of worship we must take heed to the word, in every particular that is properly Eclefiastical, that is pro-

perly Church-work, we must I say in every thing take heed to the Word of God. It is a notable expression that Luther hath about this, It is not faith he so much in Religion to look at what is the thing as who commands it; and he citeeth Seneca, Seneca faith he gives this rule, observe not who commandeth but what is commanded, but in the Church and in Religion it is to be turned quite another way, it is not so much Quid but Quis and Qualis and Quantus, but the Devil faith he changeth this into quid quale quantum, that is, he change thor
this who, and what manner of person, and how great a one commandeth; into this; what, what manner, and how great a thing. So that this is the reason why many despise some Ordinances in the Church, why what great matters are there in these things? So they look to the thing and not to the institution; whereas did we look to Christ the Institutor which we should do, we should look more to the institution than unto the thing itself. Let the thing commanded be never so low and poor, never so mean in itself, yet the institution must be honored. Take heed to God especially in the point of worship. So we have done with the tenth verse. It follows.

Verse 11.
Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

Still the holy Ghost envieth especially against the Priests; for their whordom, their wine and new wine did take away their hearts. Take away, The words are translated diversly, either Take the heart, or, Take away the heart.

Take the heart. So I find some turn it, and there is a good sense of it, that is, these lusts do take possession of their hearts. It is one thing for a man to be overtaken with a lust, and another thing for a lust to take a man. It is said of the godly that they are overtaken, but it is said of these that their lusts take them; but now when it comes to this that you do not only yeild to a temptation but a temptation takes you, when you are taken captive, whoredom and wine they have taken their hearts. So some.

But I rather think the other more proper, these lusts take away the heart. It is true, of any one lust there is not one lust harboured in the heart of a man but in time it will take away his heart, will eat out all the juice and strength and vigor of any thing that is in him. That is the reason that many professors grow so sapless, so heavy, so dull, so dead in the way of Religion, there is some secret lust or other that they have a haunt after and that doth take away their hearts, that now their hearts are like to dead beer, all their
their spirit and life is quite gone and their lust hath eaten it out; And that man is in a sad condition whose vigor and strength is gone and eaten out by some lust in his heart.

But to speak of these lusts as they are here set forth unto us, these two sins, whoredom and drunkenness. I shall not speak of the nature of the sins, I have spoken somewhat of that in the beginning of the Chapter, but I shall only speak of them in the expreßion of the holy Ghost here, to shew you a little how these take away the heart.

First, For both the sins in general, as they are sins of sensuality, joyning them both together. Only one Note first from the connexion, they left off to take heed of God in point of his worship, now it seems they are left to the sins of whoredom and drunkenness; the Note therefore is, It is just with God that they that will not seek to satisfy their souls in himself they shall be given over to base filthy delights of the flesh, that they shall never have any other comforts but those. Let them have those comforts faith God, there is all the comfort that ever they shall find. So we reade in Rom. 1. that when they did not glorifie God as God he gave them up unto unnatural affections and unclean sins.

Sensuality it is a besetting sin (that is the Note) sensuality either in whoredom or intemperancy in drinking. You know how it took away the heart of Solomon (who was so wise) as neffe. that his wives did trun away his heart from God, and turned him to Idolatry. And so it did Sampson who was so strong, when Delilah had first taken his heart then she took away his heart, for you know in the story though she sought his destruction many times, he saw it apparently that she sought his life, to give him up into the hands of the Philistines, yet for all this Sampson's heart could not be taken off from Delilah. The Scripture speaks of the sin of lust for this most fully. Prov. 2.19. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life; None that go unto the whore returneth, or as some would read it interrogatively, do any return that go unto her? It is a rare thing for any one to return whose heart is taken with a whore, or ever to enter into the paths of life.

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The holy Ghost speaks this, make of it what you will. And again 2 Pet. 2.14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; when as eyes come to be full of adultery they cannot cease from sin; their hearts are so taken off from all good. And Prov. 23.27 A whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit; It is hard to get out of a deep ditch, especially if the mouth be narrow too; those that are got in there are like to Jeremiah that was put in the dungeon where there was no water but filth and mire so that he sunk in the mire; and except the Lord send from Heaven long cords of his mercy, it is unlike they should ever come out but they must die and perish, and how many thousands do die and perish? Nothing ever deaded David's heart more than that sin of adultery; Psalm 51. he cries out Obey establish me with thy free Spirit, as if he should say, Lord I was wont to have more power over temptation, but now I am weak and quickly overcome, Lord establish me. And as the sin of uncleanness takes the heart away from God and from truth, therefore in that place of Peter verse 18. the professors were allured thorough the lusts of the flesh unto much wantonness, even such as had escaped, vertually escaped the pollutions of the world and from them who live in error: So drunkenness, that likewise takes away the heart, wine takes away the heart exceedingly. When Solomon gave himself to wine, he took hold of folly at that time, Eccles. 2.3. though somewhat of his wisdom remained, yet wine took away his heart in a great measure. He gave himself liberty (as appeareth by that Scripture, though we read not of drunkenness) yet he gave himself liberty to satisfy himself with wine and then he took hold on folly. Those that give themselves liberty in drinking wine and strong drink they are besotted in their very parts, as you know by experience, they are as a snuff of a candle in a sconce, drowned in the tallow, a while since it gave a good light over the room, but now being even drowned in the tallow there is nothing left but a little smoke and a flinking snuff and little or no light remaining; so manie men when they were young were like a candle upon the table that gave light to
to all about them, but now having given themselves up to the satisfaction of that filthy and vile lust of drinking, all their parts are become like a snuff of a candle in the socket, almost drowned in the tallow. Or rather they are become as a quagmire, we know if the husband man should sow never such precious seed in a quagmire, what fruit will it bring forth? 

*au*stin hath this expression, just as when the ground hath too much rain it grows miery and dirty and is not fit for seed, so do those that indulge themselves in drink. Therefore in Ezek. 47. 11. it is said the waters of the Sanctuary did not heal the miery places and the marishes, miery hearts are seldom healed by the waters of the Sanctuary. *Basil* in a Sermon of his upon intemperancy, makes drunkenness as the Idols spoken of in the Psalms, that have ears and hear not, and eyes and see not, and feet and walk not, it takes away their standing and their understanding likewise, their very parts are taken away and they are left at liberty unto all kind of wickedness. How many are there that were excellent when they were young, yet being taken with that lust, how are they grown like *Esau* that sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, so these will sell Heaven for a cup of wine; yea they are more prophane than *Esau*, for he was in a straight, he came out of the field and he was very hungry and he thought he should die if he had not the pottage, so that he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage out of a kind of necessity, which he might plead; but these will sell their souls and Heaven and all meekly to please that humor, that lust, venture the health of their bodies, the consuming of their estates, the loss of their friends, the shaming of themselves, the ruin of their names and the damnation of their souls and all for a little drink. Oh how doth this befot men that otherwise have excellent parts!

Well, But these two are applied here unto the Priests, and so we must make use of them especially. That whoredom and wine and new wine did take away their hearts, for these Priests (as before we have heard) they did reject the knowledge of God, and so left off the work they were appointed to do, to instruct the people, therefore the people were brought up in
ignorance; now they leaving their office, their duty that they should perform in the place they were set in, they gave themselves up to sensuality, to whoredom and to wine. From hence this may be the note, "That Ministers when they are negligent in preaching usually they grow sensual. We find it so in experience, we need not go about to prove it. Have there not been many that in their younger time have been forward preachers, and when they have gotten livings and preferment, never minded their study and preaching any longer, but gave themselves to satisfy the flesh in uncleanness and filthy lusts and grew to drinking? do we not know some that have had excellent parts when they were young and having gotten preferment fell to drinking and uncleanness? People are but in an evil case when they have such Ministers. Est. 56. 9. Ye beasts of the field come to devour, yea all ye beasts of the forest, what is the matter? the verse shews what kind of Priests and Prophets they had, Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day and much more abundant; such kind of Priests they had, and then all ye beasts of the field come to devour, you lie open to all kind of misery. Paul would have Timothy when he was weak drink a little wine for his stomachs sake and often infirmity; he good man out of conscience it seems would drink but water, though he were but a weak young man, yet for fear least it might do hurt he would drink but water till he had a commission from Paul; he was fain to exhort him to drink wine and yet it was but a little, drink a little wine. Oh those in publique places especially should take heed of intemperancy. I have read of some Heathens that they have made it death for a King or a Magistrate to be drunk. It follows.

Verse 12.

My people ask counsel at their flocks, and their staff declareth unto them.

There is a little more difficultie in these words than in the former. Only first from the connection there is this useful Note,
Note, "That bodily and spiritual whoredom use to go togeth-er. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart, and then, they ask counsel at their stocks and their staff declareth unto them. First they are befotted with these lusts and then they fall to the most gross waies of Idolatry, for these words in this verse seem to express the most gross and stupid Idolatry that ever was in the world, to ask counsel of their stocks, and their staff to declare unto them; but when they had given up themselves to the lusts of their hearts then they grew most fottish in their way of Idolatry. "Therefore we are not to mer. Use, "vail though men that seem to be men of understanding yet "will worship stocks and stones, as your Papists; why? they "give themselves up to their lusts and then they grow to be "lots, and the most gross Idolatry in the world will go down "then. I remember I have read of one that saw one go to Mafs and presently after go to a house hard by where a whore was, he hath this speech upon it: A lpanari missam tantum esse passum: that is, there is but one step from the Mafs to a whorehouse. Spiritual whoredom and bodily go together, their hearts are taken away by their whoredom, and they ask counsel at their stocks. Jewel in his Apologie relates this that by very credible report search being made in the year 1565, for harlots belonging to the Jews in Rome, there was found in Rome to the number of 28, thousand women of that sort. Thus bodily and spiritual whoredom you see how they go together; 28, thousand of such kind of women found in one City, in that City which we know is called the City of whore-doms, it is not only in regard of spiritual whoredom, Idolat-ry, but of bodily whoredom likewise, for those two as I said usually go together.

Now for opening this, They ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff doth teach them. Their stocks,] That is their Images, God puts that contemptible name upon them; they ask counsel of them. And that is to be observed too, My people, there is the emphasis; Mine by profession, not wholly cast off yet, yet these ask counsel at their stocks, their Images, which perhaps they beautified with
with Silver and Gold, yet God calls them their flocks.

And their staff teacheth them.] Here is a peculiar way of Idolatry to be taught by their staff. Vatablus and others interpret it thus, their false Prophet upon which they leaned as upon a staff, and so they they think by staff here is meant their false Prophets. But I rather think it is to be meant literally.

There was a kind of Idolatry which the Jews had and likewise the Romans after this, a way to ask counsel by the staff, which the Prophet here charged them with, which they call'd ăsămavriti or ĕsămavriti Divination ex virgis, divination by rods, or flicks, or arrows, or staves; And there were four waies by which they did divine by these. The first was to put arrows or staves into a close thing having the names written upon them of what they divined about, and then drawing out one or two, according to what they found written upon the staves they determined any business; thus their staff declared to them either good or bad; And thus Nebuchadnezzar seemed to do Ezek. 21. 22. there Interpreters shew that the business was, that Nebuchadnezzar being in doubt whether he should war against Philadelphia or against Jerusalem he took two arrows and wrote the name of Jerusalem on the one and Philadelphia on the other and so came to divine which way he should go. And this is the first way of declaring by the staff.

A second was by casting up staves or arrows into the air, and according as they did fall, on the right hand or on the left, before or behind, so they did divine their good luck or their ill luck as they call'd it. A third way was this, they used to peel off the bark of some part of a stick and then cast it up and divined according to which part of the pith either black or white appeared first. A fourth was (which we find in the Roman antiquities) that their Augures or South-sayers used to fit upon the top of a Tower or Castle, and the air being very clear and fair without any clouds, having a crooked staff in their hand which the Latines call Lituus, there they quartered out the regions of Heaven, so much as was for their purpose, when they had quarter'd them out they did reach forth this staff (having first offered sacrifices and prayers to their gods)
upon the head of a person or a thing they would divine for, and so they came to have good or ill luck to be shewed according to what at that time they observed in the Heavens, the birds flying &c. when that staff was upon the head of the party. This the Romans did, and it is like they had it somewhat from the Jews, they did ask counsel of their staff.

By all this we may see what poor waises Idolaters have had to know the mind of their gods. When men forsake the right way of knowledge of God's mind, what poor waises do they go to know the mind of God. Oh by this how should our hearts be raised up to bless God that we have such a way to know his mind, that we have his Word, that we have his Son that come out of his bosom to declare the eternal counsel of his father unto us. These are the poor waises that Idolaters have to know the mind of their gods.

Now follows the ground of all: For the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to er, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.

For the spirit of whoredoms] Some would have it thus, that look as there are particular sins, so there are particular Devils to attend upon them; As there is a devil especially to attend upon Idolatry, another to attend upon whoredom, another upon drunkennes, another upon envy, another upon pride, another upon passion and the like; and so the spirit of whoredom that is (say they) that devil that especially attended upon this sin caused them to er. But I think this not to be the scope, but this rather, the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to er, the spirit, that is, that impetus of spirit that was in them, there is an impetus an ardency, a vigour, an activity of their spirits to such a kind of sinful way, it is that which hath carried them on and caused them to er. The Scripture oft speaks of several sorts of spirits, as sometimes the spirit of perverseness, Esa. 19. 14. it is translated in your books, a perverse spirit, but the words are Spiritus pervertitatum, a spirit of perverseness, there is an impetus of spirit that hath caused Egypt to er in every work thereof. So the spirit of uncleanness Zech. 13. 2. it is translated in your books the unclean spirit, but it is.
sitelements or uncleanness, the spirit of lying, 1 King. 22. 22. the spirit of error, 1 John. 4. 6. He that knoweth God heareth him, by that is not of God heareth not us, hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, that is, there is an impetus, a strength of spirit that carries men on unto such an erronious way. And the consideration of that will be of marvelious use unto us. Let us look to our spirits my brethren, and consider what spirit we are of, especially when we are carried with an impetus of spirit to a thing, that is, when we find an eagerness of spirit that way, to such a thing we would fain have, let us then take heed to our selves: when you find I say your spirits very eagerly and strongly set upon such a thing, examine then what spirit you are of, that it be not a spirit of lust, of envy, of malice, as sometimes there is in mens hearts when they are carried with a more than ordinary strength after such a way. There is many people when they find themselves carried on with such an impetus, ardency, and fervency, they cannot endure that any body should cross them in it, no, but they must have it; As they in Samuel that would have a King, when they heard all the reasons that could be to persuade them against it, they would not answere one reason but held to their conclusion, No, but we will have a King, say they. So a man that hath a spirit of such an evil, a spirit of envy, a spirit of error, a spirit of Antichrist in him, a spirit of domineering in him, a spirit of crueltie, a spirit of bitterness in him, first he will rest upon such a thing without examining of it, and further, if there come any thing against it, any truth, he flights it presently and calls it off and thinks there is nothing in it, why? because he hath a spirit that carries him that way, and if the truth come more strongly that he is convinced by it, yet he hath a spirit that carries him on, and though he meet with many difficulties in the way he will break through them all. Oh it is a dangerous thing when men have a spirit of error, or a spirit of bitterness. You shall find some men that have much remaining of Antichristianisme in them, do but speak to them of any thing that concerns an Ordinance of Christ, of Christ's institution, of the will of Christ in the word,
word, as soon as it is but mentioned, you shall not hear any answer to the argument, but you may perceive a spirit of bitterness, a spirit of envy, a spirit of frowardness and passion presently to rise in them. So in other things you shall find men, and some that have good things in them, that if you do but discourse with them of some things that you know are according unto the mind of Christ, yet they have been brought up otherwise and have drunk in other principles, and they have a spirit of bitterness and anger and vexation that presently will appear in them to call off any truth that is suggested unto them.

But let us labour on the other side rather to be acted by the Spirit of God, the Children of God are led by the spirit. And it is true, the Saints of God have a Spirit of holiness in them, as wicked men have a spirit of uncleanliness in them; so Gods children are carried on with a spirit of holiness, the love of Christ hath taken hold of their hearts, and perhaps they are weak and cannot reason out the case with some subtill Sophisters, but they have the Spirit of Christ, an Impetus of spirit that carries them on. But take heed, the Spirit of Christ is joyned with much humility and holiness; do not say you are carried with the Spirit of Christ and yet bitterness and pride is mixed with it; but if there be humility and holiness, then perhaps though you cannot answer every objection of every Sophitter yet there is the Spirit of Christ in you; that as wicked men have a byas upon their hearts that swaies their judgment, so the godly have a byas upon their hearts, the truth and love of God doth byas their hearts and carries them on with strength in the ways of God; as the poor man, the Martyr that said, I cannot dispute for the truth, but I can die for it; There was such a spirit of love in him unto Jesus Christ that carried him on and made him favour and relish holy things though he could not dispute for them.

We are to pray unto God that he would satifie us not only in body and in soul but in spirit, that that Impetus of spirit may be sanctified, for great things depend upon that Impetus, that force, that activeness of our spirits; almost all things
things in the world they are carried by the Impetus of mens spirits. Hence is the reason that men that are very wicked, yet come to them upon their death beds, then they will hearken to what you will say and they will hear reason, why? because then their afflication doth abate the Impetus of their spirit, the activeness and fervour and keeness of their spirit, and do but take off the Impetus and keeness of ones spirit and you may say any thing unto him. They have a spirit of whoredoms.

And they are gone a whoring from under their God.] Drusius turns it thus, by a Paraphrase, they have cast off the yoke of God. In the Hebrew if it should be read word for word it is, a sub Deos suo, from under his God, much according to our English.

And it notes these two things.

First, They have gone from under the command of God. The pride of their hearts refused to be under the command of God, especially in his worship. Oh my brethren this is that we should look to, we should look to God above us, and be willing that God should be above us, and be willing to lie under God, be willing to lie under the command of God, the authority of God, especially in his worship. Take heed of the rising of your thoughts in the matter of Gods worship.

Secondly, They are gone a whoring from under their God] that is, from under the protection of their God. From under the command of their God and from under the protection of their God. As whores, so long as they will keep themselves under their husbands in duty and subject that is due, then they are under the protection of their husbands, but some whores will go from under their husbands, and from under their commands, they are too good to be under their laws and commands, and so they refuse to be under their protection. So do my people faith God, they will be from under my commands and so they are from under my protection. Hence there are these two Notes.

First, That all false worship (so far as it is false worship) doth put a people from under the protection of God. No marvel that miseries.
Serie do befall a people that corrupt the worship of God. Oh we were in a sad case not long since, we were even from under the protection of God, things ran on at riot with us, and because the people of this land have not yet hearts to entertain the true worship of God, we may fear left we should not have the protection of God as we desire. Would we have the protection of God? then keep close to the rule of his worship.

The second is this, To be from under God's command and from under his protection are joined together, so far as from under God's command so far from under God's protection. You would fain have liberty to your selves, you will not be under God's command, you shall have liberty but not God's protection, and what good have you in that? In any way of sin, when you go abroad and are in any sinful act, you are in that act from under God's command and from under his protection too. But now the protection of God is over us when we are in his waies. Keep close to God's commands and whatever trouble befals you yet still you are under God's protection. The difference that is between a man that is under the command of God and will keep himself close to that, and another that will have liberty, is as a Deer in a Park, so long as it is within the pale it is under the care of the keeper, that there shall no dogs or anything come to do it hurt, and if it should be snowy weather that there is no grass to be got, the keeper provides for it; but if the Deer will go from within the pale and get out, it is true it hath more liberty, but then every dog follows it, and it is subject to a thousand dangers more than it was within the pale. So it is with a man that is willing to be within the pale of God's command, to be under God's command, there he hath God's protection, to look to him, to provide for him, but if he will not have more liberty to get from within the pale, let him never expect the protection of God in that thing. Oh that those that are gone astray from God would observe this! It may be some here their consciences tell them that they are got from under God's commands, there was a time that they trembled at God's word, at his commands, and their hearts fell
fell down under the dreadful authority of those commands, then it was well with them, but now you have got from under this, you do not fear God's word as you were wont to do, you will not tremble at his commands as you were wont, now you run wilde and frisk about in your own waies; Oh poor creature whither art thou gone? thou art got from under the protection of the Lord.

Verse 13.
They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills under Oaks, and Poplars, and Elms, because the shadow thereof is good; therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

In the former verse the Prophet in the Name of God had charged Israel for having the spirit of fornication, and accused them for going a whoring from under their God, And now shews to them wherein, and in what particular. "General accusations without particular specification will not prevail with stubborn hearts. Above all Idolaters must be convinced wherein they have committed Idolatry." They will stand it out exceedingly if you charge them only with Idolatry in general, of going a whoring from God, except you demonstrate wherein. It is so with many sinners: Mal. 1. 6. Ye have despised me, and yet you say, wherein have we despised thee? verse 7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, and yet you say, wherein have we polluted thee? Stubborn hearts will stand it out with God a great while until it be shewn in particular wherein they have done such and such evils. And it is wisdom therefore for all Gods Ministers not to leave things in general, but if they would have their Ministry a convincing Ministry they must not only charge people that they are wicked and naught in general, but they must instance. Instancing preaching it is the most convincing preaching.

Now the Prophet doth instance in that kind of Idolatry that seems to have the most specious shew and fairest intention of any thing in the world, and one would have thought that
there should have been as little evil in that which he instanceth in as in any thing we can imagine. Why what great matter is it they might say? You accuse us for going a whoring from under our God, what is the matter? we offer sacrifice upon mountains, we sacrifice under trees, is that so great a matter? It is sacrifice, and you cannot say but we sacrifice to the true God, we do not sacrifice to Idols, why do we go a whoring from God then? Nay the shew of this is very specious that they should sacrifice thus upon mountains and under trees, in this they seem to be more devout than Judah was; the people of Judah they sacrificed only in one place, they sacrificed only in a Temple, and did as it were confine and limit God to that place, and they sacrificed only upon one Altar; Now say they, we think God worthy of a great deal more than so, we think it is fit to sacrifice unto him every where, in every place, and especially upon mountains; for it is to the high God that we sacrifice, therefore we go to mountains to express the high esteem we have of God. Just as the Papists at this Papists day, they will have their Images in every place and their Crosses in every high way as they travail, that by them they may be put in mind of God continually. What a specious shew is this? Yet the Lord by the Prophet chargeth them with going a whoring from under their God, and he instanceth in this which they thought they had most plea for.

From whence we may note first, *Whatchever seems to be most* Obs. 1 *specious in our eyes, yet if it be not according to the rule, it may prove most abominable in the eyes of God.* And,

Secondly, *That for a thorough conviction of people in their sin,* Obs. 2 *Ministers should especially labour to present to them the foulness of those things that they think have least evil in them.* To come to people and to cry out of notorious wickedness that they themselves cannot but acknowledge to be notorious, this will never so convince as thoroughly to humble: but to come and close with them and to open the evil of their ways in those things that they bless themselves most in, and shew how they make themselves abominable unto God even in those things, that is the way to have our Ministry a convincing & an humbling
bling Ministry indeed. Thus the Prophet doth, you sacrifice upon the mountains and high places and under the shadow of every tree. Hierom upon this place hath this Note, Israel, faith he, loveth high places, for they have forsaken the high God, and they love the shadow, for they have left the substance. It is thus with men, ordinarily when they have left the high God, forsaken him, then they have somewhat or other that they set up high in their hearts; they forsake the shadow of the wings of God and then they seek after vain shadows to be their protector.

But to open this Scripture yet more clearly, to shew wherein their sin lay here, that they sacrificed upon the mountains and hills and under trees. For that, we are to know that in former times before the Ark and the Tabernacle and the Temple was built, it was lawful to sacrifice in any place, and God approved of sacrificing in mountains, and did direct Abraham to go and sacrifice his son upon a mountain, upon Moriah, Gen. 22. 2. And we reade of Abrahams planting a grove when he called upon the name of God, Gen. 21. 33. So that the forefathers did sacrifice upon mountains, and they planted groves and trees by the places where they sacrificed; there was no hurt then in such things. But afterward God prohibiteth this, Deut. 12. 13. 14. Take heed to thy self that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest, but in the place which the Lord shall chuse in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings. God would limit them the place of his worship. When the Ark was made and the Tabernacle they were bound to come to that and sacrifice there and no where else, and so when the Temple was built they were bound to come thither and to sacrifice there and no where else. Yea then the Lord commanded them to pull down the high places, and to cut down the groves and trees, Deut. 12. 2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the Nations which ye possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree. When once God had appointed a place of worship then they were to destroy the other places where the Heathens were wont to worship their gods.
The Note is this from it, *When once God chooseth places or things, when God once putteth a stamp of holiness upon places or things, then no men may choose places or things and put such a stamp of holiness upon them as God hath put.* If God appointeth a way of worship of his own, this stops us from all other of our own. If God makes a place holy, this stops us that we must never make any place holy but that; so it is true of things, of ceremonies, anything, if once God sets a stamp upon a thing to make it holy, we must confine our selves to that, and not think to imitate God in it, to make anything of the same kind to be holy as God hath done. It was now a sin for them, and God stands much upon circumstances we see in his worship. You shall have many men plead why should men be so strict and scrupulous to stand upon circumstances? what must we have every circumstance in the word of God commanded? My brethren, that which is natural and moral and may be subservient to religious things, may be left (it's true) unto prudence, but whatsoever hath any Religion in it, though it be but a circumstance, God stands much upon it, and we must have a Divine rule for it. "Natural circumstances, moral, civil, circumstances, prudence is enough to guide us in, but any religious circumstance we must have a rule for it." Here they are not accused for sacrificing the things they ought not to sacrifice, no question but they offered these sacrifices which they were commanded, sheep and beves and the like, but only in the circumstance of place, they did not sacrifice where God would have them sacrifice, therefore God charged them in this thing that they went a whoring from under their God. It is true, we read sometime of some godly men sacrificing else where, Gideon under an Oak, Judg. 6. and Samuel upon an high place, 1 Sam. 2. and so David in the threshing floor of Araunah, 2 Sam. 24. Now to all these instances the answer generally is given by Divines, that they could not be any way lawful for them to do thus but by some special dispensation of God himself, some special revelation from God to give them order to do it there or else it could not but be a sin. For the Kings of Israel and Judah they also are charged...
Chap. 4. An Exposition of Ver. 13.

for their sacrificing in the high places; Even Solomon himself in 1 Kings. 3. 3. where when he is commended for loving the Lord and walking in the Statutes of David his father at first, yet the text saith, "Only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places." And amongst other high places we read in 2 Chron. 1. 2. that Solomon went to Gibeaon, that was a great high place. And though some excuse him because it is said the Tabernacle was there therefore he might go to Gibeaon that great high place to sacrifice; yet for all that Austin in his Questions upon Judges he thinketh Solomon is to be blamed though the Tabernacle was there, for he it seems sacrificed in other high places besides, and though the Tabernacle was there yet it seems he put a more than ordinary respect upon that high place, wherefore else is it called the great high place? And he went there not only for the sake of the Tabernacle, but because it was that great high place, therefore he is to be blamed. So that we may go to God's Ordinances, but if we do go to the Ordinances of God where yet there are other mixtures, and we do the rather go and esteem of them because there is some addition of man's inventions, this is a sin against God. And further, this is observable, though Solomon were blamable for going unto that high place though the Tabernacle were there, having some more than ordinary respect unto that high place, yet we find that God revealed himself unto Solomon in a wonderful gracious manner even in that place, and bad Solomon ask what he would. Solomon had very gracious manifestations of God unto him when he went to that high place though there was evil in it and he put more respect upon it than he should: So certainly many of God's people have found God so far indulge them that though sometimes they have been in the use of Ordinances wherein hath been such mixtures as they have sinned against God, that Ordinance hath been polluted unto them by those mixtures, yet the Lord hath been so gracious unto them that he hath accepted of the uprightness of their hearts, and they have had many sweet manifestations of God unto them even in these Ordinances: they can remember those times when they have been at Sacrament, and they
have known how they offended against God by reason of some pollutions, yet they have found for all this God letting out of abundance of mercy unto them, refreshing their souls with comfort and joy in the holy Ghost. This was Gods mercy. Do not you think therefore that there was no evil in it because God let out himself so far unto you? There was evil in Solomons respecting this high place so much, yet God let out himself abundantly unto him. Other Kings there were that are exceedingly blamed that they did not take down the high places, which were all one with these mountains here spoken of.

Yet there were some of the Kings that were very careful in this thing, As amongst the rest Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat. Hezekiah in 2 King. 18. 22. where he is charged by Rabshakeh for taking down the high places, Is it not he that hath destroyed the high places and Altars of God faith he? God approveth of it well though Rabshakeh thinks he hath done ill; Oh faith he, Hezekiah, do you trust in him? he hath taken down the high places. He thought that Hezekiah had been an enemy unto Religion and to the worship of God for taking down the high places. Thus it is with ignorant people at this day that do not know the way of God's worship; because some in authority (as the Parliament) seek to take away corruption in the Parliam worship of God, abundance of people cry out that they are enemies unto all Religion, that they will take away all Religion. Thus it is reported by your countrey people that dwell far off, as in Wales and in other places, the people are there persuaded that the Parliament are a company of vile men that seek to take away all Religion out of the Kingdom. But this is so but in the understanding of a Rabshakeh that thinks the taking away of high places to be the taking away of Religion.

The other King is Jehoshaphat that is commended for taking away the high places, and it is noted of him, that his heart was lifted up more than ordinary in the ways of God when he did it; For this sacrificing upon the high places was such a thing that the people were so set upon it, what say they, is it not a brave decent thing that we should go up to a high place
to offer unto the high God? therefore when Jehosabhat took them away the text faith, his heart was lifted up in a more than ordinary manner. So it should be with Governours when they see corruptions in God's worship, though the people stick close to them, yet they should have their hearts lifted up with courage and zeal to go on in the work. In 2 Chron. 17. 6. there you have it, His heart was lifted up in the waies of God, Moreover he took the high places and groves out of Judah. Here is two things that Israel is charged for, the high places, and the groves, Jehosabhat took away, and he took them away out of Judah. He was of a lift up mind and his heart took boldness for the waies of God, so the old Latine hath it. But mark, what course, what way did Jehosabhat take to remove the high places and the groves? In the 7. verse of that chapter you find this, He sent to his Princes to teach in the Cities of Judah. Mark here, Princes are become Preachers; He sent to his Princes to teach in the Cities of Judah, and with them Levites and Priests, and they taught in Judah, and had the book of the Law with them, and they went about all the Cities of Judah and taught the people. This is the course to take them away. If he had only by an Edict removed them he could not have done so much, but he took this wise course, he sent faithful Preachers thoroughout all the Countrey, in all the great Cities especially. He was careful they should have faithful Preachers and then the work would be easily done. So that it appears it was because of the ill Preachers they 'had before or because they had no Preachers at all that the high places were so hard to be taken away. How easie would it be in England at this day to make a Reformation, to take away corruptions from the worship of God, if in all Cities and Towns there were faithful Preachers! For we see apparently that people that have been brought up in ignorance they stick most to these things. Let a faithful Minister come into a Congregation and take pains, so that the people may see and be convinced that he takes pains, and expound the Scripture unto them, they will begin to confess we get more by this than by all the reading of prayers all this while, and this is more painful to the Minister. They
They would I say be convinced of this if they had teaching. This was Jehosaphats way, and Oh how happy were it if we took the same course? But there is one thing more observable it is said in this 7. chapter that Jehosaphat took away the high places; but in Chap. 20. ver. 33. it is said he took them not away; but how is it? It is put upon the people, the text faith, with

The high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not prepared their heart unto the God of their fathers. The people were the cause. Now for the reconciling of these two places, it seems Jehosaphat did what lay in him, in chap. 17. therefore God accounts it as being done for his part, but because when he had done what he could yet the people were so stubborn and stout and would not yield to the command of the King, therefore in this 20. Chapter it is all layed upon the people; As if God should say, they were not taken away because the people had not prepared their hearts, but as for Jehosaphat he did what lay in him for the taking them away. God will accept of the intention of Governours, Let them do what they can in it and if it be not done the fault will lie where the cause is.

You may see by this that people may hinder the work of Reformation much, their hearts were not prepared, that is, they were not fit to receive such instructions as were sent unto them. And truly in England many people are not yet prepared to receive the work of Reformation. We never read (that is observable too) of any difficulty of any of the Kings either of Judah or Israel to bring in any false worship, observe it in all the stories of the Kings or Chronicles when there was any King that would bring in any false worship there was never any difficulty in it; But when good Kings did seek to bring in true worship and to call out false, it was too difficult a work for them. Thus mens hearts do cleave more to false worship than they do to true.

And this is one thing further observable for the high places, that it is not said here in the Text only that they sacrificed upon the Mountains, but upon the top of the mountains. There are two things very observable from hence.
First, It note the publickness of their way of Idolatry. They would not do it in a corner, in a hole, but they would go to the mountains, to the top of the mountains and were not ashamed. Idolatry is brazen faced, it is impudent and loveth to be publick. Oh why should we not have the true worship of God as publick? It is a lamentable case when the true worship of God must get into holes and corners and dare not appear in publick; yea when they are persecuted because they are in corners and they say they get into holes and corners and there they do thus and thus. Well my brethren, let us pray and endeavor what we can to bring in the true worship of God to the most publick way that may be, that we may not be ashamed of it in publick before the world. In Revelation 14. 6. there is mention of an Angel flying in the midst of Heaven having the everlasting Gospel in his hand to preach unto them that dwell on the earth; Now it is ordinary in the Revelation to set out the Ministry of the Gospel by an Angel, and so it is a prophesie of the Ministry of the Gospel, that it shall fly in Heaven, aloft, publickly, that all the world shall see it. And mark what follows upon this, verse 8. And there followed another Angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. So that the Note from thence is, "That when the Ministry of the "Gospel and the Ordinances of the Gospel comes to be made "openly publick, then is the time for Babylon to fall, and "so long as Babylon stands and Antichrist stands so long is the "Gospel fain to be preach’d in corners, but when the time of "Babylons fall cometh then shall the Ministry of the Gospel be "in Heaven, above, in the eyes of all the people, in a publick "way.

Secondly, They sacrificed not only upon the mountains, but upon the tops of the mountains. Idolaters they seek to rise to the height of their way of false worship, they would do it unto the uttermost; they content not themselves with hills and mountains, but the very uppermost of hills and mountains, if there were any higher than other, if they could get up to Heaven they would do it. Idolaters do not content themselves with a lower degree of false worship. How much less
lest should we in the way of Gods worship? we should not
content our selves in a mean way but get up to the top of god-
liness, and labour to gain the very height of the worship of
God; Not content our selves in one Ordinance, but get all
Ordinances, and get them in the full exercise of them as much
as may be. That place in Ephes. Walk accurately, circumfpeclly Eph. 5. 15.
not as fools but as wise, the word is ἀφροδίτη as if he said, walk
to the top of godliness, to the height, if there be any higher
degree than other labor to get to it, as Idolaters will get up
to the tops of the mountains. Thus for their sacrificing upon
the mountains.

The next is, Their sacrificing under Oaks, and Poplars, and
Elms. And these trees that are here named are such whose
leaves are broad and did abide longest upon them. But why
did they seek to sacrifice under trees and such trees as these?
There are five or six reasons why the Heathens and these peo-
were so set upon sacrificing under trees.

The first was this, The Heathens did consecrate many trees
to their Idols. The Poplar to Hercules, the Vine to Bacchus,
the Mistle to Venus, the Bay to Phoebus. They consecrated
several trees to their several gods and therefore sacrificed un-
der those trees.

Secondly, They sacrificed there in imitation of the Patri-
arches, as I shewed before, Abraham built a grove by the Altar
he made; and so many of the Patriarchs had groves and trees
by their Altars, and in imitation of them they did it, and so
did the Heathens, for the Devil did strive much to imitate the
way of the true worship of God, but now when they came
once to abuse the ancient practice of the Patriarchs, God re-
moves it.

Thirdly, They thought that dark and shady places, dark
by the shadiness of these trees, might strike some fear and re-
verence in the hearts of men when they came to worship, there
is a kind of dismalness as it were, and it doth cause a kind of
reverence in coming into woods where there are high trees
and shady places, there is a kind of solemnness in it, and
they thought it was a means to put reverence into the hearts
of
of the worshippers. Even Heathens themselves when they worshipped their idols they sought to have the hearts of the worshippers to be hid with reverence. And,

4. Fourthly, They thought that the spirits of their Heroes were up and down in the woods and groves. It was the tradition of the Heathens, they were taught it by their Priests, that the ghosts of their great men, their Heroes were in woods and in groves: *Nullicerta domus, lucis habitamus opacis.* So you have it in *Virgil,* that they themselves have no certain houses to dwell in, but they dwelt in dark and solitary places, in woods and groves.

5. Fifthly, They were fit places for committing of filthiness when they came to those places, which many of them did. The sacrifices of the Heathen many of them were mixed with filthy and abominable uncleanness, and those places were fit for such uncleanness, and therefore the Devil liked well of them. So *Philo,* and *Sozamen* in his history he tells us of this reason of their sacrificing there, because of the filthiness that was there committed.

6. Lastly, It was the conceit of many of the Heathens that it was too much to the dishonor of God to be worshipped in any place covered above head or to be circumscribed within any limits. Even the Heathens, some of them looked upon God as infinite, and for him to be worshipped within any place covered above head they thought it was a dishonor, therefore they would worship him in the open fields and under trees. This was the reason of their sacrificing under trees.

Now the holy Ghost saith they did this, because the shadow of them was good. The holy Ghost instanceth only in one reason; the shadow was good, that is, they pleased themselves in their own ways, they thought there was more solemnity in this way of worship than to go to the Temple to worship there. The shadow was good, Oh it was brave to go to the open fields, and it was more solemn they thought to go there than to worship in the City. *The shadow was good,* they applauded and blessed themselves in this way. "*Usualy superstition thinks it"
"hath a great deal of reason for what it doth, that is the Note from hence. Therefore it is observable of the Papists, the way of their worship it is most rediculous and absurd, yet they write whol volumes of their Rational, of Divine Service to shew reason for what they do, as if it were a reasonable service, and in Colos. 2. ult, it is spoken of will-worship, that it hath a shew of wisdom. Now the words in the Greek are λογιως σοφίας it hath the reason of wisdom, for so it may be turned, for is used for Ratio, it hath the reason of wisdom. So that word your Reasonable Service, it is λογικωσαφίας. So that Idolaters think that it is not only wisdom, but that they have the very reason the very quintessence of wisdom in their way of false-worship, they can give such account of it, the shadow is good; And especially in that very thing that they think their worship is more sumptuous and brave and hath more solemnity in it than the Ordinances of God have: This is the vanity and pride of mens spirits, to think that the worship of God appointed in his word hath not solemnity enough in it: That is the point naturally rising from thence. "It is the pride I say of mens spirits to think that Gods Ordinances are too plain, too mean for them, they can find out a way that sets out the worship of God thus and thus, they will shew more reverence of and respect to God than others shall. But certainly if it be not Gods own, whatsoever outward respect can be given unto God in it, he abominateth it and abhorreth it. I have read A Lady of a Lady in Paris, that when she saw the bravery of a Procession to a Saint, she cried out, Oh how fine is our Religion beyond that of the Hugonites, that is such as those who in England they call Puritans! They have a poor and mean and beggarly Religion, but we have a fine and brave Religion: So your Papists with decking up their Churches and their Altars and their crings and bowings, they have a fine and brave Religion, their shadow is good, there is bravery and solemnity in it. Oh take heed of this in any point of Gods worship, to think that any addition of mans makes it more solemn and more reverent. It is the worst argument you can use, to say can we do things in Gods worship with too great reverence?
Is it that which you have warrant out of God's word for? doth 
God enjoyn it? Have you not either some rule or ensample at 
least for it? If you think by your own addition to do it with 
more reverence, this very argument spoils it, though it were 
lawful in other respects. Take some gesture, suppose it were 
indifferent, suppose it were lawful some way; but if you take it 
up thus, to think that by it you put more reverence and respect 
upon God's worship than there is, there you spoil it; upon 
some other grounds it may perhaps be granted; but upon that 
ground you spoil it quite. Therefore the Lord forbad his people 
when they were to make an Altar to him, to lift up a tool up-
on it, for then faith he, you pollute it: They might have said, 
Lord we would fain have thine Altar not so plain as other 
things, we would fain bestow carving and some cost upon 
it and so shew some respect to it: No faith God, If you lift 
up a tool upon it, you pollute it. So if you think to put more 
reverence and solemnity upon God's worship by any invention 
of your own, certainly you defile it. That was the sin 
of Israel at this time, they would sacrifice here, why? because 
the shadow was good. So much for that, for their high places, 
and their worshiping under trees.

Now follows the judgment threatened: Therefore your 
daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall com-
mitt adultery.

You commit adultery in going a whoring from me, you 
shall be punished in the like kind, your daughters and your 
spouses shall go a whoring from you.

They shall commit adultery.] Take it first under this conside-
ration, as a judgment of God upon them. 

Secondly under this, As that which they themselves were 
the occasion to produce.

First, It was the judgment of God upon them. Hence note,

**Observe.** God sometimes punisheth sin with sin, he punisheth spiritual adultery with corporal uncleanness; Corporal pollutions are the fruit of spiritual filthiness. So Rom. 1. They worshiped not God as God
but in an Idolators way, after the similitude of an Ox that eateth grass, therefore God gave them up to uncleanness. If men be not careful to maintain purity in Gods worship, God cares not for their bodily chastity. If you pollute my worship, be uncene then faith God. Not that he doth permit it as lawful but in just judgment he leaveth them unto it. What care I for all your uncleanness otherwise in your bodies if you pollute my worship. And it is usual for bodily and spiritual adultery to go together. The word Roma, turn the letters and it is Amor, there is a deal of unclean filthy love in Rome, as I shewed before. Where there is most Idolatry there is most adultery.

But secondly, The sin of Parents is punished many times in the children and in the family. Your daughters and your spouses, I will leave them faith God, and mine hand shall be upon them. When a parent or a husband sees the hand of God against his child or against his wife he should consider, how doth God meet with me in this? is it not a sign of Gods displeasure against me in this particular? It is observable, that of the woman of Canaan, Mat. 15. 22. when her child vexed with an unclean spirit, faith she, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, my child is grievously vexed with a Devil; she did not say Lord have mercy upon my child, but Lord have mercy upon me, for my child is vexed with an unclean spirit, as if she should say, O Lord, my sin may be this unclean spirit, it may be the punishment of my sin, therefore Lord have mercy upon me & forgive me my sin that hath caused such a thing as this, yea Lord it may be I have had an unclean spirit, and this my child did imitate me in somewhat that was evil, and so thy hand is come upon it, I am the Original, therefore Lord have mercy upon me, for my child is vexed with an unclean spirit. So should you, when you see the hand of God upon your children, not only outwardly upon their bodies, cry out, Lord have mercy upon me for my child hath such a disease, hath such convulsion fits, hath such pain and such extremity, Lord pardon my sin. And doth God leave your children in wickedness? do you see unclean spirits in your children, the spirit of filthiness? Cry out, Lord have mercy upon me;
me; perhaps it was by imitating of you that they came to have such unclean spirits.

Obs. Thirdly, It is a great reproach unto any family to have uncleanliness committed in it. Fornication and adultery is a great reproach unto a family, especially when the daughter or the wife is unclean. It is a reproach unto a family if a servant prove naught, especially to some families more than others, the family of a Minister, or of a Magistrate, or a man in public place and esteem, to have a servant prove naught: which by the way should teach Governours to be more careful of their families than they are, for many times thorough their carelessness God sends such a judgment, puts this disgrace upon their families. Many of you for your pleasure and delight can go to your country houses, and while you are there your servants are doing wickedness. You should have an especial eye over your families in this, lest God as a just judgment upon you for your neglect bring this reproach upon your families. But especially your children, your daughters and your spoues, and above all, the children of Ministers, Levit. 21:9. it is said there, if the daughter of any Priest profane her selfe by playing the whore, she shall be burnt with fire; Now fornication was not punished with death in any other, though adultery was, but the fornication of a Priest's daughter was to be punished with death, she was to be burnt with fire.

Obs. 4 The fourth note is this, which is the note I specially aymed at from these words. Our ill dealings with God, our unfaithfulness towards God is made more sensible when those that are near unto us deal ill with us, and are unfaithfull to us. Well faith God here, you goe a whoring from me, your spoues they shall goe a whoring from you, you have beene unfaithfull to me, your children shall be unfaithfull to you, they shall goe a whoring too, and then by that anguish and trouble that you have when you see this in your wife, or in your child, you shall be made sensible how grievous this is to my Spirit, that you go a whoring from me. You have many Parents if they should hear that their daughters were grown strumpets and have played the whore, Oh how would they beat their hands upon.
upon their breasts, and tear their very hair, and stamp upon the ground and cry out, I am undone, I am undone, and though they had never such great estates they would think they had no comfort in any thing, but would even look upon themselves and their family as ruined and undone; And if you should hear that your wife had played the whore, how would it be as a dagger in your hearts. Are you so sensible of this? then by that extremity of grief you would have in such a case, know such is the extremity of the grief of God's heart when a child of his goes a whoring from him. If his people go on in ways of superstition and idolatry from him, yea though it be in things that otherwise seem to be but small (it is but a circumstance of place I told you here) yet it goes as near to the heart of God to have his people set upon superstitious ways in his worship, as it doth to the heart of any husband or father to have his wife or daughter play the whore. Oh that you would consider that there is this grief in Heaven when God looks upon his people forsaking the true way of his worship. We think indeed that murder and blasphemy provoke God, but we little think how the corruption of his worship provokes him. Let us know that the great provocation of the most high God is the corruption of his worship, I mean when his people shall corrupt his worship any way.

And further, As in this particular so we may take occasion to make use of it other ways. Do your children prove stubborn, stout to you? Oh how many times doth the father or mother get alone into their chamber and fall a bemoaning of themselves, Oh what a stout, stubborn child have we, nothing will reform him, no admonition! It may be the mother goes alone and wrings her hands and cries out because of the stubbornness of her child. Well, are you so sensible of this when your children prove stubborn towards you? Oh consider how sensible God is if you carry your selves stubbornly towards him. If a husband have an ill wife that is forward and troublesome, that grieves his spirit and loves him not, he goes alone and laments his condition and thinks himself one of the miserablest men upon the earth. Is this so grievous to you?
Oh how grievous is it unto Jesus Christ to have his Church so to him? And have you any friend that hath dealt unfaithfully with you? Oh such a friend hath dealt unfaithfully with me, was ever any served so? Oh consider how you have dealt unfaithfully with God, and as it goes to your hearts to have a friend deal unfaithfully with you, so it goes to the heart of God when you deal unfaithfully with him. This is the note

Obser. Our ill dealings with God and our unfaithfulness to him, is made more sensible when those that are near unto us deal unfaithfully with us. And thus much for the words under that consideration. I will make you sensible faith God of your dealings with me, if nothing will do it, it shall be by this way of mine, to bring this judgment upon you, your daughter's and your spouses shall commit adultery.

But the next is under the other consideration, as they were causers of it. Now the people of Israel were the causes of the uncleanness of their daughters and wives by this their way of false worship in two respects.

First, By going abroad from their families to hills and mountains to worship, in the mean time they committed filthiness and adultery. Calvin hath this note upon the place, As it is in Popery when they go a Pilgrimage, that is the opportune time for filthy places, places of bawdry to have the most trading. So it was here, when they went unto the hills and mountains to worship, then the unclean places had most trading. So when husbands and parents go up and down with the family out any lawful call, then their wives and families do oft miscarry. Therefore it should teach them to be as little from their families as they can be, to abide at home until God calls them out, if they have a lawful call they may trust God with their families, if not, they may have some mischief befall them before they come home.

Secondly, They were the causers of it thus, By carrying them into those places, mountains and groves and under trees, because (as I said before) those places were chosen on purpose for the committing of filthiness as being most fit for it. It is dangerous for young women to go into places that are fit for filthiness,
filthiness, and parents and husbands are exceedingly to blame for that, and it is to be charged as a great evil upon them, when they shall venture to carry their daughters or wives into places that are fit for filthiness. But this shall suffice for that thirteen verse.

Verse 14.
*I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery.*

This is as severe an expression as any we have in the Scripture, They shall commit whoredom and adultery, yet I will not punish them. It is strange, God hath threatened whoredom and adultery with death, and threatened the Priests daughters that committed fornication, with fire; and this is spoken here of the Priests especially; but here faith he, I will punish none of them when they commit whoredom or adultery.

These words are read by some interrogatively, *Will I not punish them?* and then they carry another sense. But I think that is not the scope.

Others read these words comparatively, and that I confess hath some probability in it, *I will not punish them,* that is, I will not punish them in comparison of you, for your example makes them such as they are, you should restrain them, and though the sin be great in them, yet in comparison of you they shall not be punished at all. Wicked parents they look upon their children when they are wicked, as swearers, liars, unclean &c. they look upon them as those that it will go very ill withal. Well, it shall go ill with them indeed, but if you be so too, it shall be worse with you: Many wicked parents are both their children should be wicked: I have known some drunkards and whoremasters, have put their children to be educated by Puritans; they are wicked, yet their consciences tell them it is not good for their children to be so. But the truth is, if you be wicked and your children too, though they may perish in their sins, yet you shall perish with a sevenfold destruction.
But thirdly it is read plainly by most thus, I will not punish them when they commit adultery; that is, I will shew my wrath against you in this that I will even give up your children and your wives, let them do what they will I will not restrain them by any punishment. And this is many times a way of God's judgment against wicked ones, that the Lord will not restrain them in their evil ways, that's the especial Note from these words, "That it is one of the most fearful judgments of "God in the world, for the Lord not to restrain men from their "wicked ways but to let them go on and to have their will in "them for a while. Hierom upon those words in Ezek. 7. 4. I will not spare. God doth not spare faith he that he might spare, he hath not mercy that he might have mercy upon people, that is, when God intends any good then he will not spare, that is, he will afflic and chastise, those that he loves he will chastise, but if you be bastards and not children he doth not care for chastising of you. All the while a parent hath any respect to a child and intendeth he should inherit, he doth correct him, but when once he hath cast off a child and is fully resolved he shall never inherit one penny of all that he hath, he lets him go on and take his course. A Philistian doth to with a patient, he will give him potions and bitter potions all the while that there is hope, but if the disease be grown too strong and there is no hope, he lets him alone; thus God

Origen Hom. 8. deals with sinners many times in this world. Origen in one in 20, cap of his Sermons upon Exodus quoting this Scripture he hath in this expression, Will you hear the terrible voice of a provoked God! I will not punish your daughters when they commit fornication nor your spousess when they commit adultery, this is the most terrible thing that can be imagined, here is a terrible voice of God indeed, I will not punish you. So Luther, Wo to those men at whose sins God winketh. It is a fearful judgment to fall into the hands of the living God, but it is a more fearful judgment to fall out of the hands of the living God in this regard. Many men bless themselves in this that they can go on in the world and sin and sin and still prosper and thrive, they do not pray in their families as others
others do, they are not so scrupulous in their consciences as others are, they are not so strict to walk exactly as others, yet they thrive in their trades as others, they are as rich as others, as healthful as others, they have as fine bodies, as hansom children as others, and upon this they are hardened in their sin. Oh but know, though thou mayest bless thy self in this thing, yet it is the heaviest curse of God that can bee upon thee unless he should send thee quick unto Hell. There is no such brand of a reprobate as this for God to suffer a wicked man to prosper in his sin.

Hierom hath this Note upon these words, when thou seest faith he a sinner low with wealth, when thou seest him boasting and braving of his power, when thou seest him very healthful and hale and have a lusty body, when thou seest him delighting in his wife, when thou seest him to have a company of brave children, bravely arrayed, then say the threatening of God by the Prophet Hosea is fulfilled upon that man.

Thy judgment is very great in this, for the least punishment thou hast now the more thou art like to have hereafter. The least punishment the more sin and so the more misery. Know that Justice will have somewhat and much too for the forbearance of her act, of her stroke, and certainly it were better for thee that art a wicked and ungodly man that thou shouldest beg thy bread from door to door. Perhaps now thou hast much coming in, thou liest soft and farest daintily, while others are put to miserable extremities and have scarce a rag to cover them, or a bit of bread to put in their bodies, and in cold weather have no fire to warm them, and yet thou art ungodly and wicked, know that it were better for thee, and thou wilt one day say it and wish it thy self, that thou hadst been in such a case as the poor beggar that hath begged a farthing at thy door, and it is God's wrath upon thee that thou art not now as miserable as they. Let us therefore stop the troubles of our thoughts in this, we see the wicked how they prosper in the world and how vile men are exalted; and though they undertake causes that we know are abominable in the eyes of God, and we know their waies are loath from before
before God, and they provoke the God of Heaven in their 
wicked ways and tempt him to his very face, yet they pro-
sper. They are indeed ready to take this their prosperity as an 
argument that God approveth of their ways, and that God 
loves them. Oh let us not (I say) be troubled at their pro-
sperity, for it is so far from God's shewing it as an argument 
of his approbation of their ways, that it is one of the greatest 
judgments that can possibly befall them in the world, when 
God shall say let them go on and fill up the measure of their 
sins, they shall have their hearts desire for a while and so shall 
be tainted up to their destruction. This few will conceive of 
but such who have spiritual eyes. Carnal hearts are ready 
to call the proud happy, and to think those to be in the best 
condition that are most prosperous in the world; but this 
text teacheth us the contrary. It follows.

For themselves are separated with whores.

For themselves.] Ips. Here God chargeth the persons (your 
daughters and your spoufes, for they are separated with 
whores) per modum indignationis, so interpreters note upon the 
place, God chargeth the persons by way of indignation. As 
when one man is speaking to another and his anger riseth, he 
turns from him and speaks to some body else, so God seems 
here to have his anger to arise against his people, that he turns 
as it were from them as if he did speak to some body else, 
though indeed he meaneth them; themselves are separated, 
or divided themselves.

Junius. Junius reads it only so, they have separated; and so addeth 
to it Res opimas, they have separated fat and plentiful things; 
their choice and rich things that they had at home, so he car-
rries the meaning and not improbably, the best meat they 
had or any precious thing they had at home, they would set 
it apart under pretence of consecrating it to a religious use, 
and then when they went to sacrifice they would eat that a-
mong their whores, and so deceive their spoufes at home, and 
say they would set this apart for their gods and so carry it 
and
and spend it among their whores. That is the interpretation he makes upon the word Separate.

Others I confess carry it thus, They have separated themselves from their God: first in spiritual whoredom: and then from their wives in bodilie uncleanness.

Or else thus, Separated: That is, gone alone in secret where they might not be known, as the filthiness of that sin causeth men to desire to be hid, and when they have got into a secret place or separated themselves from all that know them, then they commit that bodily uncleanness, as many men when they are gone abroad from their own houses, in their journeys in their luns, that is a fit opportunity for their filthiness.

Thus God gives the reason why their daughters and their wives commit this uncleanness, because they themselves do so. Thence the Note is, When parents are filthy and unclean, what Observe can be expected from the children but that they should be so too? Take it either in bodily or spiritual uncleanness. In bodily, David commits adultery, and Amnon commits incest; and in spiritual, Jer. 7. 18. The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven. If fathers and mothers be idolaters children will be so too; so it is at this day, in superstitious places, take any that are superstitious that stand upon the old way, if the father and the mother do so, the children will do so too, any that are Malignants, if the parents be so, the children though young it is strange to hear in what a way they will speak, because their parents are so. Which should be a good caveat unto all parents to make them take heed what they do before their children, he that sins before a child sins twice, for the child will do as his father doth, he thinks it enough that my father said so, or my father did so. Take heed how you sin before your children.

But this word translated Whores, and the other that follows Harlots, have a further signification than our English here expresseth it. According to most Interpreters it hath this meaning. It presents to those women that worshiped Baal Peor, or Priapus that unclean god. In 1 King. 15. 13. it is said Aa
of *A* that he took away *Maacah* his mother from being Queen, now it is interpreted by some that he removed her that she might not be a special Queen in the solemnity of that unclean god *Baal Peor*, which Idol she had set up in a grove. So then those women that were devoted to the service of that unclean god, in whose worship there was most abominable filthy uncleanness, yet these people did separate themselves to those women, not to ordinary whores, but to those that were consecrated to the service of that unclean god, and so went to worship that unclean god, and committed uncleanness with the women devoted to that service.

And the other word, *Sacrificed with harlots*, if we were to take it meerly according to our translation, *harlots*, then the Note is only this, *That those that are filthy and unclean, yet they will sometimes make some shew of Religion. Harlots and yet sacrifice? how can these two stand together? One would think harlots should cast off all sacrifice*. No, many times such as are filthy and unclean will make a shew of Religion, to think to satisfie al their filthines with some Religious action; as the harlot in the Proverbs she had peace-offerings, and the rather she had them, she made her peace-offerings but preparations for her committing of uncleanness. What horrible wickedness is this! yet this is ordinary for many that are very devout in some Religious duties, and upon that they think they have served God well, God hath had his turn and so they think they may take the more liberty to the flesh afterward; It is true we are sinners, we cannot serve God alwaies, we will serve God sometimes and to take the more liberty because of that. It is an abominable thing to joyn filthines and sacrifice both together.

But this word translated *harlots* here, hath a great deal further meaning I suppose than our English can express or bear. The word *רַעֲנָן* translated *harlots*, it is meant of the Priests with the consecrated ones. This doth more justify the interpretation of the other word *whores*, for I told you by that was meant those women that worshiped *Baal-Peor*, for there the word signifies the consecrated ones, the holy ones. You will
will say, holy ones, how can it be translated harlots then? Yes, merely by way of contrariety, for so the Scripture expresses things and words, and so doth other languages too, as wood is called wood by a name that comes from light. So here, holy ones, that is, devoted to filthiness as others do consecrate themselves to God and therefore are called holy ones in a quite contrary sense, because they rather devoted themselves unto all manner of filthiness. And that I think is the meaning of this place, the Priests of Baal-Peor they are here those that are meant that this people did separate themselves for.

Hierom upon the place hath this Note, he saith that the Romans in disgrace of the French used to separate Priests of that Nation for that Idol and to make them Evnuches, from whence all such Priests to that Idol that they had (which was the like to that of Baal-Peor the Jews had) they used to call Gallos, French-men to put an ignominy upon that Nation for some especial revenge they had to them, and they would have them to serve that Idol being first made Evnuches.

Take it thus then and it will afford us a very profitable instruction. These people were grown so corrupt that they had forsaken the true Priests of God and the Prophets of the Lord and separated themselves from the Lord to joyn in sacrificing with these filthy Priests of Baal-Peor, that unclean Idol that is said in Scripture to be that shame.

But only here is a Scruple how can it be meant of Priests Quest. when the word in the Hebrew is in the feminine gender? That Answ. is answered thus, because of the effeminateness of these Priests, some of them were made Evnuches and so might be put into the feminine gender in that regard, and they were grown to be so fottish and filthy that they lost the very name of men. Therefore Aquila he turns it, Cum mutatis, so he calls those that were effeminate, they were changed from men into women, and so the Scripture speaks of men that have lost their true fortitude and are changed from it, they are called women or men of womanish spirits; And so the Heathen Poet Virgil he calls the Trojans women not men, which he had from Hosea.
Women being of a more feminine gender, they were rather to be of the feminine than the masculine gender. Therefore these Priests here of that unclean Idol had the feminine gender put upon them.

Or as Cyril and Theophylact and others think that these Priests seemed to be men, but were indeed women. So that then by this text is meant such notorious prostituted filthy ones that were consecrated to be as Priests to the service of this unclean Idol. Now then here is the Note from hence this was their abominable vileneas, to forsake the Priests of the Lord, to separate themselves from them and to joyn with such unclean Priests as these Priests of Baal-Peor were. Here were Separates indeed. Have we not many amongst us at this day as vile and wicked, of as wicked spirits as these, whose hearts are against the faithful Ministers of God, against the purity of God's Ordinances, & they separate themselves to any drunken unclean filthy Malignant Priest? It was just so here for all the world, there were the true Priests of God in Judah, they had the true Ordinances of God there, and yet these men rather than they would joyn with them in the true service of God, they will separate themselves to the Priests of Baal-Peor, to these filthy and unclean and base Priests, and they think there is more good to be had in joyning with them than with the true Priests of God. How hath God of late discovered the filthiness and malignancy of our superstitious Priests who cared not what became of our Liberties of Religion, of our Liberties as men, of our Religion as Christians, so they may have their lusts; yet how vile are men's spirits stil that though faithful and conscionable Ministers are sent amongst them who would reveal the mind of Christ and the way of Heaven unto them, that they may now know more in one month than before they knew in many yeers if they had hearts to hearken to them, yet they will separate themselves and joyn rather with such as are manifested to be of most vile spirits, not only malignant but filthy and wicked in their lives, and commend them for the only men, these they love with their very hearts. Heretofore when they had but some Sr. John that could only reade prayers sent by the Bishop, and godly
godly Ministers were thrust out, yet if men did then go from their parish Church to hear a Sermon, how did they cry out upon such then, they were called Sectaries and Schismaticks presently; but now when men of vile and malignant spirits are by a better Authority put out for their wicked lives, and godly and holy men are put in their rooms, yet these they will not hear though it be in their own parish Church, but if a malignant Preacher be in the City, to him they will flock: Who is the Separate or Schismatick now? they separate themselves now to such men, and now they think they may hear those men they can most profit by, that is those that preach things suitable to their spirits. When the case comes to be men's own how partial are they in their judgments? I know nothing sets out the condition of these men as these words do, though as they are read in your books there is no such thing appears, but the words according to the Original signifies separating themselves to unclean Priests.

Therefore the people that do not understand shall fall.

This is the close of the verse. Well might he say that they are a people that understand not indeed, idolaters are ununderstanding people, they do not understand, they are ignorant people. You will say, ignorant, many of them are Scholars and learned? But they are ignorant of the ways of God, even their Priests are and for the most part the people are, and their very design is to bring ignorance into places, that their Idolatrous ways may be the sooner imbraced.

The people that do not understand shall fall.] Understand what? what did not these people understand that was the cause of their fall? They did not understand these things.

First, They did not understand the design that Jeroboam had and those Princes that followed him. Poor simple people they were led by vain pretences, Jeroboam he pleaded this, that he was for the true Religion, he was for the worshiping of the true God, only he would not have the people so tired as to go up thrice a year to Jerusalem, that was not so necessary. But the truth
is, that the design that Jeroboam had under all his pretences of worshiping the true God and being a friend to the true Religion, it was to bring them under his own government, to tyrannize over them, and to keep them from that right way of government that they should have had. Now this people they did not understand this, they were carried away with fair words, if Jeroboam did but pretend Religion and profess that he did it meerly out of respect and love and in favour unto them, and that for his part he intended to set up the worship of God as much as any, though his design was another thing, yet this people were led away and did not understand. They did not understand the design of Jeroboam and his Princes.

Secondly, They did not understand that the acceptation of God's worship did not depend upon the outward pomp and bravery of it, but upon the rule, according to what God had required. They understood not this. They were led away meerly with the fair shews and pomp of Religion, but they did not understand that all the acceptation of divine worship cometh from having a divine rule. Most people at this day understand not this, and that is a great evil.

Thirdly, They did not understand this, That their safety did more depend upon the true worship of God than upon all the politic wisdom that possibly could be. They understood not that their protection depended upon God's service and worship, but they thought to go politickly on to provide for their own safety, and they thought their safety depended upon their wise men that understood better than they. And then,

Fourthly, They did not understand, that whatsoever was commanded by their Governours or taught by their Priests, yet if it was against the mind of God it would not excuse them from judgment and deliver them from the wrath of God, though their Magistrates did command it and their Priests did teach it.

They did not understand these four things, and for not understanding these four things they shall fall. This was that which brought them down and did ruin this people.

There are divers degrees of not-understanding.
First, When people do not understand merely for want of the means of knowledge. This excuseth not wholly, but they shall even fall though they have no means.

Secondly, When men have means yet thorough their negligence in the use of the means they do not understand.

Thirdly, When they are not only guilty of negligence but they oppose and shut their eyes wickedly against that means of knowledge. Then they shall fall indeed.

Fourthly, When having knowledge heretofore, now they lose it by their often refiling of knowledge and so come to fall in their understanding.

Lastly, When they so provoke God as that he hath given them up unto a sottisih spirit so that they shall not understand. Now these people fall deepest. Where all these five are (as they are in many places) sureily that people must needs fall. My brethren have we not cause to fear our not understanding at this day in these five degrees? And in a great part Applic, even in those four Generals, The not-understanding the vain pretences of our adversaries of what our Cavaliers say.

First, That they fight for Religion, and they make such and such kind of protestations, and they intend nothing but the liberty of the subject, many people are led away with these pretences and understand not that their design is to bring them under slavery and to take away their Religion. And this want of understanding is like to cause us to fall.

Secondly, People understand not that the worship of God must have the word of God to be the rule, and that the government of the Church must be according to the word. They think what shall be most suitable to the reasons of understanding men that is best. Because men understand not this we are in danger to fall.

Thirdly, People at this day think there is too much to do about Religion, and let us rather go in a way of policy to provide for our selves, as for that why should we injure or trouble
trouble our selves so much? we have troubled our selves too much already. People think not their safety is in Religion therefore they shall fall.

Fourthly, people think if they be taught so by their Ministers that's enough for them. Is it not so with us now? Therefore we have cause to fear that the Lord intendeth us a grievous fall.

Yea as those four Objects, so the four degrees of want of understanding.

In many places they have no means, many Towns and Countries have scarce a Sermon in half a year.

In many places where there is most means there they are negligent of it, they rebel and shut their eyes against it and are weary of it.

And others that have had knowledge heretofore, have resíled their light, are grown sottish: yea it is to be feared that God hath delivered many amongst us over to a sottish spirit, it is impossible they should remain so ignorant as they are if God in his just judgment had not delivered them up unto a sottish spirit. To instance in this, Is it not a sottish spirit of men that after all their oppression and misery that they have suffered, yet they will not understand, but joyn with those that have oppressed them and lay all the blame upon them that venture their lives to deliver them. Surely this is most gross sottish ignorance, that when men shall come and spoil them of their goods and ravish their wives and children, yet in the mean time they rather cry out of those that venture their lives to do them good as if the cause of their misery was from them. Surely these people do not understand, can it be expected but that these people should fall, themselves and their posterity, into the depth of misery to be made slaves for ever?

They shall fall. Idolatrous people shall fall; that's the next note. An Angel proclaims this, Babylon is fallen, as fallen. It is fallen already (my brethren,) how ever Idolaters seem to lift up their heads high yet they are falling, and fall they shall, God hath pronounced it, and the time is at hand; they have fallen off from God, and fall they shall by the hand of God, and
and the prouder they grow the nearer they are to their fall; Pride goes before a fall: while the Gospel of Christ and his pure Ordinances that are now so opposed, they shall stand; and all superstitious wayes, and persons, they shall fall. That is observable that place before named, Rev. 14.6, An Angel flies in, Rev. 14.6 the midst of Heaven and preacheth the everlasting Gospel; and with. Opened in a verse or two, another Angel cries out, Babylon is fallen, is fallen. When Babylon with all their Idolatrous wayes shall be fallen, then shall the everlasting Gospel be preached: the Gospel and the Ordinances of Christ shall be everlasting, shall continue for ever when all superstitious vanities shall fall. We find it so; however they thought to bear up all their superstitious wayes by all the means that ever the devil or wicked men could devise to keep them up to perpetuity, yet have we not found that God hath blasted them, and many of them are fallen? and though God bring his people into affliction, yet they shall rise, the wayes of God shall rise, Zion shall rise, Babylon shall fall: the people that understand not, they shall fall.

A word or two about the meaning of the word in the original: The word is from שָׁכַל shall fall. It is not often in scripture, very rare, and I find divers translations of it. Shall be beaten, so some. Shall be brought into captivity, so others: And others again give this the meaning of the word, and so it doth properly signify, Shall be perplexed. The word signifies to be brought into perplexity and doubtfulness of one's counsels, and wayes, that they do not know which way in the world to go; that is the propriety of the word: I say, by their doubtfulness of their way, not knowing which way to go, being perplexed in their counsels, thereupon they come to stumble and fall. This people that do not understand shall this fall. Indeed it is more proper and suitable to the words before, they do not understand, therefore they must needs be perplexed in their wayes and not know which way to go, and therefore must fall; as a man that is in the dark and knows not which way to go he must needs fall; so when men have left the true light and are in the dark they shall fall, and when they are fallen they shall be perplexed in that misery into which they are fallen. From whence these two Notes.
An Exposition of


Obs. 1. First, That it is a fearful judgment of God and a forerunner of a grievous fall, for him to leave men to perplexed counsels. When men are perplexed in their counsels, one is for this way, and another is for that way, and then carry it back and then forward again; Oh this is a forerunner of falling into grievous misery. In Ez. 19. 14. the Lord threateneth Egypt that he will send a perverse spirit in the midst of them & they shall be in every work as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit; they shall er in their counsels and this comes from a perverse spirit. The Lord many times sends a perplexed spirit and a perverse spirit in judgment upon men, and what then? then they reel and stagger up and down in their counsels; first they will go one way and then another, and so bring a great deal of sorrow and trouble upon a people. The Lord grant our enemies these perplexed counsels, and deliver us from them.

Obs. 2. Secondly, It notes thus much, That when they are fallen and are once down and have brought misery upon themselves and others by their ill ways and counsels, then they shall be so insnared and most dreadfully perplexed that they shall not know which way to go or what to do. Men that are Idolatrous and superstitious, and men that God leaves to themselves they are in miserable perplexity when they are fallen, they are as those poor blind men in 2 King. 6. that Elisha led to Samaria in stead of Dorcan, what miserable perplexity were they in when they found themselves in Samaria among their enemies? So when men are left unto themselves and God hath brought them into those perplexities, when they shall see the fruit of their perplexed counsels, how grievous will it be? On the other side, when a man goes according to the rule of God's word, and in the uprightness of his heart desires to be directed according unto that rule, though such a one should meet with trouble and fall into affliction for his trial, he need not be perplexed, there shall be quietness and peace to his spirit in the midst of his afflictions, why? because he hath followed God, he hath gone according to his rule. It may be he knows not God's end in bringing him into affliction, he understands not the depth of God's ways, yet having endeavoured in the sincerity of his heart...
heart to walk according to God's will, you that have done so, you understand much, though you should fall into affliction yet you shall not fall into perplexity.

Verse 15.

Though thou Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend, and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor swear, The Lord liveth.

The close of this Chapter is a warning to Judah to take heed that she doth not do as Israel did, in regard of the vileness of their sin, the fearfulness and suddenness of their judgment.

Though thou Israel.] Thou wretched, wicked, stubborn, stout hearted Israel, that no means will reclaim, though thou play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend.

The word translated Offend, that is from דָּנָה it signifies desolare likewise, because sin brings desolation. The Hebrews have divers words to express sin and punishment both in one, because they are so near a kin. Israel playeth the harlot and so is like to bring desolation unto her self, but let not Judah likewise offend and bring the same desolation likewise upon her self.

The Prophet Hosea was especially sent to Israel, to the ten Tribes, but here we see he turns his speech unto Judah. Ministers should especially look to those whom they are bound unto by Office, but yet so as to labour to do good to others as occasion is. And not only Ministers but others likewise. We should all intend good, especially to those that are under our charge, but yet neglect no opportunity to do good unto any.

Secondly, "When we see our labor lost upon those we de- Obl. 2 fire most good unto, we should be desirous then to try what we can do unto others. If this or the other get not good by our Ministry, by our Admonition, by our Exhortations, by our Counsels, yet it may be the Lord may bless our endeavors upon such and such; let us try what we can do there.

Thirdly,
Thirdly, *Let not Judah offend*] Let not Judah do as Israel did. There was a great deal of danger that Judah should be ensnared and polluted with Israel's idolatry, and that in many regards, which are the ground of this reasonable admonition of the Prophet. Though Israel do thus and thus yet let not Judah do so, as if he should say, the truth is Judah is in great danger to be defiled by Israel, and why so?

First, They lived near unto them, and there is a great deal of danger in living near unto idolaters or wicked ones. All sin, especially idolatry is as leaven that will spread, and you may see the danger that there was in living so near them, in Ezek. 16. 46. and indeed afterwards it proved to be dangerous, one special reason of the iniquity of Jerusalem is there given, that was an special reason of the iniquity of Jerusalem, their elder sister Samaria, that is the ten Tribes, were on the left hand, and their younger sister, Sodom, were on the right hand, and so they came to be sinful. To be near idolaters and wicked ones is very dangerous; then much more to be in the same town, in the same family where superstitious and wicked persons are, there we had need to take heed to our selves; for there is much danger.

2. Again, This was not only dangerous that Judah should be defiled by Israel's idolatry because of their nearness, but secondly, because they were brethren, and so the danger was the greater to be drawn aside by them. If you have a kinsman, if you have one that is near to you, not only in place but in nature or affection, that is superstitious, take heed of being defiled by such. Oh how many have suffered shipwreck of their faith by this means, that they have had some kinsman, some uncle, some acquaintance that have been very near unto them, and they have drawn them aside from the ways of God. Hence is the reason of that severity that God would have used against a brother or a friend, that seeks to draw away from God unto idolatry, because the Lord sees there
there is so much danger in it, Deut. 13. 6. If thy brother, or the
son of thy mother, or the son of thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom,
or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly to go from
God, thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shalt thine eye pity him,
neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thine
hand shall be first upon him to put him to death. Though he be thy
brother, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend that is as thine
own soul thou shalt not pity him, but thou shalt seek the very
death of such a one if he seek to draw thee unto ways of Idolatry. Because God saw what danger there
was in this; that is the reason of the severity.

Thirdly, Judah was in great danger to be drawn aside by
Israel, because that Israel was the greater number. Israel was
ten Tribes, but Judah and Benjamin, those two Tribes, little
Benjamin together with Judah were but a few in comparison
of Israel. It is a great argument that Idolaters use to draw
others unto the ways of Idolatry because of the number of
those that go that way. The whole World admire after the Beast;
the World doth, the Nations do, and that is a mighty argu-
ment to draw; the greater part of people they think that this
way of worship is the best way, there are but a few and in-
considerable number that are in another way. No question
but it was their argument here, as if they should say, what;
do not ten Tribes know the mind of God as well as those two?
Is there any reason why we should think that the greater part
of the children of Abraham, of the Jews, ten Tribes should
not know the mind of God? It is the argument at this day.
(say many that are superstitious and would go on in their old
way of Idolatry) They that are against such ways they are
but a few, an inconsiderable party, but the chief, the great
ones and the most of all sorts you see which way they go. We
are to take heed of this. Oh let not Judah though Israel be
the greater part follow a multitude to do evil.

Fourthly, Israel was rich and in a flourishing estate, there-
fore there was danger that Judah might be carried away by
them. Israel carried things before them in outward pomp
and glory, and we know that way that thrives in the world,
Obser. men will soon be brought to close with; and the way of Israel when Hosea prophesied did much thrive and prosper, Israel prevailed mightily in the world, When Ephraim shake there was trembling, therefore it was a wonderful grace of God to keep Judah from following their example. We find it by experience, let a way be persecuted yet let it be but once countenanced in the world, men will cry it up; do we not see at this day that those things that heretofore men would not profess because of persecution, that now on a sudden their minds are changed and now they cry it up? The same things that heretofore have been persecuted, if they once be but countenanced by great ones and by multitudes, how will men cry it up! Things that their hearts were against, things that they would argue and reason against, yet now because they have more publick countenance, their judgments are changed; here is the deceit of mens hearts, that way that hath most countenance in the world, that way they will go on in, especially in the worship of God.

Fifthly, Israel had many colours and pretences for what they did, and that might endanger Judah to be led aside by them; for Israel they did not profess themselves Idolaters and superstitious, No, they professed that they did serve the Lord, the true Jehovah, and the difference was not great between them and Judah, they would tell you it was but circumstances in place, you must worship God at Jerusalem, and we would have you worship at Dan and Bethel, and those images that are set up are but to put you in mind of the same God you worship. The nearer any come to you in what is the right worship of God, yet if they retain any corruption, there is so much the more danger that they should draw you from that which is right; for Israel did come nearer to the true worship of God than the Heathens did, now the Prophet doth not say, though the Heathens be Idolaters, yet let not Judah be so too, but though Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend. There was more danger that Judah should be drawn aside by Israel than that they should be drawn aside by any of the Heathen. And so there is more danger that we at this day should be drawn aside by
by those that joyn with us in many things that are right than by Papists, they are hateful to us, we see their waies to be abominable. Papists and Heathens there is not so much danger (especially for those that profess godliness) to be drawn aside by them, but the danger is in this, to be drawn aside by their brethren, and that by their brethren that joyn with them in many things that are right, and that come very neer to the true worship of God.

Well, Judah must not do so though Israel doth. As there were many things wherein Judah was in great danger to be drawn aside by Israel; so there were many arguments why Judah should not do as Israel did. As

First, God had graciously differenced Judah from Israel in abundance of mercy, Judah must not now make himself like Israel in sin, seeing God had made them unlike in mercy. God had in mercy made a difference between Judah and Israel, let not then the wickedness of their hearts make themselves to be all one. God had kept Judah to the house of David and to his Temple, to be his own people.

Secondly, Judah had more means than Israel had, therefore Judah's sin would be more vile than Israel's was: For Judah had the true Priests of God to teach them; Judah had the Temple among them; Judah had the Ordinances of God in the right way with them, therefore for Judah to be drawn aside to the waies of Israel, this would be a greater sin in them. Whatsoever Israel doth that have none but superstitious Idolatrous Priests amongst them, Priests made of the lowest of the people, Israel that hath but the Calves and hath not the right Ordinances of God among them, whatsoever they do, yet let not Judah offend that have the true Ordinances of God and the true Priests and Ministers of God among them. "Oh those that enjoy God's Ordinances in his own way and the Ministers of God in a right way of calling they should take heed of doing as other people do. And then,

Thirdly, Judah was not compell'd by her Governours to do so as Israel, for Israel you know by Jeroboam and other of the Princes was compell'd to do what they did, and they might pretend.
pretend that it was for their own safety, to save their lives and to save their estates: but there was no such necessity for Judah to do it, for God many times sent godly and gracious Princes to Judah, and there was not such waeis there to compel them, they were not so necessitated to that way of false worship as Israel was, (if we may call it any necessity to that which is evil.) When people have liberty and are not forced but God doth give them liberty that they need not (except they will) be Idolaters, yet for them to close with waeis of Idolatry and Superstition, when they need not, this is more sinful. It is true, heretofore there might have been some excuse, we were forced to it, it was as much as our estates were worth, we must have been cast into prison and persecuted, and that made us do that we did: The Lord be merciful to us for that we rather than we would suffer would joyn in those superstitious waeis that were amongst us. But now thorough Gods mercy we are delivered from that bondage, we are not so compel'd, yet that now for all this our hearts should yet cleave to those old superstitious waeis, this makes our sin so much the greater.

Fourthly, Let not Judah sin, for what then should become of Gods worship? For God had no other people upon the face of the earth but Judah and Israel to worship him; well, Israel is gone from him, and will Judah go too? what will become of the worship of God? A mighty argument to those that make profession of godliness to keep them from the waeis of false worship and wickedness in any kind. If you depart from God too as others do, what honor will God have in the world? what will become of the service of God in the world? Is not God worthy of all honor and of all service from all his creatures? It is pitie there should be any creature in the world that should not honor and serve the blessed and infinite God; But we see most do not, and there are but a few, a handful of people that regard to worship God aright, and shall this few this handful forsake God? where then shall God have any honor in the world? Shall Judah go away too? then the Lord will have no Church, no worship, no service in the world.
Fiftly, God had much mercy in store for Judah, more than for Israel; therefore let not Judah offend: For Christ was to come from that Tribe of Judah, and the Lord promised that he would shew mercy unto Judah when he had said he would reject Israel as indeed he did. Though Judah was carried into captivity as well as Israel, yet God was with Judah in their captivity and promised them a return from it, but he never promised Israel a return in the like manner as Judah. Therefore since God had the more mercy in store for Judah, let not Judah offend.

From hence these Notes are to be observed.

First, We must not do as others do, especially in point of God's worship; we must not make the example of men, not of any sort of men, not of our brethren, not of those that profess Religion, not of those that prosper in the world, we must not make them an exemplar or rule in any thing, especially in the matters of God's worship. Indeed the consideration how others sin against God should be so far from being an argument to draw us unto sin, as it ought to be the greatest argument to draw us from sin; Thus, every sin against God is a striking at God. It's true if there be a common enemy simile come into a City or Town, every one desires to have a blow at him, and when men make this an argument for their sin because others do it, they deal with God as those in a Town would deal with a common enemy, that is thus, why such and such and such go on in such wicked ways, they strike at God, therefore let me strike at God too, when thou pleadest that argument and fairest because such and such do sin therefore I may sin, thou dost in effect as much as say such and such strike at God let me have a blow at him too. Is there any force in this argument? For ever take heed of pleading the example of others in ways of wickedness, and remember this one expression that thou dost in effect as if thou shouldst say, others about me they strike at God and I must have my blow at him too as well as they. In any sin we must take heed of example, but above all in matters of worship. Hence Deut. 12. 30. Take heed to thy self that thou be not snared by following of
the Nations after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these Nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Take heed that God, thou dost not so much as enquire how these people serve their gods and say, I will do so likewise. God would not have us use that argument. Take heed therefore of pleading thus, other people do so and so and other Nations, why may not we do as other Nations do? It is a very ill argument to plead example in matters of worship, I mean that worship that here Judah is forewarned of, that is, worship that is by institution, and above all things the examples of men are not to be followed in points of institution. In any thing in the world there may be more plea for example than in instituted worship and the reason is this, Because that other things have somewhat of them written in the Law of nature in man’s heart, all matters of morality are in some degree or other written in man’s heart by nature, every man hath somewhat of the moral Law written in his heart, but institutions they are such things as depend meerly upon God’s revealed will and are not written in the heart of man: Therefore though we might have a plea to follow the example of others in point of morality, yet there can be no just plea to follow the example of others in point of Institutions, there we must be sure to keep to the rule of God’s Word, to look above all things in points of Institutions to what is written and never to make it an argument that such or such people do so and so. And,

Note

Secondly, a second Note is, That it goes neer to the heart of God when his people offend much more than when others offend. Yet let not Judah offend: Judah was the only people of God, the only true Church of God that remained in the world. When God’s own people offend, Oh that goes neerer unto the heart of God than when others do offend. As Christ said to his Disciples, Will ye also go away? and as Julius Caesar said to Brutus in the Senate that came with a dagger to stab him, What and thou my son Brutus, what thou amongst all others? so fares God, when those that are professors of Religion, that are his people, that are neer unto him, when they
sin against the Lord, what and you also? will you also come
and strike me?

First, There is more unkindness in the sins of Gods people than there Real, 1
is in the sins of others. This grieves the Spirit of God, others do
provoke God, do anger God, but Gods Saints do grieve his
Spirit, for grief is out of love, and the more God loves any the
more grievous is it unto his heart that they should offend him.
The more you love a wife, or a child or a friend, the more doth
it gree your heart that such a one should do any thing that
might justly offend you.

Secondly, There is more unfaithfulness in the sins of Gods people
than there is in the sins of others, for they have given up themselves
unto God in another way than others have done, and the heart of God
confideth in them more. What thou my friend that hath eat
bread at my table, wilt thou lift up thy heel against me? And
Ezs. 63. 8. I said, they are children that will not lye. God con-
fideth in them, and for them to be unfaithful, for Judah to sin,
this goeth to the heart of God indeed.

Thirdly, Gods Name is more polluted by the sins of his people than
by the sins of others. Others, wicked ones offend the will of
God, but they do not pollute the Name of God so much as his
own people do.

Fourthly, The excellency of the graces of the Saints and the ex-
cellency of the state wherein they are, makes their sins to be worse than
the sins of others; As spots of dirt in a sackcloth is not so great
an evil as spots of dirt and stains in a piece of Cambrick or
Lawn, if you have fine cloathes and fine garments and there
be but a stain comes upon them, a spot of dirt, then you will
think that a great evil; but there are some course garments
(as your safeguards) that you make of course things, you
care not so much though they be soild and dirty; So the wic-
ked they are of a course thread, their spirits are little worth,
therefore though they be fullied and defiled it is not so much;
but the spirits of the Saints they are renewed, they have the
Image of God upon them, therefore a spot in them is a great
deal worse: As a spot of dirt upon an ordinary Deal board is
no great evil, but if there be a curious Image and Picture drawn

Simile
upon a table, to have that besmeared is a great deal worse: so if thou art godly thou hast the Image of God drawn upon thy soul, and a sin, a spot in thee is worse than in others. Therefore what ever others do, yet let Gods people take heed to themselves that they do not offend.

Yea, the Saints of God they are the very salt of the earth, the very light of the world; they are those for whose sake God continueth the world in that way he doth, they are the supporters of all, and if they depart from God also what will become of the world?

Fiftly, As the sins of the Saints go neerer the heart of God than the sins of others, so they goneerer to the heart of the Saints. The sin of one Saint goes neerer the heart of another Saint than the sin of any other man doth. Offences of brethren amongst brethren they are the greatest of all. As Sampson said to those that came to bind him, do not you bind me, I care not for the Philistines so much, only do you not bind me: so all the railings and persecutions of ungodly men are not so much as the unkindness of the Saints. Unkindnesses from such as we look upon as godly, go neerer to the heart of those that are godly than all the railings and persecutions of ungodly men. If others of the Saints, such as are godly, should suffer opposition, yea if it should come to this that they should suffer persecution from such as they look upon as godly, Oh how would that cut their hearts! Their complaints to their father of this would be sore complaints indeed.

The force of this, Though Israel do thus, yet let not Judah offend, if it were applied unto us at this time, it would come to thus much, "Though Prelates, though such as were superstitious and corrupt, though they were bitter against and did persecute my servants, yet let not such as have professed godliness, let not such as have been painful and conscientible Ministers, let not such whose consciences have been herefore tender in many things, let not them offend in any bitterness in any harshness against their brethren; This will go more to Gods heart and to the heart of the Saints than any offences of any other that ever was heretofore." All the...
persecutions of all the Prelates and Papists and of all your Popish Priests and such kind of men, they would not be the thousand part so much as any bitterness or harshness from the spirits of those that are looked upon as godly against the Saints; Especially such as heretofore have profet so much tenderness of conscience, and have suffered so much for the tenderness of their consciences because they could not do what they were enjoined to do, and now if they after they have gotten liberty to their own consciences should once come to be harsh and bitter against others that are godly, Oh how sad would this be unto God and unto his people! Oh let not Judah offend what ever Israel do.

Come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven.

There are two things to be enquired here.
1. What this Gilgal, and what Beth-aven was.
2. The reason of the prohibition, why they must not come to Gilgal, nor go to Beth-aven.

The words are ordinarily read and past over without any great observation, but there is much of Gods mind in them.

For the first, Gilgal, it was a most famous place in the borders of Israel, famous heretofore for many things. I know no one place that there are more glorious things spoke of than of Gilgal, except Jerusalem it self. It was famous for these things.

First, There was that great Circumcision after Israel came out of the wilderness, when God rold away their reproach, from whence it had the name Gilgal. For we are to know that all the forty yeers wherein Israel was in the wilderness, none of their children were circumcised, God was so indulgent to his people for that time, because they were to remove up and down according as God should require, they knew not how soon, now if their children should then have been circumcised they could not have carried them up and down so readily. But yet it seems it was an affliction, for God saith he would roll away the reproach of Egypt from off them.
them and therefore commanded that they should be circumcised. Now when they came over Jordan, as soon as ever they came to set foot upon the land of Canaan, or presently upon it, then God required them to circumcise their children. And if we observe it, it was a strange command, for they were now come into the very mouth of their enemies, and all the people of Canaan, all the Kings and Princes of the Countrey were gathered together to fight against them, and yet now they must circumcise even their fighting men, those that had been in the wilderness so long, all those that were under forty years old must now be circumcised, and though they were even in the very mouth of their enemies and by reason of their forenesse after their circumcision they could not be able to stir out against them, yet they must come to it. Thus we see God will have his worship regarded rather than our own safety when he pleareth. And upon this the place was called Gilgal, the text gives the reason, Josb. 5. 9. This day (faith God) have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you, wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. The word is from י"פ that signifies to roll, the Hebrew letter Gimel being doubled and interposed, it is Gilgal. That is the first thing observabell of this place, that there was the great circumcision.

2 Secondly, There was the first Pass-over that was ever kept in the land of Canaan, as appears Josb. 5. 10.

3 Thirdly, In Gilgal there the Manna ceased, and the people were fed with the bread of the Wheat of the country of Canaan; there God gave them that first possession of Canaan to eat of the fruit of the land, that they should not have any need of such extraordinary providence of God to feed them by Manna, but they should eat of the fruit of the land; this was in Gilgal as appears Josb. 5. 12.

4 Fourthly, There did Josua pitch those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan for a memorial & perpetual remembrance of that great deliverance given them by God in drying up the waters of Jordan from before them until they were passed over, as appears Josb. 4. 20.

Fiftly,
Fiftly, Joshua himself together with the Camp kept much in Gilgal, and that after Jericho was taken, after Ai was taken, after the five Kings were slain, yet Joshua kept there, Josh. 10. 6. Yea after the whole Countrey was possed yet still he kept at Gilgal together with the Camp, as appears Josh. 14. 6.

Yea in the sixth place, At Gilgal the Angel of God appeared unto Joshua, Josh. 5. 13, and told him he was Captain of the host of the Lord, and bad Joshua loose his shoes from off his feet for the place whereon he stood was holy. The Angel of God appeared to tell him that he went before as the great Captain of the host of God to give them possession, and the place was holy.

Seventhly, At Gilgal Saul was anointed King and thither he and Samuel often repaired, 1 Sam. 11. 15.

Eightly, Gilgal was the place for sacrificing, the Tabernacle, the Propitiatory was much at Gilgal, as appears 1 Sam. 10. 8. and 1 Sam. 15. 21. And verse 33. of that Chapter when Samuel hewed Agag in pieces, it was in Gilgal, and the text saith, It was before the Lord.

Ninthly, At Gilgal Elijah and Elisha came often, and there they prophesied as 2 King. 2. 1. and chapter 4. verse 38. You see how famous Gilgal was, and yet though Gilgal in these Nine particulars was such a famous place, God gives his people a charge that of all places they must not come to Gilgal. I will give you the reason of the prohibition by and by, only I must first tell you what Bethaven was.

Bethaven was no other than that Town which so often in Scripture was called Bethel, which Bethel signifies the house of God, and it had that name given unto it by Jacob upon God's extraordinary appearing to him when he fled because of his brother Esau, Gen. 28. This place was before called Luz, and it had that name from the abundance of Almond trees which were there, which that word Luz signifieth; but upon God's appearing unto Jacob it changed the name and it is called Bethel, the house of God; And a very sweet Note we may have from thence, and that is this, "That Gods appearing to his people in any place puts a more honorable respect upon it
1.84. Chap. 4.

An Exposition of Ver. 15.

c"than all the pleasant fruits that can grow in a place. A Garden or Orchard, if they were fill'd with Almond trees and the most pleasant fruits that can be, yet they are not so delightful, they should not be so delightful to our hearts, nor would not be if our hearts were right, as the house of God, where God appears to us. If God appear to us in any place though it should be a wilderness, it should have the honor rather than the most pleasant Garden in the world, where we have not the like appearance of God to us. God's appearing makes that place the house of God: where ever God appears, there is the house of God, and that will make a place far more delightful than all the beautiful and pleasant fruits in the world, possibly can do. Thus you see what both places were; but now they are charged they must not come thither. Beth-aven it is no other place than Bethel, and if you will know the reason of the change of the name from Bethel to Beth-aven, I shall shew you presently in giving you the reason why they must not come to Gilgal nor to Beth-aven.

Now the reason why they must not come thither, it was, because though they were such famous places before for God's true worship, yet now they were become the primest places for Idolatry in the whole land, therefore there is a charge here not to come to Gilgal nor to Beth-aven. So in Amos, 5.5, there you have the like charge almost in the same words, Seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal; there it is called Bethel; though (faith God) it hath the name from my house, and once there was a glorious appearing of mine there, yet now do not seek to Bethel, do not so much as enter into Gilgal.

That both these places were now very corrupt by Idolatry, I will make that appear too. As I have shewed you how famous these places were before, so I will shew you how corrupt these places afterward were made. For Gilgal, that place was abominably corrupt, it appears plainly in Hos. 9.15. All their iniquity (faith God) is in Gilgal, above all places there is the greatest iniquity committed, and there I hated them faith God. It was the place where God loved his people and manifested himself unto them, but now, there I hated them, I saw so much
much wickedness in Gilgal that made me hate them now. And it quickly grew to be corrupt, for in Ebuds time the third Judg from Joshua Idols were then begun to be set up in Gilgal; Judg. 3. 19. the text faith, that Ehud turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, now that word translated quarries סולות some turn it, be came ab Idols, from the Idols, and so the word may be translated; And it signifies to engrave, he came from the engravings. There were Idols at Gilgal then. And the reason of the corruption that there was in Gilgal was this, because it had been an eminent place, and that place was accounted very holy because of the great things that had been done there, upon which they set up their Images there, and put much superstitious respect and honor upon the place. They took the rise of their respect to the place from God's much appearing there and the great things that had been done there, and now they began to think that place was holy and so abused it: "As men are subject to abuse places and to put "holiness in places more than God doth because of some "special things that have been done in those places; As we see Papifts do at this time, at the Sepulchre of Chrift, Oh what a deal of flir was there about going to visit the Sepulchre of Chrift! And the very Crofs whereon Chrift was crucified what a flir was there about that as if it were more holy than an\ny other piece of wood! One chip of it was counted worth I know not how much; And the Sepulchres of the Martyrs and Cels of the Munks, men have gone many a fore journey to vifit those places. This is the old vanity of spirit that was a-mongst the people of the Jews. Whereas the truth is that it is not the place that can sanctifie a work except it be appointed by Gods institution therunto, but if there be any sanctity in a place it is sanctified by the work, & not the work by the place; and if the work do sanctifie it, it is but for the present while the holy duties are in exercising. We may say this is the house of God, where the Congregation meets for performance of holy duties, but it is only in regard of the work, when the work is done there remains no impression of holines upon the place, as if Gods worship were not so well accepted in any o-

Note
ther place as in that. This was the vanity that was amongst the Jews, they did therefore abuse the place, Gilgal, because there had been done so great things there, and God hated it so much the more now, I charge you faith he, come not to Gilgal that superstitious place. They thought because it was a place so eminent for many appearances of God, it was therefore the more holy; I do therefore abhor it, faith God.

Come not to Beth-aven.] The reason why they must not come to Beth-aven appears from the change of the name, it was once Bethel, and now it is Bethaven, and the difference between the two names Bethel and Beth-aven is wide and great, Bethel is the house of God, and Bethaven is the house of iniquity, the house of vanity, the house of labor, and the house of affliction, for it signifies all these. That which was my house, which I did once own, being corrupted it is no other but the house of iniquity, and vanity, and the house that brings affliction. Bethaven was one of the places where Jeroboam set up one of his Calves, one of the eminentest places for the Calves, and he took the advantage of the conceit that the people had of the holiness of that place to set up one of his Calves there, & thought thereby to prevail with the people so much the more: now God chargeth them that they should not come there. There was indeed another Town as in Josb. 7, that before was called Beth-aven, but generally that by Interpreters is made another Town, not that of Bethel, but this Town here is no other than that Bethel of which we have such often mention in the Scripture. And some, as Aquila, and Symmachus, they turn the word Bethaven, Domus inausitis, an unprofitable place, for indeed sin and idolatry make places unprofitable.

Come not to Beth-aven.] From whence we are to note, First, We must take heed of coming to places that are dangerous to draw us into sin, especially to false worship. Those places that are dangerous for bodily pollution we must take heed of. Prov. 5. 8. Remove thy way far from her, and get not thou near the door of her house. Do not come so much as nigh her door. Nay, not, why may not I go such a way? may not I go by her house? No you must not go by her house, nor by that way that leads to her house.
house. This is a strange admonition you will say; Mark the very words before the admonition, in the seventh verse, *Hear me now O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth; what are the words of his mouth? Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.* Thus wisdom herself counsels us, howsoever many think they may take liberty to themselves to come neer a temptation, neer to such a place, many have come so neer that they have been taken with the temptation; As you shall see it sometimes in your houses, when you light up a candle, you shall have some gnats and flies that will flutter up and down the light and at first they will keep at some distance, and then get neerer, till at length they singe their wings and lose their lives too; so it is with many, at first they think, they will not do such a thing, Oh God forbid they should do so and so; but they will come nigh a temptation, and be tampering with a temptation and at length they are taken with it and destroyed by it. It is dangerous to take liberty out of Curiosity to go to see places of Idolatry, with pretence only to see Mass, and to go abroad to see the fashions of the Countrey. Dinah went abroad to see the fashions of the Country, but she came defloured home; so there are many that will go abroad to see the fashions of Countries out of Curiosity; I speak not of going when God calleth us to it, but to go merely out of curiosity, it is just with God that we should come home maimed and not whole as we went. In the Lords prayer we pray that God would not lead us into temptation, How do men mock God when they pray to God daily, *Lead us not into temptation,* yet they will venture upon temptations, go to brothel houses, to many places where they know there will be wicked company, yea even thrust themselves into wicked company needlessly, only with this pretence, Oh they will take heed to themselves, and they mean no hurt; Let not that excuse you, when you have a temptation to go to wicked places, to play houses, to brothel houses, to wicked company, satisfie not your selves with this, I mean no hurt; but have you any call from God, can you approve it before God and say, Lord thou hast call'd me
me hither? I suppose you have heard of that story that Tertullian hath of a Christian woman, who being at a play was possessed of a Devil, and other Christians coming to call him out, asked the evil spirit how he durst possess one that was a Christian? He answered, I found her as she is in my own place; so if we would take heed of the Devil, take heed of wicked places.

Secondly, Whatevery where were places have been heretofore, yet when they grow corrupt in God's worship they lose their honor. Rome heretofore hath been a famous Church, as in Rom. 1. we find that the faith of Rome was spread abroad throughout the world, and so they will yet plead for the glory of Rome, because once it was famous. But it is no matter what it hath been, what is it now? Suppose it hath been the seat of Peter, what is it now? If once they are corrupt in themselves they lose the honor of what once they had. Oh let us take heed unto ourselves in this. It is true, England hath also been a famous place for Religion, and Travellers that have come hither have blessed themselves, and blessed God for seeing what they have done, they never saw so much of God as in England: But if we shall corrupt our ways and grow to be Idolaters and Superstitious we may by Gods just judgment be made as infamous and vile as any people upon the face of the earth. And so it is true of particular persons, of persons that heretofore have had much honor among the Saints, have been men of admirable parts and have been useful to the Church, it may be temptation prevails so much with them, I have had such a name, I have done such and such things, I now may be quiet, I cannot but be esteemed of for what I have done. But let a man in his younger time or afterward do never so worthily in the Church of God or Commonwealth, if he decline afterward he loseth all his honor both with God and men, and may be as unsavory salt, and spurned out and troden under foot of men; As Gilgal and Beth-aven though honored before, yet now the people are charged not to come to them. Some men one would have blessed themselves before to be in their company in their families, but now grown...
fo loose, fo rapless in their spirits, fo carnal, fo malignant, fo superstitious, fo vain, that it is dangerous now to come into their company, so that now we may even hear a voice from God calling to us, go not into such a mans company, as here, go not to Gilgal. Thus you have these words opened unto you and what the mind of God is in them. *Come not to to Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven.* It follows.

Nor swear the Lord liveth.] Swearing in it self is lawful, yea it is a part of the solemn worship of God, when God calls for it; And it is such a part of God’s solemn worship as sometimes it is put for all the worship of God in Scripture, *Psal. 63. 12. Is. 19. 18.* Therefore oaths are to be esteemed so much the more sacred; For as God puts an honor upon prayer, that sometimes all the worship of God is called prayer, *He that calleth on the Name of the Lord shall be saved; My house shall be called the house of prayer &c.* So God puts this honor upon Oathes, that all his worship hath sometimes the name of an Oath. Therefore the abuse of Oaths is much the more vile; & when swearing is called for, it should only be by the Name of Lord, we should swear by the Lord when it is lawful to swear and no other way, for by this we acknowledg the Lord to be the searcher of all hearts, the Judge of the heart, implies the All-seeing God, fit to witness to all mens ways, and to be an avenger of all their unfaithfulness, this we hold forth in an Oath. And here is the reason that we must swear by none but by God, because in swearing (I say) we do acknowledge him we swear by to be the searcher of our hearts, the witnesses of all our secrets, and the supreme judge if we be unfaithful; Now this honor is only due to God whether secret or open. God accounteth much of this his honor and will not give it to another. And when we do swear by the Name of God, the Life of God is the greatest title we can give to God in an Oath. It is the greatest Oath of all, God himself doth often swear by his life, and the Angel sweareth by the living God. God loveth that his creature should acknowledge him to be the living God for ever, that is to live to reward that which is good, and to revenge that which is evil.
evil. And therefore Jer. 4. 2. there is an injunction, Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, but it must be in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment. And indeed it is God's mercy to us that he will grant us the use of his Name, that he is willing to be called to witness to our affairs.

But then you will say, why doth God forbid it? In that place of Jeremiah you see it is, Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth; and here, Thou shalt not swear the Lord liveth. How shall we reconcile these? Thus, because God would not have his Name and this his solemn worship abused by Idolaters; When they were before their Idols yet still they would make use of God's Name and would seem to honor God; Oh Jehovah liveth, we acknowledge him and honor him as a living God. This was the guise of those Idolaters, though they forsook the true worship of God and his commandment, yet they would seem to honor God much, the Lord liveth, and we desire to honor this living God. Now faith God, what do you go on in such ways of Idolatry as these and take my Name into your mouths? What have you to do to take my Name into your mouths seeing you hate to be reformed? I will have none of this honor from you faith God, you shall not swear any more,

Applica. the Lord liveth. Many superstitious people they will make much use of the titles of God in their mouths, and have many expressions about God that carry much devotion with them, they will cry out, our blessed Saviour, our Lord and Saviour, and the blessed God, and honouring the Lord and the like, they will say, have many titles of God in their mouths and expressions that carry much devotion with them, but God cares for none of these all the while they worship him according to the traditions of men, after their own inventions, God cares not for all their seeming honouring him, for all their devotion, let them appear to men to be never so devout, God rejects those devotions when they reject his pure and sincere worship. God loves not to have his worship mixed. Zeph. 1. 5. there God chargeth them for swearing by the Lord and by Malcham, that they would put both together; what is the meaning of that? Malcham there signifies, a King, for so the Hebrew
Hebrew word doth, and it seems that this people, though it is true they would sometimes call their Idols by the name of King, Honoris gratia, to give respect unto them, yet there is some probability that in this place more is intended, namely that they would worship God, yea but they would worship their King too, they would swear by God and by Malcham, they made their honor of their King come too near the honor of God; that is one thing (I say) that seems to be specially intended here, they would not reject the true God, but they would let the honor of their King too, too near the honor of the true God. It is true, both are to be honored, but one is to be honored more than the other, and the true distance between both in giving honor is duly to be observed, and not to jumble them both together, to swear by God, and to swear by Malcham, & not observe the true distance between them both; Much less to prefer the will of their Malcham their King before the will of their God. God cares not for any honor that is given unto him if we make any Competitor with him. It is true indeed God rejects not the worship of his Saints because of some mixtures of evil, for there are none that do worship him so but they do mix some sin with it; But now such as chuse to themselves some way of sin, that set up in their hearts and lives some way of sin, and then think it sufficient to give God some outward service and to put off God so, while at other times they follow their own lusts, such worship God rejecteth, therefore faith the Lord here to these Idolaters, You shall not swear, the Lord liveth. It follows.

Verse 16.

For Israel slideth back as a back-sliding heifer.

Here first Israel, the ten Tribes, is compared to a heifer, and to a back-sliding heifer. A heifer, that noted the wantonness of Israel. And here is one argument why Judah must not offend as Israel doth, let not Judah offend as Israel doth, for Israel is as a back sliding heifer: Israel through his sin hath brought himself to be a vile, a wanton heifer, but the emblem of
of Judah is to be a Lyon, Gen. 49. 9. Judah is a Lyon's whelp, he
trooped down, he couched as a Lyon, and as an old Lyon; who shall
rouse him up? It is true that Judah should not refuse the yoke
thorough wantonness and perverseness, but through a magnani-
mous spirit, he should not be willing to be brought under
the yoke of bondage. Israel is as a heifer that through wan-
tonness doth refuse to be brought under the yoke, but let not
Judah do thus, for Judah is as a Lyon, and although Judah
be a Lyon, yet he should come under God's command, to be
subject unto him; but when it comes to be in bondage unto
men and that in matters of Religion, Judah should have a
magnanimous spirit, a Lyon-like spirit; and should cast off the
yoke of men in that regard, Let not Judah be like Israel; Judah
is as a Lyon, Israel as a heifer.

And the word that is translated backsliding, commeth of
It signifies, perverseness as well as backsliding. It is
translated in Scripture stubbornness, rebellion, as in that place of
Exposition about the stubborn and rebellious child, there is
the same word that is here, and many other Scriptures might
be shewn how this word is taken otherwise than here for
backsliding: Israel is a stubborn, a rebellious, a perverse people,
therefore let not Judah be so. And I find the Seventy
translate it thus, squalris narioysiga. Israel, the ten Tribes,
they were like a flung Bullock, Juvenca eestro percita, as if to
be they had by a kind of witchery, or by the byting of some
venemous thing been put into a fury and madness; that is the
force of the word according to the translation of the Seventy,
they translate it (I say) by such a word whereby they would
signifie that Israel was not now like a Heifer only wanton, but
like a Heifer that was bit with some venemous thing, and ran
up and down like a mad thing. There is a great deal of dif-
terence between the wantonness of a beast, and a beast that runs
up and down in a fury and madness as being bit with a mad-
dog. Thus this people was. Ephraim goeth on madly: As
many wicked men go on in ways apparently against light and
conscience, and against the Word, though they know it will
prove to be their eternal ruin and destruction, Conscience tells
them
them so, yet they go on in a madness violently in a rage even down to the pit. This was Ephraim's condition here.

And that which made Ephraim so, it was his prosperity. Real.

Ephraim was grown prosperous and had plenty of food, was fed full and large, and that made them go on in such a fury and rage in the ways of wickedness and sin. That was now fulfilled of Ephraim that was prophesied of him Deut. 32.15.

Those are waxed fat, those are grown thick, those are covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Oh when a people is waxen fat and grown prosperous, then they kick and spurn and forfake God that made them, and lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation; God and his Truth and his Saints and his Ordinance, they are nothing with them, they lightly esteem them, why? because they are waxen fat, they are in their prosperity. You shall have many men upon their sick beds highly esteem of the Ministers of God and of the ways of God and of his word and worship, and then, Oh send for such and such to come to us; but when they are in prosperity they lightly esteem God and all that concerns God. This was the condition of Ephraim. Where have you a man almost but if God let him prosper, except he come in with abundance of his grace, but he grows wanton in his prosperity? Judah was almost in the same way, though here the Lord would not have Judah to be like Ephraim as a wanton heifer spurning and kicking with the heel, yet it appears in Jer. 2.24. that Judah was not much unlike them, Judah is there compared to a wild Ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure, all they that seek her will not weary themselves, but saies God, in her month they shall find her; take her when she is full of spirit and strength and there is no dealing with her, but in her month, when she is more weakened then they shall find her; So many men, take them at some times when they are in the ruff of their pride and prosperity, there is no dealing with them, but when God hath tamed them by affliction then you may talk with them and then they will hear you.

Israel is as a backsliding heifer.] The word that is translated heifer
heifer here, it is in the feminine gender, though it is spoken of the ten Tribes, because being stubborn and raging mad in wickedness, though they did seem to themselves and others to be of brave spirits, yet the Lord looks upon them as people of base and effeminate spirits, of poor and weak spirits. There is none that are stubborn and proud but they think themselves to be of more than ordinary spirits, they are the only brave spirits; but the Lord looks upon those that are stubborn and proud as base and weak spirits, and therefore speaks of them here in the feminine gender.

Now the Lord will feed them as a Lamb in a large place.

I find some, Mercer and Vatablus, they would carry it thus: 
*Lamb ut Agnus pastus, max maculatur.* 
As a Lamb when it hath large food it is soon slain, so God threatneth Ephraim here that he will soon make an end of them, only he will let them prosper for a while and feed them largely, but it shall be for the slaughter. Many men that are fed largely and are in their prosperity, they think themselves blessed, God intends them only for the slaughter; but I think that is not the meaning of the place, they shall be fed as a Lamb. But thus,

As a Lamb.] They are as a heifer raging mad, but I will make them as a Lamb, I will bring such affliction upon them as that I will tame the pride of their hearts. Have you not seen experiences of this kind? did you never see a ruffianly, blasphemous, proud, stubborn spirit, when the hand of God was upon them, tamed?

Fed as a Lamb.] *Parce ac tenueiter,* not fed as a heifer, that noted their prosperity, but fed as a lamb, that notes their adversity, for the food of a lamb differs from the food of a heifer, that which will feed a lamb will starve a heifer. Now faith God, they have been proud and wanton by their prosperity, but now they shall have short Commons, I will bring them down, I will lay them low, they shall be but as a lamb that picks up the grass in the wilderness.

As a lamb in a large place.] That is, dispersed among the Coun-
Countries, amongst the Assyrians and Medes in their captivity, which was a very large Countrey. They would not be satisfied with Canaan (which was a narrower Countrey) and with that Sheep-fold of mine that was there, they shall have more room faith God, they shall go into a large place, but it shall be into their captivity.

Or rather, which I conceive to be the full scope of the holy Ghost in these words, I will feed them as a lamb in a large place. That is, as a lamb that shall be alone; one lamb, he speaks of a lamb singly, because they shall be scattered. They had society and might have made good use of their society where it was, but they did not regard to make good use of it, to edifie themselves in the fear of God, they shall be scattered one in one place and another in another, and they shall be as a lamb alone in the wilderness, succourless, helpless, shiftless, bleating up and down in the wilderness, in the wide vast wilderness, and none to have any regard unto them. As now if you simile should see one poor lamb in a vast wilderness, in a mighty great heath, and in a wilderness where there are a great many Wolves that are ready to devour it, and there is no body near it, no shepheard to look after it, none that regard it, but it goes bleating up and down alone and none takes any care of it; what will become. think you of this lamb? what a succourless condition is it in? So faith God, they have been wanton heifers, but I will feed them as a lamb in a large place, their condition shall be just thus, they shall be carried into captivity and there they shall be bleating and howling and crying out, and in danger of Wolves, but there shall be no body to regard them and succour them. It is a great deal safer for a lamb to be in the flock though it be more pind in, than to be thus alone in a large place. "We love our liberty, and we may have liberty enough, but this our liberty may prove "to be our misery." To keep within the compass of God's commands is the best liberty of all, as David professeth Psal. 119. Then shall I have liberty, when I keep all thy commandments. As for all other liberty it will certainly bring us into straightness, therefore Rom. 2. 4, 5. where tribulation and anguish is threatened.
threatened to be upon the head of every one that worketh wickedness, the word translated anguisf is straightness of place; they shall have straightness of place; you would have elbow room and would fain get out of God's limits: though God may for a time let you have such liberty, yet the conclusion will be anguish of spirit. Oh my brethren there is largeness, there is room enough in God, our souls may expati ate themselves in God, we need go no further for liberty. If we would have liberty out of God out of his bounds, our liberty will prove our undoing and utter destruction. Let us make much then of the society of the Saints while we are not yet through God's mercy scattered up and down in other Countries as some of our brethren have been, though thorough God's mercy some in strange Countries have met with God's fold, and have been in God's fold there, but others have been scattered about and have walked up and down in the streets and have known no body, and have had none to help them in any strait; but now we may meet together, we may be in God's fold and have our hearts refreshed, we may go into our families and pray to gether and sing together: Our condition is not yet as it is here threatened against Israel, that they should be as a lamb in a large place bleating up and down and none to regard them.

If one should be in some parts of Germany and there see an English man in some great strait, wring his hands and making grievous complaints, and no body succouring of him or helping him, there he remembers what he hath been in England, in what fashion he hath lived, and now there is none regards him, this were a sad condition. This is the condition here threatened, They shall be fed as a lamb in a large place.

**Verse 17.**

Ephraim is joined to Idols; Let him alone.

You have heard before that God gives warning unto Judah to take heed of the sins of Israel, of the ten Tribes; And many arguments are used; some you have heard, and others remain.
This 17. verse hath two strong arguments for it.

First, Ephraim is joyned to Idols, Ephraim engaging himself in that way of false worship is now so inwrapped in that sin and guilt that he cannot tel how to get out, he is joyned to it: As it is the way of Idolaters and the curse of God upon them, that when they are once got into that sin it is very hard ever to recover them out of it. *Take heed Judah that you come not into it.*

Secondly, As he is joyned so, being strongly set upon his Idols, so the Lord hath given him up to his Idols. There is this curse of God upon him to say, *Let him alone.* Oh Judah take heed what you do then. So that these words are brought in as two arguments to perswade Judah not to do as Israel hath done; and indeed all the remainder too of this Chapter is brought in this way.

To speak then of these:

Ephraim is joyned to Idols] Ephraim, why Ephraim was dead long ago, Ephraim was one of the Patriarches, the child of a Patriarch at least, he was the grand-child of Jacob, and he had a great blessing upon him; Gen. 48.20. *In thee shall Israel bless, and shall say, God make thee like Ephraim.* Ephraim had a special blessing upon him, such a blessing as that the rest of the Tribes should say, *God bless thee, and make thee like Ephraim* (for Joseph's tribe was in Ephraim and Manasses:) and yet now it is said, that Ephraim is joyned to Idols.

Why Ephraim?

Because that the chief of the ten Tribes that were now joyned to Idols were the children of Ephraim; for Ephraim and Manasses stood in stead of Joseph, that Patriarch, and the children I say of Ephraim were those that were joyned to Idols, which were the chief of the ten Tribes. From whence the first Note is this. That

Children that are wicked they are great disgraces and dishonors unto their parents. Ephraim that was dead long before suffers dishonor by his children that are now joyned to Idols. Let children out of reverence and respect to their parents take heed what they do.

Secondly,
Secondly, all the ten tribes were joined to Idols, why then Expos. 2. is Ephraim named rather than any of the other? The reason is this, because that Jeroboam and the Princes were all of the tribe of Ephraim, and therefore all is put upon them. He doth not say the ten tribes are joined to Idols, but Ephraim is, because indeed the Idolatry of all the other nine tribes was from the Idolatry of Jeroboam and the Princes that were of the Tribe of Ephraim. From whence another Note is this, That,

The Governours of people are usually the causes of the evil of the people, and especially in the point of false worship. If Governours be superstitious and Idolatrous, if they will favour Idolatry, all the people usually or the generality of them will go that way. They contract the guilt of the Idolatry of all the false worship of the people. Ephraim doth, Jeroboam and the Princes that were of that tribe contracts all the guilt of the Idolatry of all the ten tribes, therefore it is said Ephraim only, as if only Ephraim was joined to Idols. Governours therefore that are superstitious and Idolatrous have woful guilt upon them, and we have cause to lament their condition exceedingly. We read in that second of Matthew where the wise men came to enquire after the King of the Jews, they came from a far Countrey, they said they had seen his star and they desired to know where the place was that he should be born in: It was a mighty work, & such a work as did trouble Herod, and all Jerusalem with him was in a mighty trouble what this should be, a strange thing, that such wise men should come so far, from a far Countrey, and tell us of a star that appeared, and that a King of the Jews should be born, all the people were troubled together with the King, so as that they called a counsel of all the chief Priests and the Scribes and such as were expert in the Law, to know where Christ should be born, and this Counsel told them that the place was to be in Bethlehem, and upon that the wise men according to their direction or according to the star, went to find out the place: But mark, you do not read of any one of all the people of Jerusalem that went with the wise men; Although they were stirred at it and thought it a wonder.

Note
wonderful work that a star should thus appear, and that these
wise men should come and enquire for the King of the Jews,
and that their own Teachers should tell them that he was to be
born at Bethlehem and thereupon they went to Bethlehem to
search it out, yet (I say) we do not read that any of the peo-
ple went with them; No, they durst not because of Herod, Her-
od that was then their Prince he did not frame that way, and
therefore not one of the people would follow after the wise
men to search after Christ. So it is usual, that when Gover-
nors discountenance the waiies of God, the people generally
do as they do; And especially Governors that are in waiies
of superstition and Idolatry, and together with those waiies
shall give people liberty to satisfie their lufts, then they will
cleave unto them indeed, as Jeroboam and the rest of the Prin-
ces did, they set up a false way of worship and together with
that they gave liberty unto the people to satisfie their lufts, as
appeared partly before and will further appear in this prophes-
fie; And this was one special way by which they gained the
hearts of the people to them in their false worship because they
gave scope and liberty to their lufts. Let any Princes and Go-
vernors set up and countenance any false way of worship, and
together with it give liberty to the people for the satisfying of
their lufts and they will gain enow unto them, there is no
cause to wonder that such Princes should have so many to
cleave unto them, seeing the people know that by cleaving un-
to them they shall have liberty to enjoy their lufts. That is a
second Note.
Thirdly, Ephraim is joyned to Idols.] The word is פָּדַּה
and it signifies in the Participle, Incantatus, such a kind of
joyning as your Inchanters in the waiies of their conjuration
joyn their unclean spirits to them, that is the propriety of the
word; so Ephraim is joyned to his Idols, cleaveth to his Idols,
or (as some turn it) is glued to his Idols, and that unclean
spirit that carries him on to the waiies of Idolatry, he comes
to be one with him; as it is said of Believers, that they are joyned
to the Lord Christ, and so they are one spirit; so Idolaters are
joyned to the Devil and are become one spirit, that is the mea-
ning.
An exposition of

An Apes Tooth.

Idolaters hearts are very strongly glued to the waies of Idolatry, so that it is very hard for any to get off their hearts. Jer. 8.5. They take fast hold of deceit; they will not easily be taken off. And Jer. 10.11. Pass over unto Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing; Hath a Nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? Kedar was one of the vilest places of all: Was it my faith David, that I have my habitation in the tents of Kedar: yet faith God, go thither and see whether they have changed their gods. Those that are the most vilest Idolaters yet they will not change their gods, their hearts are joyned to their gods, let their hearts be never so base and their gods never so vile; as the Egyptians, they would worship Leaves, and Garlick, and Cats, base and vile things and yet they would not be taken off from their Idolatrous waies. I have read of a people in India in the Isle Zolon, that worshiped an Apes Tooth, and when it was taken from them they offered an unconceivable sum of treasure to regain that their Idol again, they are set upon their waies of Idolatry though it be never so foolish, never so foolish.

And especially if Idolaters have outward prosperity, to be as the glew and cement, to joyn their hearts to that way of false worship, then they are joyned indeed. Take men that are superflitious and if they do prosper in their waies, this their prosperity is the glue and cement to joyn their hearts strongly to those waies, there is no getting of them off from them. And though they have been long in that way of false worship, they do not like it ever a whit the worse. I beseech you observe this note. "In any thing that is false worship antiquity will make it venerable, and they will plead for it by antiquity, and say, it is thus and thus ancient, and their forefathers did thus and thus." But observe it, in waies of the true worship of God men are quickly weary, and because they have had it a great while they desire some novelty, some new thing. You shall have many people much affected with the
the truth when it is first revealed to them, and when they come to hear Sermons or such exercises their hearts are much taken with them, but within a while they loath this Manah and so fall off quickly from it! "So that in the worship of God "that is true and right, there the continuance in it makes it to "be left esteemed; but in false worship the longer people continue in it the more they esteem it, and there antiquity makes "it to be venerable, they do argue from antiquity to make it the "more honorable. This is the wickedness of the hearts of men. But will Idolaters thus joyn to their Idols? will their hearts be glued to them? are they willing to be one spirit with them? Oh how much more should we joyn to the Lord our God, joyn to Jesus Christ, to be as one spirit with him? That exhortation of Barnabus Act. 11. 23. that with full purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord, is a reasonable Exhortation even at all times. Oh let us cleave unto God and his worship so as whatsoever arguments are used yet our hearts may never be taken off from the love of the truth; but let us say as once that Martyr did, Though you may pluck my heart out of my bowels, yet you shall never pluck the Truth out of my heart. And the less there is between God and our hearts the more firmly shall we be glued to him. Those that are godly, gracious, they need not the glue, the cement of outward prosperity to joyn their hearts unto God, but godliness alone, the sweetness that they find in God alone is enough to joyn their hearts unto him even in an everlasting covenant. Those men who seem to be joyned to God and his worship, yet if it be the glue and cement of outward respects that joyns their hearts unto God they will quickly fall off from it; But those that are immediately joyned to God they will for ever keep to him, when there is nothing but God and their hearts together, nothing between God and them.

Ephraim is joyned to Idols] The word that is translated Idols, it is by some translated Angusti, and so indeed it signifies, it signifies pain and trouble, for their Idols did in the conclusion bring them to pain and trouble. There are two reasons why it signifies pain and trouble:

First,
First, Because that Idolaters were willing to endure much pain and trouble in the worshiping of their Idols; which should teach us not to account the worship of God tedious though it be somewhat hard to the flesh; Idolaters would endure pain and trouble to the flesh in the worshiping of their Idols.

Secondly, Such worship will bring pain and trouble to them in the conclusion.

But this is not the principal thing intended here, but the force of the argument is, Ephraim is joyned to Idols, therefore meddle not with him, do not you do as they do. So that when we see people set up false waies of worship in any place, and they are set upon those false waies of worship, we must take heed of communicating with them in these false waies of worship; But this Note, to enter into it will take up a great deal of time.

Let him alone] Demitte eum. Let him go faith God, he is joyned to his Idols, let him go. First, This is a speech to Judah, let Ephraim go faith God to Judah. Ephraim, they indeed are the ten Tribes, the most of the people of the Jews, but yet seeing they set up false worship, let them go, have nothing to do with them, do not converse with them. "It is a heavy judgment of God upon a people when the Saints shall. let them alone, when they shall withdraw from them." If God had any Saints in the world they were in Judah, and faith God to these Saints of his, let Israel alone and withdraw from them, though they be your brethren and Countrey men yet let them alone. Many wicked men they make nothing of this, and say when as Gods people that are the most strict, and holy, and gracious, shall withdraw from them, and as heretofore they went out of the land because they saw it so defiled with superstitious vanities, let them all go say they, we are well rid of them; And who knows but you may meet with such expressions before you die? that you may have many that will be willing to be rid of those that are most godly and gracious. Well, whatsoever men think and say, let them know it is a dreadful curse of God:
upon a Nation for the Saints of God to withdraw and go from them, for so God threateneth it as one of the most dreadful curses; Judah, let them alone, have nothing to do with them: so when God shall speak to his Saints that they shall withdraw from others of their brethren, (I say) it is one of the most dreadful judgments of God upon a people whatever they think of it. You know that expression that you have of the most fearful curse of God upon those that are wicked in the 1 Cor. 16. 22. He that loves not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha. Anathema, let him be accursed, but Maranatha the meaning of that is, the Lord cometh; Maran it signifies the Lord, in the Chaldee and Syriack; therefore in Dan. 4. 19. and Dan. 5. 23. there that word is translated Lord, My Lord the fram be to them that hate thee, and Thou hast lifted up thy self against the Lord of Heaven, the word is Mari there, from whence that word Maran in the Syriack comes; Daniel living in Chaldea used that phrase for the Lord, And atha signifies to come, Deut. 33. 2. The Lord cometh with thousands of his Saints, the word in the original there is atha* So that you have in Scripture these two words Maran and atha; what then is the meaning of that, Let him be Anathema Maranatha? That is thus, when men shall forsake Christ and the waies of his worship after means have been used with them, then Anathema Maranatha, that is, let all the Saints of God leave them to the coming of Jesus Christ, let them alone, do not meddle with them, when you have used all means you can then withdraw your selves from them and leave them unto the coming of Christ, and Christ will deal with them well enough; Let them not only be excommunicated, for some when they were excommunicated though the Saints withdrew themselves from them yet they sought to gain them again, but some were so direfully excommunicated that they were to be let alone to the coming of Christ; So when those that are godly shall first labour to deal with such as are wicked and ungodly by admonition, and perswasion, and counsel, and they shall be refractory, and stout, and stubborn, and be as swine to trample under feet those pearls, or as dogs to turn again and rend them,
them, they are then to let them alone, that is, to let them alone to the coming of Jesus Christ; and even in their own hearts say, we see no means can do them any good, Maranatha, the Lord cometh and he shall deal with them himself when he comes.

Expos. 2. Let them alone.] The Lord speaks to the Prophet, as if he should say, Hosea, you can do no good upon them, it is in vain for you to meddle with Ephraim, Let him alone; just as Christ gave order to his Disciples when he sent them forth to preach the Gospel, that if any place rejected them they should go away and shake the dust off their feet, it shall be a testimony against them faith he; so faith God here to the Prophet, Let them alone, spend not your strength any more upon them. The exhortations that come from the Saints, but especially from Ministers of the Gospel, from Ministers of God, be they what they will be, they are pearls and precious things, and God will not have them despised, he will not have them spent in vain; therefore there is a time even for the Ministers of God to let people alone. In Exod 33. 7. we read that when the people had notoriously sinned against God, Moses took the Tabernacle of the Congregation and pitched it without the Camp, he went away from the people and did separate from them till they did repent, and would not come amongst them, he took the Tabernacle and went away from the Camp at a great distance from them, more than ordinary: So there is a time even for the Ministers of God to hold their peace and let people alone. Many people think they are troubled with Ministers, and they could wish they would let them alone, why do they trouble us? we were quiet enough before they came, we would they would let us alone. There are many guilty consciences that cannot come to a powerful Ministry but they find that the Minister hath in every Sermon to do with them, and he will not let them alone in their wicked ways, and this troubleth them and they had rather be let alone; had you so? It is one of the most dreadful judgments in the world for God to say, let such a Ministry let a man alone. It may be some of you may be weary of the faithful Ministers.
nister of God; you may be rid of them perhaps, God may take them away and you may be let alone, but yet know it is the brand of God's wrath upon you.

Thirdly, This letting alone, it shews that God himself would let them alone too, it is an evidence of God's rejection of this people; It is as if a father that had used means to reclaim a rebellious child, and he regards nothing that is said, at length faith the father, let him alone: what do you think is the meaning of this, if the father should say so? it is as much as if he should say, I have done with him, I will own him no more, I will meddle no more with him: If a servant should be stubborn and rebellious and after much means used to reclaim him should not be reclaimed; the Master faith, let him alone let him take his own course, I will have no more to do with him; So here when God faith, Let them alone, it is as if he should say, let them take their own waies, let them have their lusts to the full, let them joy and joyn and joyn to their Idols and satisfie themselves with their own devices, Let them alone. From hence there are these two Notes that are of mervailous use.

First, That God hath a time to give over men to themselves, to say that his Spirit shall no longer strive with them. Oh many a man hath felt the Spirit of God drawing, strugling, striving with him to draw him from such and such a wicked way; he hath felt (I say) Gods Spirit mighty and strong, what will you still go on in this way of wickedness, uncleanness, drunkenness, oppression, injustice, profanation, hypocrisy, self-seeking and the like? but he hath been striving against the Spirit of God and his lusts have even gotten the victory over the Spirit, so that God faith, My Spirit shall no longer strive, I will not struggle in vain, but let him go on and have his own waies; Oh it is dreadful when the Lord shall say of a drunkard, of an unclean person, of an hypocrite, I have been striving so long with them but yet their hearts have been opposite to me, let them alone in that wicked way and let them go on and satisfie themselves in their wicked devices; Psal. 81. 12. They would none of me faith God, they would none of my waies.
So I gave them up to their own counsels. Oh this is a dreadful gift! Many men that will set their counsels against God's counsels, and will do it so long as that God at length gives them up to their own counsels: You will set your thoughts against my Truth, your counsels against mine, well, take your counsels, satisfie your selves in your own waies. And you know that place in the latter end of the Revelation, He that will be filthy, let him be filthy still: Saith God, Let him alone; wil you be filthy? be filthy then. And that in Ezek. 24.13. Because when I would have purged them they would not be purged, therefore they shall be purged no more faith God; I will let them alone, I will never seek either by my word or by my works to do them any further good, they shall be purged no more.

And the reason of this is:

Real. 1. Because God hath no need of men. God doth this to shew that he hath no need of you; Indeed he seeks by his Word to draw you to obedience to his service, and you stand off and draw from him and will not come on; At length God will manifest himself that he hath no need of your service, he can honor himself without you, though you perish as filthy and dung everlastingly.

2. God therefore will let men alone in their sin, because he doth know how to fetch out glory to his own Name from their sinnes. You will go on in your wicked waies, you will be stubborn and stout faith God, do you think to hinder me of my glory that way? well, do you take your fill of your lufts, I know how to glorifie my self out of that sin of yours that you do so much against my glory, therefore take your fill of it.

Obs. 2. Secondly, which is the chief, It is the most most full judgment of God upon any people, upon any person, when God shall say in his wrath, Let him alone, go on. The word is רלמה and it is as much as to say, Let him be quiet, and Tranquillus: that quiet will prove a dreadful storm. You know what the wise man faith, Wo to him that is alone, Oh wo to him that God faith, Let him alone, that is thus alone. Many men bless themselves when they are let alone, and desire it, Let us alone say they: Oh but when God shall say, Let them alone, this is a most dread-
ful thing indeed. It was a fearful evil, it proved at least to be 
a fearful evil to Adam in Paradise when God let him alone, 
when God left Adam to himself what became of him? he undid 
himself what in him lay and all his posterity, when he was but 
left to those natural abilities he had it proved in the conclusion 
dreadful enough. Yea and when God shall but leave his 
own Saints, that have grace in them, shall but leave them for 
a little while unto themselves, Oh what mischief comes of it! 
As in 2 Chron. 32. 31. Hezekiah was left to himself but a while 
and what a deal of misery did he bring upon himself, 
when God did but leave him to himself to try what was 
in his heart? What, are there such evil consequences upon 
Adam in Paradise left alone, and the Saints left alone 
here, Oh what a dreadful thing is it then when God shall 
leave a sinner alone, I mean one that hath nothing else but 
sin in him, a wicked wretch that hath no grace at all in 
him?

First, This is a testimony of very great disrespect in God of 
his creatures, in this, that he accounts them not worthy of 
any further meddling with, he loves them not so well as to 
meddle any further with them; it is a sign I say of great dis- 
respect of God unto them, as if God should say, well there are 
others indeed that are ill enough, that are very great sinners, 
but I have mercy for them, I intend to draw them to myself, 
I intend to shew them the evil of their ways and to turn 
them to me that they may be saved, but as for these I have 
nothing to do with them faith God, I have no mercy for them, 
let them alone, let them shift for themselves as well as they 
can.

Secondly, The evil is great, because they are then let alone Real 2, 
when they are going apace unto misery. To let a man alone 
when he is at home in his house and all things convenient a- 
bout him, is not so much, but if you should see a man in a mad simile 
humor running to the water to drown himself, and then to 
let him alone this were a great judgment. Though when a 
man walks in the street in an ordinary way no man will med- 
dle with him but let him alone; but if you should see a man 
running;
running into the fire, or running to call himself into a Well or a Pond, no one then would let him alone: But now the Lord sees sinners running headlong into misery, into the bottomless pit, and even then God faith, Let them alone.

Real, 3. Again, They were in the midst of abundance of dangers and yet God faith, Let them alone. When a man is in safety among his friends and you let him alone it is not so much, but suppose you should know of one that were environed round about with adversaries, or that there were wild beasts round about him ready to devour him, and this message were brought to you, Oh there is such a friend of ours in great danger, and you should say, what if he be, let him alone, let him shift as well as he can: So we are to know that all sinners that are going on in their evil ways they are in woful danger, dangers on every hand, and the Lord sees and takes notice that they are in the midst of dangers, yet faith God, Let them alone, they shall not have my protection and help.

And this is a just punishment of God upon wicked sinners that will go on in their wicked ways.

Real, 4. Fourthly, When God faith, Let them alone, he intends this as the making of way unto some fearful wrath that is to follow after. Let my mercy and goodness let them alone but it is that they may fall into my wrath, and that will not let them alone, that will trouble them, howsoever they cannot endure to be troubled by my Word, by my Messengers, by my Spirit, but my Wrath shall trouble them afterward, that shall not let them alone; as in that place Ezek. 24. 13. before quoted, Thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee; they shall not have any means to trouble them for a while, but at length my fury shall rest upon them. When the Lord shall seem to be quiet toward men and let them alone, it is but to make way for fearful wrath that is coming after.

Real, 5. Fifthly, If God once inflict this judgment upon sinners to say, Let them alone, if God will not vouchsafe to speak unto them any more, he will not then vouchsafe to hear them speak unto him any more. If God once shall take away his Word from
from them. If once the Lord shall say, they would not hear me, they shall never hear me more, *Let them alone,* God will then likewise say, I will not hear them, let them cry in the anguish of their spirits I will let them alone; that is certain: When God shall let sinners alone in regard of his mercy then he will let them alone too when the greatest wrath shall be upon them. As thus, when they shall come under the greatest affliction, the most dreadful miseries and torments in this world and eternally in the world to come, when they shall then be crying, and roaring, and yelling out in the anguish of their spirits unto God, Oh that God would now have mercy upon us! God will let them even then alone, I will bring them into the fire faith God, and then I will leave them there; Oh think of this when you feel that there was a time when God was stirring and striving with your hearts, but now it is not so as before, yet you are worse in your lives than before.

And then further, It is a dreadful sign of reprobation Real.6 for God to say of a people or of a person thus, *Let them alone.*

For first, What is reprobation? Reprobation certainly is Reprobation not for God to decree to damn men, you mistake in that, that is not the first act of God upon any man; but thus, reprobation is this, for God to decree whereas there are some that he hath set his heart upon, he is resolved to do them good, there are others, he doth not presently decree to damn them, but he doth decree to leave them unto themselves, that what they earn they shall have and no more, he will deal with them according to their works, he will do them no wrong, he will not be unjust to them, he will not damn them but for their justice. Sin. he never decrees to damn any but for sin; but he decrees this, he will leave them to a course of justice, I will give them what is fit for them to have in creation, I will make such a covenant with them, and then I will leave them unto themselves, and what they work for they shall have; this is then another kind of reprobation, and worse than that first; that is reprobation for God to decree to leave a man to himself when...
An Expedition of

Chap. 4.

when he had no sin in him, as God did not make man with
sin at first; suppose you were now made according to the Im-
age of God without sin, yet if God should decree to leave
you fully and eternally to yourself, you were but a reprobate;
but now when God sees a man in the gall of bitterness and in
the bond of iniquity, now for God to leave him to himself,
this is reprobation of the second Edition, this is a most dreadful-
ful reprobation indeed,

Secondly, There is a reprobation in it in this regard, That
God now doth manifest that he doth intend to fetch his glo-
ry from this sinner out of his ruin, he manifeseth no o-
ther now; for thus, Certainly God will have glory from e-
every creature, howsoever you may resist God in his glory, God
will have it, he will fetch it out from you; Well, but now on
the first hand, God he would have his glory from his crea-
ture in the ways of obedience and service, but they deny
this to God, they will not give him this glory, they will
have their own will, they will set up themselves in God's
Throne: Well faith God, I have used such and such means to
draw their hearts from those ways to my self, but they stand
out, Let them alone now, As if he should say thus, I have
thought now of another way to fetch out my glory from
them, as he reasoned in the Gospel, when he could not pro-
vide for himself one way, I know what I will do faith he; so
faith God, I am denied my glory one way, well I know what
to do, I have another way, that is, to glorifie my infinite Ju-
stice and the power of my infinite wrath; they have refused
to give me glory by obedience and coming in to me, I will
not have my glorie that way, but now I will rather chuse to
have my glorie from them in their everlasting misery, they
shall be spectacles of my wrath and justice, and it shall be
known to Angels and men unto all eternity what my infinite
justice and power is able to do, therefore let them alone to
that faith God.

Real. 7 And further, When God shall say of any, Let him alone, it
is a greater judgment than if he should inflict all the outward
judgments of this world upon them: Too many of you are a-

Aog.
fraid of sickness, of being spoild of your goods, that God should let the enemy in upon you and all should be taken from you, this were a great judgment. Oh but this judgment here in the Text is a greater judgment than if you were stripped of all the comforts in the world and brought into the miserablest condition that ever any creature was upon the earth in regard of outwards, you were not under such a dreadful judgment as this, for God to say, Let them alone; better any judgments than spiritual judgments; As the spiritual blessings of God bestowed upon the Saints are the greatest blessings, Ephe. 1. 2. Oh blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things; for the judgments of God that are spiritual judgments they are the most dreadful judgments of God in the world. Oh that we could have our hearts poiffelt with a fear of those to fear spiritual judgments more than all the judgments in the world!

And yet more, This is not only worse than all, outward judgments here in this world, but it is worse for a man to be given over by God to himself, than to be given up to the Devil. If God should give up any man to the Devil and say, Devil take him, poiffels him (as once he did poiffess many in Christ's time) it were not such a fearful judgment as this, to say, let lufts take him and rule him, let him be given up to his own hearts lufts, let him alone to them. And that is apparent out of that place where the Apostle gives order for the incestuous person to be given over unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his soul might be saved: When one is given up to the Devil in Excommunication or any other way, it may prove to the salvation of his soul; but this judgment of God saying Let a man alone, it is for the destruction of his soul, not of the flesh, it tendeth directly to the destruction of the soul though it may be in the mean while the flesh may be saved. It is so with many, There are many that God letteth alone and that proveth the destruction of the soul, but perhaps the saving of the flesh; As thus, perhaps many that went on in wickedness, God was chastising them and afflicting them, well
this tended to the destruction of the flesh though to the saving of their soul; yea but they would rather live in prosperity and ease and have their sin; well faith God, you shall do so, you shall have ease and prosperity and have your sin, that is, your flesh shall here be saved, but your soul shall eternally be destroyed. Therefore it is worse than to be given up unto the Devil.

Ref. 9. Yea further, For God to say, Let him alone, it is worse than to be sent down to Hell presently, for when one is left alone to himself he will encrease his sin most dreadfully all the time of his life, and as his sin doth encrease, so his torment doth encrease; therefore it is a most dreadful thing to be let alone.

Ref. 10. Yea further, When God faith, Let a man alone, you will say, God should pity him then, alas what can a man do? No but his condition is thus, when he is let alone though he be without the grace of God, yet he must answer for as much as he might have done if he had had that grace which he hath justly deprived himself of; there lies the evil of it further;

When God leaves a man alone he must not think but he is to answer still for the motions of God's Spirit though he hath them not, and for the means of grace though he enjoy them not, for he hath deprived himself of them; For look what means of grace we thorough sin have deprived our selves of, we must answer for them, and there is none of your reasons but may be convinced of it; I will give you a plain instance; Suppose you send your servant to market to buy a commodity you give him money whereby he may do it, but he goes into an Alehouse or Tavern and drinks it away, he cannot bring you that you sent him for, but you may justly require it, and punish him for not doing of it; he may say, what would you have me do that I cannot? I cannot bring it you without money; yea but the Master may say, I gave you monie, it is your fault you have bezelled it away: So God may justly require of these men all that they might have done by all the means of grace they should have had, God gave you that means you have bezelled it away by your sin.

Again
Again further, When God shall say, Let him alone; his condition is dreadful in this, that now all the means of grace are made unprofitable to him, yea cursed to him, and they are turned to the quite contrary end; For the word will work one way or other, either to be the favour of life unto life or of death unto death; and so the Sacrament, either to be the seal of Salvation or the Seal of damnation. Now all means are not only unprofitable, those means that do other souls good; It may be the poor child of a wicked parent comes unto the word, and there he finds God revealing himself unto him; and the Spirit of God drawing his heart unto himself; but there is his parent of whom God hath said, Let him alone, he sits under the means and gets no good: So perhaps the Master, he is one upon whom this judgment is past, Let him alone, he sits under the means and gets nothing, and his poor servant he comes and his soul is enlightened, his heart is enlarged because this judgment is not upon him.

Oh my brethren, upon this (because the point is of so great consequence I could not passe by it lightly) you may learn from hence,

First, what poor creatures we are all. God need not say, Let my power, and wrath, & justice come upon them to make them miserable; if God do but say, Let them alone, we are miserable presently, we are lost and undone presently, As in simile nature, If God should say to any of you as soon as you are born, Let this creature alone and let none help him, what poor shiftless faceless creatures had we been? So for our souls, take one that hath the most excellent gifts in all this Congregation, yea take one that hath the most excellent graces, if God should but say, Let him alone, he would quickly bring himself to misery; It is through the strength of that grace in the Covenant that God will never say to those that are members of his Son; Let them alone for ever.

Secondly, Oh let us fear and tremble at this judgment. E. Ufe 2: specially let them take this to heart that have felt the Spirit of God stirring in their hearts, and the Word coming to their consciences, yet they have gone on, directly against Gods Word.
Word and the motions of his Spirit; Oh that this day the fear of this great God may fall upon them, lest God should say, Let them alone! Perhaps God hath not said so yet, but who knows but that upon the next wilful sin thou comitted, God may say concerning thee, Let him alone? and then thou art undone for ever; Oh fear and tremble.

Perhaps some of you may say, God hath surely said this of me already, I should not be so unprofitable under the means else, I should not hear such powerful Sermons and get so little good, I should not have such and such corruptions prevail over me; I am afraid this is pronounced already against me.

I am loth when I speak of this dreadful judgment (which is indeed the most dreadful in all the Book of God) to let any poor soul go that hath need of comfort without receiving what is due to him.

To answer thee then:

1. First, It is a good sign that God hath not let thee alone when thou art troubled in the fear of thy heart lest God should have let thee alone. Commonly those men that God hath left alone they go on and are quiet and are never troubled about it, but please themselves in their own hearts lusts.

2. Secondly, It is a good means to keep thee from being let alone. Those that are afraid lest God should leave them alone, and upon that can say in the uprightness of their hearts, Oh I tremble under this judgment, I had rather God should give me up to all the Cavaliers, to all the Devils in Hell than to my own hearts lusts, it is a signe that this judgement is not upon thee, and it is a means to keep it from thee.

And,

3. Thirdly and lastly, If thou hast yet a heart not to let God alone, God hath not a heart to let thee alone. So long as thy heart keeps up to God that thou wilt not let him alone, (you know it is the Scripture phrase, when Moses was so earnestly seeking God in prayer, let me alone faith God to Moses) though thou findest not God coming to thee as thou desirest, thou attendest upon God in the word, and in reading, and meditation, and all
all the means thou knowest, and yet thou dost not find God come, and yet for all this thou art not weary of God's service and art resolved thou wilt not let God alone but if thou perish thou wilt let it be thy last breath to be crying unto God and never let him alone, peace be unto thee, God hath not let thee alone so long as this frame of heart doth abide in thee. Those of whom God faith, let them alone, usually they begin to be more sluggissh in prayer than before, to break off prayer in their families in their closets, and then perhaps to fall objecting against it, why, What is there for it to prove such things must be done and the like? and so by degrees they will come to have no heart unto any holy duty; but if thy heart be kept in quickness and activity and life to be seeking God and resolving not to let him alone, surely God will not let thee alone.

Lastly, Oh bless God if thou findest that he hath not inflicted this judgment upon thee. Though perhaps thou hast many outward judgments in the world, it may be some of you are spoiled of all your goods and have great afflictions upon you, Oh let this be a means to quiet your hearts that though God hath taken from you many comforts in this world, yet blessed be his Name he hath not left me alone, yet I find his Spirit within me, I find his Grace within me, I find his Word working in my heart, there are many other men that have outward comforts, they have fair houses, great possessions and lands, and brave cloathes, Oh but the Lord hath let them alone; though I have afflictions upon me yet blessed be God he hath not inflicted this judgment upon me, he hath not let me alone.

And let us bless God in regard of the Kingdom. Surely the wails of God toward this Land are such that we have hope that God hath not pronounced this judgement upon England. God might have said unto England, England hath been joyned to Idols, let him alone. One would have thought that some three years since and a little more that we were in a condition fit to be let alone, but in this time the Lord hath been so stirring and working for England as it may appear evidently that God will not let us alone, and blessed be God that he will
will not let us alone, that he will scourge and afflict us sorely rather than not purge out our idols. And that people, and that soul that had rather have God purge them soundly than let them go on in any sin, surely God doth not let that people and soul alone. It is true indeed, great chastisements are upon us, but till they al hitherto tend to our purging, not our ruin, it is because the Lord will not let us alone. It may be many think it would be better if it were with us now as as it was four years since, then we had no such noise and rumours of war, there was no such spoiling and killing as now; what is the English of this but thus much? Oh it was well with us when we were going on in superstitious and idolatrous ways, going to Rome as fast as we could, that God might have said then, Let England alone: If God should have said let them go to Rome, let Idolatry be set up there, this would have been a greater judgment than all the blood-shed in England at this day: but in that the Lord is yet striving with us, though we be struggling against him, let us bless his Name.

Verse 18.

Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her Rulers with shame do love, Give ye.

Their drink is sour.] I find some Interpreters carry this word thus, as if it noted their excess in drunkeness and luxury, as if they powred down drink till it fowred in them, and then they vomited it up; So Luther translates the words, they do most filthily and wildly gormondize drink, and eat and pamper themselves. I remember Luther upon the place hath this note, faith he, Idolaters they love to pamper the flesh, they drink even to vomiting again, but for the true worshiping of God, that faith be, is cut more short in these outward things, and it is hungry and cold. We find that the false prophets were pampered at Jezebel's table, when poor Micaiah was fain to be fed with bread and water of affliction. So Luther and divers other Interpreters carry the word. But I think there is more in it.
The word that is here translated *drink*, it carrieth within it their festival meeting, *Convivium recepti*, that is, their feasts and their meetings, it is as wine that is sour and hath lost the spirit and favor of it; For drink they understand their drinkings, that is, the comforts that they have in this world, that these Idolaters do so much satisfy themselves in, as your superstitious Idolatrous people they always seek to pamper their bellies and to be sure to have outward comforts: Now faith he, all this is sour. And indeed all the comfort of this world when God is forsaken, it is but as sour drink, the sweetness and quickness, and life of all is taken away when God and his worship is forsaken: So you may take *their drink* by a Sennechdoch, for all the comforts of this world, even all those carnal things they seek to satisfy their flesh withal, it is all sour, for God is gone when his worship is gone. Perhaps if you had had superstition and Idolatry set up amongst you in England, you might have had your drink and your wine at your tables more pientifully, but if God and his Worship had been gone, all had been sour no sweetness in any thing. I appeal to those that have proved Apostates though they have apostatized to enjoy comforts to the flesh, how sour and unsavory have the comforts of the flesh been unto them? whereas let a people keep close to God and his worship and then their drink if it be but water it will be sweet unto them; As in Acts 2. the Saints that believed they did eat their bread with singleness of heart and with gladness. We were wont to say, Brown bread and the Gospel is good cheer; let us have but bread and water so be it we may have the Gospel and the Ordinances and the Worship of God, and it will be sweet unto us; but let us have wine and all manner of drink at our tables, if we have not the Ordinances and Worship of God, it will be all sour to us. The ten Tribes had as good drink as Judah had, yet all the drink of the ten Tribes was sour.

Thirdly, *Their drink is sour.*] it notes thus much, Their society is unsavory and sour, for so their *Convivium* their meetings together for feasting and drinking noteeth many times communion and converse and familiarity, as the drinkings...
kings of people together you know it is a means to keep their converse and maintain familiarity one with another. So the meaning is, that their converse one with another when they met together at one another's tables and were drinking together, what favor, what relish can any gracious heart take in it? You may observe it of all your superstitious people that have heretofore lived amongst you, how unsavory have they been in their converse? Perhaps heretofore they have been forward in the ways of Religion and then converse with them and there hath been some life and quickness in them, but when they have yielded once unto superstitious vanities, all their converse is become unsavory. It would have been so with you if these times had not come, perhaps you might have met together and have had brave cheer and drinkings of all sorts and have had many merry meetings, but the truth is all your merry meetings would have been sour and sapless, there would have been no sweetness in your converse, and those of your brethren that had been gone from you into the howling wilderness would have found more favour in their water there than you could have had in all the drinks you could have devised to your selves.

Fourthly, Their drink is sour. That is, even all their worship and their sacrifices, for so their drink is taken by others, for all their drink offerings, they were wont to have feasts in their sacrifices, faith God, all their offerings be sour, the favour, and sap, and life of them is taken away. These are the four hints by which we may come to understand what the scope of the holy Ghost is in these words, Their drink is sour.

It follows:

They have committed whoredom continually.

Expos. 1. They are unwearied in their wickedness, continually they go on in their way of whoredom, of their bodily whoredom but especially of their spiritual whoredom, that is, when they are worshipping of their Idols they are never weary, continually they commit whoredom. Oh what a shame it is for those that are:
are godly that they should be weary of the service of God when Idolaters are not weary of the service of their Idols? What rebuke is this to you that if you come to a Sermon you are weary (perhaps some of you) if the glass be but out a little; but if you were in company in a Tavern to sit up all night you are not weary at all? They commit whoredom continually, they are at the service of their Idols and satisfying of their lusts never weary there, but they are soon weary of my service.

But I take it there is somewhat further meant, Fornicantur in fornicando, they commit fornication in committing fornication, that is the propriety of the word in the Hebrew, that which they do they do it intensively, in doing they do it. As the Apostle faith of Elijahs prayer, Jam. 5. In praying he prayed, that is, he did pray intensively, he prayed strongly, he prayed powerfully with his whole strength put out in prayer; So the words are here, in committing fornication they committed fornication, that is, they give up their strength to their Idols, they are mightily intent upon their Idols. And therefore have nothing to do with them (still the argument goes on) Have nothing to do with them for fear that fearful judgment be upon you before spoken of: Have nothing to do with them because their society and converse is unseemly: Have nothing to do with them because they give up themselves to their lusts. How should we give up ourselves to the service of God, to pray in praying, to hear in hearing &c. seeing Idolaters in committing Idolatry do commit Idolatry.

Their Rulers with shame do love, Give ye.

The word that is translated Rulers, it is הָגִים her shields, that is, their protectors, so the word in the Hebrew signifies. And there is a very special note to be learned from hence, it is this, That Magistrates and Rulers they should be the shields of the people where they live, for their defence; And so in Scripture phrase they are called, Psalm 47.9. The Princes of the people are gathered together, the shields of the earth belong unto God; That is, the Governors and Rulers of the earth (so I find Interpreters carry

Obser.
Ps. 47.9. carry it) they belong unto God: they are in God's stead, and they govern in God's Name. Rulers, Governors, are to be the shields of the people, for they are to bear off all dangers; All dangers that may come upon the people they are to be willing to put themselves forward to bear them off. Have not our Worthies in Parliament shewn themselves to be shields in this thing? Have not they put themselves next us and our dangers, next us and our harms? And do you not think if the Adversarie prevail they will first swallow up them, I mean those of them that are faithful? Whereas those that were before in Parliament when they looked upon it as an honor to be Parliament men and there was no danger, Oh they were brave Parliament men then, and they made brave speeches, but when they saw things come to be hot and that there were darts shot against the people, and that they must be the shields to keep off the hurt of those darts from the people, away they go; they love to be brave golden shields, enamelled shields fit for no service, but when it came to service away they go. We are therefore to honor these that will stay, and though they are not perhaps so brave and gilded as those, yet they are proved to be shields of good metal that will not break, but will keep off the darts that are shot against the people. And indeed Rulers and Governors should be men of good metal, willing to bear off much hardship from the people; And they should not think to be honored only but they should take their honor as a burden also. We are not therefore to think upon our Rulers as too much honored, Oh consider of their danger together with their honor. So for the Governors in Armies, it is true they have pay more than others, but if they be faithful they hazard their lives more than others, and they are the shields of the people. It is an evil thing when a Common wealth have none but wicked Magistrates, they have then nothing but as if they had shields to defend them that are made of rotten wood.

They say with shame, give ye.

Expos. They love this, so it is in your books: And I find that it is turned by some, they love to bring shame, they love not to say
bring ye, but they love to bring shame: and if you should translate it thus it is, the words in the Hebrew only altering the points of them, and so they may be read, they love to bring shame, that is, they being of vile spirits themselves they do not care what becomes of the people, they care not for putting the people upon any shameful ways, what care they so they may have their ends, let them perish as dogs and let them do that which shall be a perpetual reproach to them to all posterity, so they may have their lusts satisfied.

Secondly, Others translate them thus; with shame they call, bring ye, that is, with shame they call for pleasure to the flesh, so Arius Montanus. Let us have our pleasure, our tables furnished, let us have our honors and what care we what becomes of the people, let us have our minds, do you our service what we would have done, and what becomes of them it is no matter. Such kind of Rulers and Governors had the ten Tribes when they were such Idolaters: And it is just with God when people forsake the true worship of God that he should send them such Governors as these are.

But I rather take the scope of the Spirit of God to be according as we read them, to rebuke them for their bribery. They love with shame to say, Give ye. They will not only take liberty privately but they are grown so impudent that they will sell all the good of a Kingdom, the liberty of the Subject all for their own gain. They say with shamegive ye. It is a great judgment of God upon a people when Magistrates and Governors are given to bribery, to regard gifts and the increase of their estates more than the publick good. Pro. 17. 23 A wicked man takes a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment. It is a sign of a wicked man to take a gift though it be but secretly, out of the bosom, but if he take it openly it is a sign of more impudence. A wicked man takes a gift out of the bosom, he is loth to be seen at first, and he doth it to pervert judgment; these men that should be as shields to the people, for base ends they will betray them. What, to subject such a glorious thing as Justice to base ends; Justice which is the glory of
of God, the glory of a Kingdom, and the glory of a man, which he should be clothed with as a robe, as a diadem, to subje& it to base ends, for gain, to say, Give ye, this is abominable. For a Justice of peace to be strucken dumb with the appearance of Angels, Oh it is an evil thing: For Justices to be bound to the peace by a gift in a basket, this is a most abominable thing. 

Exod. 33. 8. A gift blindeth the eyes of the wise and perverseth the word of the righteous. Though men are of excellent parts, men of understanding, that can speak exceeding well, yea though they seemd heretofore very honest men in their waies, yet when they come to high places a gift will blind their eyes, or as some turn it, pluck out their eyes, irradiate their eyes that they cannot see. 

Wit. In quo, inerum omnium oratio, faith an Ancient, Let gold be speaking in the language of gold, and other speeches are to little purpose. Therefore Magistrates of all men should be without covetousness, fearing the Lord. When God would have Magistrates chose, this is one character of them, That they should be men fearing God, and hating covetousness. In 2 Chron. 19. 6, 7. Take heed what you do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with the Lord, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. Justice must run down as a river, it must not be pail'd in as a pond for private advantages. Magistrates they must shake their hands from bribery, and despite the gain of oppressors Isa. 33. 15. As we reade of Paul that when a Viper came upon his hand he shook his hand and the Viper fell into the fire: So should Magistrates do, when any one brings them gifts to pervert Justice, they should look upon it as a Viper, and shake their hands of it and let it even fall into the fire, and say as Peter to Simon Magus, Thy money perish with thee: They should look upon such as bring them gifts with indignation, and even say, thy money perish with thee in this wicked enterprize. Even Cicero an Heathen in his Epistle to Quintus his Brother, a Magistrate in Asia, he hath this expression, That he should not only shew himself an enemy unto them that received gifts, but to them that gave them, he should account them his enemies. And Isa. 5. 23.
Woe to him that justifies the wicked for reward, and takes away the righteousness of the righteous from him. Many righteous men come before you, some of you, and their cause is true and good, but you will be speaking bitterly against them to give content to others from whom you expect a reward. Deut. 27. 25. There shall be a curse pronounced against such as take gifts, and all the people shall say Amen. If any Magistrate should love to take gifts in this kind, the curse of the people is upon him, and God requires that all the people should say Amen. And I have read of the Romans that if it could be proved against any Magistrate that he had taken bribes, he was to be punished with death, without any deliverance. And Psalm, 15. in answer to that question, Who shall dwell with God in his tabernacle? it is said, he that taketh not a reward against the innocent. If you would ever dwell with God either here in his Church or in Heaven hereafter, you must not take bribes against the innocent. I have read of that Saint which you call St. Edmond, in his life, That he was wont to have this speech, There is little difference between these two words, to Take, and to Hang, the words are even the same in the Latin, Prender, signifying thereby, that those that would take gifts shewed & pensero what their desert is. Prov. 15. 27. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. It is not enough for a Magistrate not to take gifts, but he must hate gifts, for the other troubleth his own house, though perhaps you may think to provide for your house by gifts.

Verse 19.
The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

The word that is here translated Wind, it signifieth also a Spirit, and so I find Hierom takes the meaning of the words to be, that the evil Spirit hurries them up and down and carries them on violently in their wicked ways. As in Deut. 32. 11. God is said to carry his people upon his wings; so the Devil here carrieth Idolaters who are set upon their wicked ways,
as it were upon his wings, in a violent hurrying manner.

But rather we are to take the expression Metaphorically to signify the power, the suddenness, the violence, the swiftness of God's judgments, carrying them into captivity and into misery. The wind hath bound the people of Israel, the ten Tribes up in her wings, that is, the judgments of the Lord shall come upon them with power, suddenly, swiftly, violently and take them away from their own Country and carry them into captivity and misery. The power and violence of the judgments of God are set out in Scripture by the wind, by storms and tempests often times. There is a mighty power of the wind, 1 King. 19. 11. A strong wind that rent the mountains and tore in pieces the rocks. Job. 38. 9. That overturneth the mountains by the roots. The winds are the voice of the Lord, that breaks the Cedars, even the Cedars of Lebanon, and shakes the wilderness Psal. 29. Sabelicus telleth us that Camysys his soldiers being in a wilderness, in a sandy place, suddenly a violent wind came and drove the sand with such force as that thousands of them were buried in it. There is a great deal of strength and power in winds. And here by the way we may have hinted unto us a very profitable meditation. Oh how great is the glory and the power of the infinite God then! For the wind what is it but a vapor? and what more weak than a vapor? We use to say, what is weaker than water? but many drops together will make the waters terrible, and the Seas are call'd the mighty waters; But vapour is weaker than the water, and yet the winds are nothing but a company of vapors joyned together, and many being joyned together what a mighty power have they to rend the rocks and turn up the mountains by the roots? Oh then what is the power of the Mighty God? for in him there is nothing but infinite, and nothing can be added unto him. If a weak vapour being multiplied have such strength, what power then is there in God that hath nothing in him but infinite, so as nothing can be added to him.

The wind is of great power and so is the judgments of God.
The observation from it shall be this, "That the judgments of God toward wicked men who have been spared a long time, when they come they come swiftly, and violently, and suddenly, carries them as it were in a Hurry-cane.

And they shall be ashamed of their sacrifices.

So long as they prospered in the way of false worship they were not ashamed, but they gloried in their way, and the ten Tribes, Israel, rather despised Judah, and sought to cast shame upon Judah who worshiped God in a right way, as appeareth plainly Amos, 7. 12. Go to Judah (that Amaziah there to Amos in a scorning way,) go your waies thither, and prophesie there. They scorned and contemned Judah and gloried in their own way of false worship. "Such as are superstitious and Idolatrous they use to look upon Gods Ordinances as vile and contemptible, and their own inventions as the most glorious things; But God hath a time to honor his Ordinances and to cast shame upon their sacrifices. That is the Note. The true worship of God is many times in such a low esteem amongst men as that they that go that way are exceedingly vilified, and many are kept off from the waies of God because they cannot bear the shame of it, there is so much shame cast upon it, none but a company of mean, poor, unwise people that take such a course: But God hath a time to honor his Ordinances, to set up the beauty of them before all the world, and to cast shame and dirt upon all waies of superstition and idolatry. They shall be ashamed of their sacrifices; a time to make even those that did glory most in them to be ashamed of them. Isa. 2. 20, 21. They shall cast their Idols of silver and of gold, which they have made each for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks. And Isa. 30. 22. They shall defile the covering of their graven Images of silver, and the ornaments of their Images of gold, they shall cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and they shall say unto it, Get thee hence. They thought they were curious ornaments, but the time shall come when God shall make me Idolaters
Idolaters see them to be filthy clothes, and cause them to cast them away with indignation and say, Get ye hence. That place in Eza. 66. 5. is notable to this purpose. You that treme-ble at my word (faith God) your brethren that cast you out said, let God be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. There are a company of you that tremble at my word, and dare not do any thing in my Worship but what my Word requires; others have more loose consciences and they can venture upon things that they have no warrant for in my Word, but you tremble at my Word, and you are scorned for nice scrupulous consciences, and your brethren cast you out because you will not be of the same judgment as they are, because your hearts, your consciences are more tender they cast you out from them, they would willingly be rid of you and think it would be better with the land when you are gone, and they say, Let the Lord be glorified, they have pre-tences that they desire nothing but the peace of the Church and the glory of God; they say, even your brethren that cast you out, they say, Let the Lord be glorified, but God shall ap-pear for your glory and for their shame, the Lord will honor you in that way of his Worship that you take up which is ac-cording to his Word, though you suffer for the present much ignominie and contempt for it, and though they may ruff it out for a while and seem to carry all before them having that which is countenanced more publickly, but the Lord will ap-pear at length to their shame, the Lord will make them asha-med of their sacrifices.

Causes of shame.

First, Disrespect from those we desire honor from, that is shame: When one comes to any, to a superior, and expects respect from him, and finds that he is cast out, this is a great shame. So they shall be ashamed of their sacrifices, they make account that I should honor their sacrifices, that they should have ho-nor from me by reason of their sacrifices, but I will cast shame upon them, they shall have nothing but arguments of disre-spect from me. In 1 King. 2. 16. when Bathsheba came to Solo-men to ask a Petition of him, deny me not faith she; the old Latine
Latine hath it, *Ne confundas faciem meam:* do not confound my face, do not make me ashamed, & the Hebrew is, *Ne avertete faciem meam,* do not cause my face to be turned, that is, do not make me ashamed by giving me such disrespect when I expect such honor from thee. When God doth cast off the sacrifices of men and shews disrespect unto them, that causeth shame, it doth confound or should confound their faces.

Secondly, *When amantakes a great deal of pains and it comes all to nothing,* that causeth shame; and so all superstitious ways will bring shame at last. In Colos. 2, it is said of all superstitious ceremonies that they perish in the use of them, there comes no good of them. Idolaters take a great deal of pains in their ways of false worship, but all will come to nothing; when they shall stand in most need all their ways of superstition and Idolatry will leave them shiftless and succourless, and helpless, and so cast shame upon them.

Thirdly, *Disappointment of hope brings shame.* Psal. 119.116. Let me not be ashamed of my hope faith David. If I hope for good and be disappointed, this will bring shame. Divers Scriptures we have to shew this. So when those that are superstitious and Idolatrous shall raise up their hearts with great expectation of good from God in their ways of false worship and shall be disappointed of all their hope, in this God will cast shame upon them.

Fourthly, *When God discovers that to be worthless and vile which a man hath gloried most in,* that causeth shame. So Idolaters that glorie in their Idolatrous ways, the Lord in time will discover them to be base and vile and worthless things, for indeed they are all but poor apish and beggarlie things, and they are fitter to please children than God. God will discover this.

If it be objected, Oh but they seem not to be such poor and weak things, they seem to be more glorious and pompos a great deal than the ways of the true worshippers of God; The true worship of God in it self seems to be a poor and mean thing?

The answer is, That the institution putteth a glory upon the ways
waies of worship; now they not having an institution upon them they are looked upon as apish and foolish and beggarlie things. And then a word of promise and an engagement of Gods presence in his Ordinances puts an honor upon them which the waies of superstition have not.

**Use.**

It is good for those who have been guilty in this kind of superstitious waies of worship, even to prevent God by calling shame upon themselves; for if they do not, God will call shame upon them, he will make them to be ashamed. That is our best way, to come in and to prevent God and to lie down in our shame, to take shame unto our own souls & to lie down therein. God knows how we have defiled our selves, even all of us, in waies of superstitious worship; and the truth is, God is calling shame upon all those waies at this day, and doth call shame upon them. Happie are those that before these times did take shame to their own souls for all their defilements in the waies of false worship. Howsoever, before God doth yet further force it upon us it will be our wisdom to take shame to ourselves. Ezek. 43. 11. that text is a famous text for this purpose; first in the tenth verse, Shew them the house that they may be ashamed, shew them the true way of my worship that they may be ashamed. The truth is, if we did but understand the beauty, the excellency, the true beauty of holiness in the waies of Gods Ordinances, in the purity and simplicitie of the Gospel, that were enough to make us ashamed if there were nothing else, we would even be very vile in our own eyes to think that while our hearts have been taken up about such vain and vile waies of false worship, that such glorious Ordinances of God, that beauty of holiness that is in his Ordinances hath been neglected by us; shew them the way of my house that they may be ashamed; But further, in the 11. ver. If they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, (again) and all the Laws thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whol form thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof and do them. First shew them my house,
house, Let them have some kind of knowledge of my ways and Ordinances in the general, perhaps that will make them ashamed: And at this day we know though there be but a little light let out unto us, to shew us a little more of the ways of God's worship than we saw before, we do begin to be ashamed of what we have done: But now if indeed we be thoroughly ashamed before God of all our false ways of worship, of all our sacrifices, then mark what a promise here is, then faith the text, if they be ashamed of what they have done, then shew them the forms of the house, and the fashion of the house &c. Thus here is one word heaped upon another to shew, that this is the mercy of God to people when they understand not only the way of God's worship in the lump, but they understand the form, and the fashion, and the Ordinances, and the Laws, the circumstances and all the several ways, the exactness of the worship of God. For we must not look upon any thing in the worship of God as worthy to be neglected, but we must have respect to all the forms, and fashions, and Ordinances of God's house, God standeth much upon his worship in every punctilio: and it is a great mercy of God to reveal to us every point of his worship. It is true, man standeth much upon form, and God standeth much upon form; Many deny the power of godliness, but keep the form of it, they are much set upon their forms, and God is much set upon his forms. If you be set upon forms for worship, look upon God's worship he is much set upon forms in his worship. And mark, then when we are ashamed of what we have done, then we shall understand the Laws of the house; but first we must be ashamed and thoroughly humbled for our former superstitious sacrifices, and then we shall come to understand the right way of God's worship in his own Temple, we must not expect it before. Many people they cry out we are at a loss, we know not what to do, we have rejected indeed false worship and in some measure we see that that is vile, but we know not what way to set up in God's house, what are the forms and fashions thereof: and the hearts of people tremble to think what may come to be determined, fearing left things will not be found out, fearing dissensions.
disentensions and disagreement. Would you but know how you should come to understand the right way of God's house in the worship and government of it? Be ashamed of your sacrifices, be ashamed of what you have done.

And above all men those that are betrothed to find out the Ministers' Laws, and forms, & fancies, and Ordinances of God's house, above all men they are to be ashamed of what they have done, to be ashamed first of their sacrifices. And that should be your prayer, that God would humble them for all their former superstitious sacrifices that so they may come to have revealed to them the form and fashion of God's house, and being revealed to them they may reveal it to you. There is a necessity that those men that have been guilty of superstitious ways of worship, that they should be ashamed first of that before they can come to understand the right way of the house of God; Let them be men of never such excellent parts and abilities, yet except they be first ashamed for what they have done and thoroughly humbled, they cannot expect to understand the ways of God's house in the forms and fancies and ordinances of it.

Note.

In Ezek. 44. 10, 11, 12, 13. there God threateneth those Priests that did depart from him when Israel departed, that did depart from him to false worship, that they should bear their iniquity, that they should never come near to him; seeing they departed in the general departure and did not keep close to the true worship of God, they must bear their iniquity, they must not come near unto God; only God would be content they should be employed in some meaner out-services: And therefore it may be that God will not use some men of choice parts in any great work of his, to do him any great service, that's the meaning of the text, that those that did depart from God when there was a general departure of the Nation, when Israel did depart they would comply with them to save their skin, and they would conform to those superstitious ways, then did the Lord swear, lift up his hand against them, that though they shall be employed in some meaner services, yet they shall not come near him. And (May) it may be feared that the Lord may do so against some of us. How ever except there
there be extraordinary repentance & taking shame unto themselves; though they may be men of excellent parts, the Lord may remember what they have done when Israel departed from God, what their compliances were; And though the Lord may make still use of them in some ordinarie work, yet he may lift up his hand against them, that they shall never be employed never blest in any choice work he hath to do: God may justly leave them to such ways as that they shall cast themselves in a great measure out of the hearts of the Saints "because he doth not delight to use them in any special service and so their shame shall stick upon them while they live; and the more honor they seek the more shame will God certainly cast upon them. Jer.3.25. faith the Church there, We lie down in our shame: Oh there is cause that such men should lie down in their shame, those that are of discerning spirits, and observe the ways of men and the ways of God, they cannot but see that those men should lie down in their shame, for so long as yeilding to superstitious vanities and submission to false power was useful to them to save their estates, their liberties and livings, they would yeild and they would submit, and then their judgments alter when times alter, when other ways come to be countenanced publickly then they are of other judgments than they were before: so long as they could not make use of another way they were not of that judgment; now when they can make use of it, and there is more countenancing of it, how soon is their judgment altered? yea and so altered as presently to grow even bitter against their brethren of another judgment. Surely a great deal more cause there is that they and we, all of us, should take shame to our selves, lie down in our shame a while and so carry things in all humility in all meekness, in suspicion of our selves and of our own judgments in love to our brethren, remembering that we our selves were of another judgement and opinion not long since; And therefore our hearts (I say) should be very low and gentle and very tender and meek even toward all with whom we have to do.

And further; God hath a time to make all carnal men ashamed. Obs. 2.
med of their sacrifices. We will a little raise up our medita-
tions somewhat higher, from this, They shall be ashamed of their
sacrifices. All sacrifices, not only superstitious and idolatrous
but all other sacrifices that come short of the rule will at
length cause shame. "As carnal men that tender up many
services unto God, and that lay such weight upon their ser-
vice, as to lay their claim to Heaven and interest in God up-
on their sacrifices, God hath a time to make them ashamed
of all these sacrifices. Al now, when God shall discover the
vanity of their prayers, if God should but shew to us all and to
the whole company here, each others hearts in time of prayer,
when we have been offering up that sacrifice unto God, and
we have seemed to be very devout in our prayers, yet Oh the
vanity of our hearts, Oh the vile thoughts, unclean, wicked,
ungodly, foolish thoughts that have run up and down tho-
rough our hearts in the time of our prayers! If God should
write our prayers before us and interline our prayers with
all our vain thoughts, and then bid us read our prayers,
and bid others read our prayers interlined with such vain
thoughts, would we not be ashamed of our sacrifices? the
best sacrifice that ever we tendered up to God in all our life we
would be ashamed of it. God hath a time (except all be par-
doned in Christ and covered in him) to make men that lay
such weight upon their prayers, to shew them such an ugly
form and passion of them, as to make them ashamed of them.

Obl. 3. Again, In all our duties performed with a carnal heart there
are many mixtures of our own base ends. We seem to draw
near unto God, and we would honor and worship God, Oh
but the hypocrisy of our hearts! what vile and base ends are
there, to give content to this and the other, to set forth our
parts and abilities in services; these things have been plain
before God, and except we be ashamed of them now and re-
pent and get them pardoned in Christ, God will set all our
base ends before Angels and men together with our sacrifices,
and shall we not then be ashamed of our sacrifices?

Obl. 4. Again, How foul and vile have our hearts been in our ser-
VICES, and how have our sacrifices been defiled with them! Not
only by actual sin mixed with them, by base thoughts and ends, but our services have come from unclean hearts, we have had very filthy and unclean hearts, our hearts have been as sties and sinks of evil, and it is impossible that out of such unclean hearts there can come any thing that is clean; our sacrifices have been extremly defiled by our filthy base and worldly hearts. And then when God shall shew the infinite holiness of his Majesty and how infinite just and righteous he is, and how infinitely worthy of other manner of sacrifices than ever we have tendered up unto him, Oh then how shall we be ashamed!

How will our hearts be overwhelmed with confusion and shame, when apprehending the infiniteness of the glory of the great God, when we shall see how infinitely unworthy all those duties were that we have tendered up unto him of that infinite excellency and Majesty of his, Oh that will make us ashamed. Men think highly of their sacrifices that they tender up unto God because of their parts they shew in them, but they do not know with what a God it is they have to do: when the Lord shall shew unto us the lustre of his glory and the greatness of his Majesty (as it will appear unto us one day when the glorious appearing of the great God will be) then we shall see how unworthy all our services were of such a God as he is, and that will make us ashamed if we have not been ashamed heretofore; nothing will be more grievous and more confound the hearts of men than to be put to shame for their sacrifices; Oh the miserable perplexity that their hearts will then be put unto!

You will say then, What are those sacrifices we should tender up unto God that we shall never be ashamed of? God will make superstitious people ashamed of their sacrifices, and all carnal people shall one day be ashamed of their sacrifices, this will be a dreadful thing one day when it comes; Oh then what are those sacrifices the Saints of God shall never be ashamed of?

First, If you would offer such sacrifices unto God as you would never be ashamed of, Be sure they be his own, worship God
God in his own way; It is not what you think will please God, what you think is brave and excellent, but look to the word, be sure it is his own.

2. Secondly, Let your hearts be acted by Divine Principles, let it come from faith, and whatsoever comes from you to be tendered up unto God, look to your principles; rest not in the action that is done but consider from what principles those services come you tender up unto God.

Thirdly, Let your ends be high in all your services. Oh take heed of base and low ends in all your sacrifices. It is too much that men should have base and low ends in their outward affairs, they should have their hearts high upon the glory of the great God in their natural, in their civil actions, but when they come to their sacrifices and holy duties, then *surius Corda*, then lift up your hearts indeed, be sure then your ends be high and holy.

Fourthly, Let your whole strength be taken up in those sacrifices so as to sanctify the Name of God, let the whole soul be carried unto God, for God is worthy of the whole, if you had ten thousand times more strength than you have God is worthy that it should be put forth in the services you tender unto him.

Fifthly, Offer up your selves as a sacrifice unto God do not content your selves to offer up a prayer unto God as a sacrifice, or alms or such duties only, but be sure together with these sacrifices to offer up your selves as a living sacrifice to God, as the Apostle speaks *Rom. 12. 1.* I beseech you by the mercies of God that you offer up your bodies a living sacrifice unto God. God cares for none of your sacrifices except you offer your selves to be a sacrifice unto him. That is a very observable place in 1 *King. 8.* the latter end of it, there you shall find that *Solomon* offered two and twenty thousand Oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand Sheep, here was a great sacrifice to be offered at one time unto God, but mark, though this sacrifice was great what God saies unto him in the 9. chapter presently so soon as the sacrifice was done, verse 4. *If thou wilt walk before me as David thy father did to do according unto all that*
that I command thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments &c.

God puts it to an If for all this, for all these sacrifices If thou thy self in the constant obedience of thy life wilt be a constant sacrifice, then will I do thus and thus, but verse 6. If thou at all turn from following me, if notwithstanding all these sacrifices thou at all turn from following of me, I will do thus and thus. Many of us think when we have been in a day of falling and spent a whol day in it, and our hearts have been let out and we have been enlarged and have offered up a great sacrifice to God, that we may take the more liberty afterward; No, though you offer twenty two thousand Oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep yet if after this at all thou shalt forsake me, all that thou hast done shall be rejected. Therefore those sacrifices that are not joyned with offering up of our selves as a sacrifice, are such as God will make us ashamed of; But if together with our sacrifices we offer up our selves as a sacrifice, you shall never be ashamed of that sacrifice. Therefore you that are poor people and weak parted, and have but little grace, yet if you have true grace, though you cannot offer up such large prayers, your heart is not to enlarged perhaps as others are, and you look upon your sacrifices as poor and mean and as unworthy to be tendered up unto the great God, but dost thou then offer up thy self unto God as a sacrifice? It is true my parts are weak and my abilities are poor and mean, but Oh Lord what I am and what I can do I tender it unto thee, here Lord, take soul, body, life, estate, liberty and all I do enjoy, I tender it up all unto thee as a sacrifice; I say then peace be unto thee, those sacrifices thou lookest upon as being ashamed of them, God will not make thee ashamed of them, but he accepts of thy poor, mean, and weak services when together with them thou offerest up thy self as a sacrifice unto him; whereas if thou didst not tender up thy self as a sacrifice, though thy services were ten thousand times more glorious than they are, they would be all cast back as dung in thy face.

Sixthly, Be humbled after all your best sacrifices, take no glory unto your selves, but be vile in your own eyes after you have
have done the best duty that ever you have done in your life; when you perform any duty that seems to have any excellency in it, and perhaps others look upon it as having much excellency in it, if your hearts be puffed up with it, the glory of it is gone; and it is that which you must be ashamed of though now you be honored for it, and pride your selves in it.

Lastly, Tender up all in Christ, in the worthinesse of his infinite sacrifice. Christ is that sacrifice that is pleasing unto God, and all sacrifices are pleasing unto God only thorough the merit and worthinesse of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath tendered up himself unto God the Father as a Sacrifice to heal all our sacrifices and to take away all the shame of our sacrifices. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, how? by Jesus Christ. Mark, you are as lively stones, and lively stones built up, not only stones lying here one and there another, but lively stones built up in a holy communion, that is the meaning, built up to offer sacrifices, and that spiritual sacrifices: But mark, though our sacrifices be never so spiritual, yet they cannot be acceptable to God but by Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ that great Sacrifice they come to be acceptable unto God, that is the sacrifice the Saints shall glory in and bless God for to all eternity, and never shall be ashamed of their sacrifices when they are tendered up unto God thorough the merit of that sacrifice. And thus through God's good hand of providence we are come to the end of this fourth Chapter.
CHAP. V.

Verf. 1.

Hear ye this, O Priests; and hearken ye house of Israel, and give ear Ob house of the King, for judgment is towards you, because ye have been a snare in Mispah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

In this Chapter we have the summoning of all sorts unto judgment. A heavy charge laid and condemnation pronounced against Israel, and Judah too brought in as guilty and sentence past upon her also; And at last the good effect that the judgments of God should produce is shewed. That is the summe of the Chapter.

This Chapter is the beginning of another Sermon of Hosea. It seems to be preached (as some think) in the reign of Pekah, son of Remaliah king of Israel, that you read of in 2 King. 15. and especially toward the end of his reign, which was the same time that Ahab reigned in Judah, when that horrible confusion was brought into Religion, much defilement in the Worship of God, he having placed the Altar that he brought the fashion of from Damascus in the house of God; therefore the Lord enveigheth by his Prophet not only against Israel, but against Judah here.

The summons to judgment you have in the first verse. The accusation and condemnation of Israel by themselves, to the end of the 5. verse. The accusation of Judah, at the end of the.
the 5th and 6th verses. Then Israel and Judah together, to the 15th verse. And at last the close of the Chapter shews the issue of all, what all shall come to.

In the summons observe these three several words.


Hear ye Priests.

Hearken ye house of Israel.

Give ear O house of the King.

When God cometh in ways of judgment he expects we should seriously mind what he is a doing. We should not only Hear, but Hearken, and Give ear: God will force audience then. We are bound to hearken and to give ear to Gods commanding Word; But if we refuse it, he will have us to hear and give ear to his threatening Word; and if that be refused, he will force us to hear and give ear to his condemning Word; for so it is here, Hear ye, Hearken, Give ear, for judgment is against you all.

There are Three sorts named here.

Priests.

People.

House of the King.

All sorts are cited to judgment, for corruption was gone over all, and judgment cometh against them all. From thence the Note is, That

Generality in sins is no means to escape judgments.

It is true, Generality of offences with men may be a means to escape punishment; One and all with men is a word of security. When Souldiers offend if there be multitudes of them in the same offence and they cry, One and all, there is no medling then with any of them. But it is not so with God, God regards not multitudes and generality of all sorts, when all sorts are involved in the offence. Men think, I do but as others do, and I shall scape as well as others: With men it is somewhat, but it is nothing with God, though all sorts offend yet there is never a whit the more security thereby unto any. We have a notable Scripture for that, *Nab. 1. 12. Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down when he shall
Though they be many, yes thus shall they be cut down.

He begins here with the Priests, *Hear O ye Priests.*] They were the principal cause of all the evil; first of the evil of sin, and then of the evil of punishment, and therefore he beginneth with them. They are called Priests, not that they were true Priests, for they were not of the tribe of Levi, but they were so reputed to be. The Priests have usually been the causes of all the wickedness in, and judgments on a Nation. Jer. 23. 15. *Prophaness is gone throughout the Land, from the Prophet and the Priests.* Multitude of Scriptures are evident before us that layes the evil of Nations upon Priests. And hath it not been so with us? and is it not so at this day? There was never a Applic. more filthy sink of scandalous superstitious Priests in a Kingdom than of late amongst us, as hath begun and will yet further appear unto you. There hath been an accusation against our Parliament, that orthodox, grave, godly Divines have been put out of their livings; I suppose you begin to see what those grave, orthodox, godly Divines were that were put out, under first Century of Ministers ejected. It was both between the Priests and the house of the King upon this ground, because by these two, by the corruption of the Priests and the house of the King all was swaied: the cause of the evil of the people came from them both partly from the Priests and partly from the house of the King: It came both waies to the people and between them both the people were undone. "Let these two join in any sinful way in a Kingdom, the Priests and the house of the King, let them joyn and set up what they will in worship, the people will go that way they go. If but one of them be right there is a great deal of hope of much good, but wo to a people.
people when both of them are corrupt, when both Priests and
the house of the King too are corrupt. If the house of the King
should be corrupt, yet if the Priests and so the Ministers, if
they kept up the truth and vigor and life of Religion, things
would go reasonably well in a Kingdom, though Religion
might be persecuted yet the life of it would not be taken away.
Whatsoever Laws Magistrates did enact against the waies of
God except Ministers be brought to comply those Laws will
not be brought to prevail with the consciences of people, nor
with their practices. Jeroboam and the other Princes saw it
was in vain for them to think to prevail with the people ex-
cept they could get the Priests to be for them, therefore it
was the great design of Jeroboam to get the Priests of his side,
which he easily did, for all preferment came by him, he ra-
ised whom he would, and then because that their means and
preferment lay upon him they would joyn with him in what
way he went.

Object. But mark, Might not the people excuse themselves and say,
what should we do? On the one side authority enjoyns us, on the other side our Ministers teach us to do thus and
thus, what shall we do? they might think to excuse them-
selves.

Answ. No, judgment is against you Ob house of Israel; notwithstan-
ding the Priests and the house of the King have done thus and
thus, yet you are not to be excused. A great many reasons
may be given why the people may not be excused though they
be commanded thus and thus. I remember Arias Montanus
upon this Scripture, gives this reason why men are not to be
excused though they be commanded by the King; for he
laies down this for a rule, That no King can make any Law but by
the people, they cannot faith he make Laws by themselves alone,
the people must consent to them some way or other; therefore the peo-
ple are involved in all the wicked Laws in a Kingdom: It is not
enough therefore for you to say such and such Laws are made
and we cannot help it; we are to know it is not meerly the
wil of a King that is a Law to a Kingdom, but Laws enacted is,
where people have their hands one way or other in them.

This
This answer he gives, and he quoteth an Heathen to shew that people must have their hand in the Laws that are made, especially some people, for some Kingdoms are otherwise governed than others; therefore there is no reason for people to say, in the Scripture such Kingdoms did so and so: We know in one Countrey the Kings authority reacheth so far, and in another so far; in one Countrey Kindoms are by Election, in another by Inheritance; in one Countrey the female inherits, in another none but the male, therefore the power of Kings and their limits is not what hath been heretofore in such and such a place, but what is the constitution of that Kingdom of which he is King, for many are limited in their power in one Countrey more than in another; Therefore the people are not to be excused because of their evil especially in these times.

Now this sheweth evidently that God would have every one examine what is taught him and what is commanded him by his superiours. It is cleer from hence; The people are here cited to judgment, and placed between the Priests and the Kings house, though the Priests taught them superstitious waies, though the Kings house commanded them, yet they must be judged, then I say it is cleer that God would have every one examine what is taught him and commanded him by his superiours, and himself to know the rule of his own actions. It is no answer for God, to say I am taught thus, or I am commanded thus, you must know the rule of your own actions your selves, for you your selves must give an account unto God.

But you may say, Shall it be left to every one to judge of the truth Quest, of what is taught, and of the lawfulness of what is commanded? If every one shall judge of what he thinks in his conscience lawful, what order can there be?

For answer unto that, Whatsoever the inconvenience may be, it appears evidently to be a truth, for we must answer unto God for our actions, therefore we must know the rule of our actions; therefore, First, let the inconvenience be what it will, the truth is good. But secondly, I say this, that every one must judge 
so far as it concerns his own act, he cannot judge so far as it concerns the Magistrates act what is fit for the Magistrate to command, nor the Ministers act what is fit for him to teach, but he may and he ought to judge so far as it concerns his own act; what I am to do so far as I must answer before God, I must judge it so, but if I be taught and commanded by authority one thing and I judge another, I go upon mine own peril, that is, if I do not judge right I sin against God and incur punishment from God and I must run the hazard; but to judge that which must be the rule of my act, that is a certain truth belonging unto every man.

Give ear ye house of the King.] And there is put an Oh unto this besides the other, Give ear Oh house of the King, for though it comes in last yet that's the principal indeed, for what can superstitious and Idolatrous Priests do? what hurt? except they be countenanced by the house of the King; Give ear therefore, Oh house of the King.

Oh house] that is, the King himself with all his Countriess. Kings and Princes must have sin charged upon them and be made to know that they are under the threats of God as well as any.

For judgment is against you.] Mark it, he doth not put all this evil upon ill Counsellors that got into the house of the King, but he puts it directly upon the house of the King itself. Ill Princes may be as great a cause why there are ill Counsellors, as ill Counsellors why there are ill Princes. Ill Counsellors usually see what the design of a Prince is, and what is suitable to his disposition, and they blow up, nourish and help that with their evil counsel. But were it that the design of Princes and their dispositions were right they might have Counsellors about them to further that which is right too. Certainly it is no excuse for Princes to cherish flatterers and wicked ones about them, & then to say they were advised to such a way; For if the teaching of the Priests, and the commands of Princes do not excuse people but they must see a rule for what they do, then Counsellors about Princes cannot excuse them, but they ought to see the rule for what they do too. It is the unhappiness of Princes to have none about them to charge them personally with:
with their sins, I mean in the Name of God, to shew them the 
evil and the danger of their sins. It was wont to be said (as 
erertofoie I have told you) Da Ambrosio & plur. habebimur 
Theodosios. Let us have Ambroses and we shall have Theodosius's, 
because of his freedom of spirit with that Emperor; And be-
sides to another Emperor, Valentinian, faith he, Nolite extolle-
re Imperator, si vit diutius imparare, esto Deosubditus. Do not 
lift up thy self, Oh, Emperor, if you will be Emperor longer, 
if you will reign longer, be willing to be subject unto God. 
And we know with what freedom of spirit the Prophets in 
former times spoke even to Kings houses. You know that of 
Samuel, 1. Sam. 12. ult. If you do wickedly you shall perish 
both ye and your King; So Elijah to Ahab, Thou art he that 
troublest Israel: So Elisha to Jehoram, 2 King. 3. 13, 14. 
What have I to do with thee? (and yet Jehoram came to the 
Prophet in an humble way) what have I to do with thee, Get 
thee to the Prophets of thy father, And were it not that I 
regard the presence of Jehosaphat the King of Judah, I would 
not look toward thee nor see thee. This he said to a great 
King. Great liberty have others had in the Primitive times 
to speak thus unto Princes; And a great cause of the evil of 
these latter daies hath been the flatteries of those that have 
been at Court, therefore faith the Prophet here, Hear ye Oh 
house of the King. Kings are great indeed above other men, 
but what are they before the great God? Psal. 76. 12. He shall 
cut off the Spirit of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the 
earth. Psal. 105. 12. When they were but few in number, 
yea, very few and strangers in the land, when they went from 
one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another people, 
he suffered no man to do them wrong, yea, he reproved 
Kings for their fakes; He reproved Kings for the sake of his 
own people when they were but few in number and went 
wandring from one Nation to another, & said, Touch not mine 
anointed, that is, touch not my Saints. He gave Kings warning 
that they should take heed how they did so much as Touch his 
Church, touch his own people; Gods people are there called 
his Anointed, and it is said unto Kings that they should not
touch his anointed that were so few and wandered up and down from one Nation to another. Say thus even to the house of the King.

Expos. 2. But yet further, The house of the King is named last here, is named after the house of Israel, why so? Not that the house of Israel were more guilty than the house of the King, but because the house of the King could least endure reproof, that is one reason given of it, they could hardly bear reprobation, therefore in wisdom so far the Prophet would go, he would begin with the other and being in a way of reprobation with the other, then he comes in with the house of the King. “Though they are to be reproved for evil yet some due respect ought to be given unto them.

Obser. Judgment is toward you faith the Prophet. Judicium here is taken either actively or passively. Actively, pro actu Judiciij, so Junius, it was their part to judge out of the Law, and so he would reade it thus, Judgment is yours, Oh house of the King, you ought to judge the people in righteousness. But I rather think that here it is to be taken passively, that is, that God calls you to judgment, to suffer judgment, judgment is toward you, or against you. And observe I beseech you the difference between the beginning of the fourth Chapter and the beginning of the fifth. In the fourth Chapter it was but a controversy, a strife that God had with them, Hear the Word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord hath a controversy with the land: But here you have another word, now it is come to judgment; that which before was but a contending with them is now come to a judgment of them, to a passing of sentence upon them, judgment is against you, sentence is out upon you. The former was Gods pleading against them, and this now is Gods judging of them. “When God pleadeth against us (that is the Note from thence) let us not neglect his pleas, for they will come to a sentence and then we are gone.” If we neglect when he begins to plead his cause with us, if we neglect it because judgment is not upon us, it will proceed to a sentence. God hath laid his plea against many a man in his Word, and perhaps some of you see it and know it.
it that God hath laid his plea against you; and God laies his plea against many a man in his conscience, but he nelegting this plea of God laid against him in his Word and in his conscience, he hath afterward received the sentence of death in his soul which hath sunk his heart into despair. Many a man hath had God speaking against him in his word and in his conscience I say, and there hath been Gods controversy, God hath been laying his plea there, thou hast gone on in thy sin, and at length it may be there comes the sentence of death upon thy soul, that thou dost as it were feel, som have said it, that they have felt God passing a sentence of death upon them, and ever after that speech they have roared out through despair and so have died. There hath been such works of God heretofore, yea and many times continued that those that go against their consciences and have had Gods plea against them often, they have as it were felt God passing a sentence of death upon them in this world and that hath sunk them into despair; it hath been a particular day of judgment unto them, they have heard as it were God speaking from his Throne this sentence upon them, thou art a dead man, a lost man. Oh take heed of neglecting Gods pleas lest they come to judgments.

*Judgment is against you; why? what is the cause?*

*You have been a snare upon Mispah and a net spread upon Tabor.*

Mark, God passeth not judgment but he gives the cause for Expos: it. Men are rash and they will pass judgment upon such and Obser. such that they know not: When you come sometimes into a Tavern or Inn, or into a Shop you shall hear men railing upon such and such, Ask them, do you know them? No: What have they done? they know not neither, only there is a general noise of them that such men do thus and thus disturb the peace of the Kingdom. But in this they deal not righteous-ly. God he passeth not judgment but he gives a full and sufficient cause why he doth it; *You have been a snare faith he on Mispah and a net spread upon Tabor.*

There is much of the mind of God in these words. Some take:
take that first, Misphah, appellatively pro. speculatone, you have been a snare upon the watch, for so הַדּה (Speculor) from whence the word cometh signifies, and Speculatio they take to be for those for whom they should watch over, as Congregatio pro Congregatis, Circumcisio pro Circumcisitis, so Speculatio pro Custodia: As if God should charge them that, You should have been Watch-men you Priests and you of the Kings house, but you have been a net to ensnare them, you should have been Speculatores but you have been Venatores & Aucupes, you have been fowlers and hunters of my people. Theodoret hath it pro Speculatoribus, that is thus, you spread a net for the watchmen, you superstitious Priests, you house of the King, and you people generally, you spread a net for your faithful Watchmen, if you have any Watchmen that are more watchful than others you seek to ensnare them what you can. So they carry it.

2 But though this doth hint at the meaning of the words, yet I think it cannot be taken from the word Misphah, therefore as the word Tabor is taken properly, not appellatively, so I think is the word Misphah. Therefore we are to remember that both Misphah and Tabor were the names of two mountains that were in the land of Israel. Indeed the first signifies a Watch, and the other, Tabor, signifies a high place, and because it was a famous & high mountain it is called Tabor by way of eminency.

Now both these Mountains, Misphah and Tabor were very eminent among the people of Israel. Misphah, so Judg. 20. 1. The children of Israel were gathered together unto the Lord in Misphah, an eminent place. It was that mountain where Laban and Jacob met Gen. 31. 49. so some think it to be, and called Misphah by Laban, For (faith he) the Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. That for the mountain, Misphah.

Tabor, So Tabor, that was very ancient too, Psal. 89. 12. Tabor and Hermon are joyned together. Hermon was famous too, as Cant. 4. 8. Come with me from Laban your spouse, look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon: Therefore it is very ill turned in your meeter in the Psalms, (as there are a great many
ny ill-places in the meeter in the Psalms, that are not only poor kind of rime, but are turned against the very sense of the text, against the meaning, as may be shewed in many places. So in that one) in Psal. 42. 6. The little hill Hermon; whereas the truth is, Hermon was an high and famous hill; A mistake done by Mr. in the reading, for in the reading Psalms it is, I will remember Roffe, that thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Misser, that signifies small indeed; but they make it as if Hermon and Misser were all one: but the Psalm is rather to be interpreted thus, I will remember thee O Jerusalem where ever I am, in all quarters of the world, from Jordan, that was eastward from Jerusalem, and Hermon, that was an high mountain in the North, and Misser, that is, of the South, because the mountains of the South were small; As if he should say, psal. 42. 6. whether I be East or North or South from the Temple I will remember Jerusalem where ever I am. So that the meaning of that Psalm is not as if Misser and Hermon were one and the fame, as if it should be turned the little hill Hermon, for it was a high and famous hill joyned with Tabor, that famous mountain Psalm 89. And Tabor was so famous, that it was a proverbial speech among them to say, As Tabor amongst the mountains. It was the mountain on which Christ was transfigured, a most brave flatly mountain every way equal. Josephus in his 4th book, cap. 21. of the wars of the Jews, saith it was 30. a Stadiums or Furlongs high, and on the top, twenty; Now a b Stadium is 125. paces as I remember, or 625. feet; and on the top it was so plain that there was not one place of it higher than another, but it lay so equal as if it had been made by the art of man; And a mountain that was very fertile and full of trees, a very pleasant and delightful place.

Now God chargeth them, that they had been a snare on Milpah, and a net upon mount Tabor. According to some these mountains are taken senechdochically, that is, for all high places, and these Metonymically, for all their superstition and Idolatry committed upon those high places, and then the meaning is this, Your Idolatry upon these high places hath been a net and a snare to the people.
But I think rather the sense to be Metaphorical, thus, These mountains were places very delightful, and places where was much hunting, and the Gentry of the kingdom took much delight in hunting in these mountains, and there they were wont to spread their nets and set their snares for fowls and beasts. Now faith God, You have been a snare on Mispah and a net upon Tabor, that is thus; Mispah and Tabor are two mountains where there is much hunting for fowl and beasts, and the truth is, you watchmen and other people that joyn with you, have been hunters that have laid snares for the souls of my people as they lay snares on Mispah and Tabor; because they were eminent places for hunting, therefore God chargeth them for laying snares for the souls of his people, and hunting them and catching them in their ways of superstition and Idolatry. The Gospel is called a Net in the Scripture, and the Ministers of the Gospel are to spread it, but the cords and twills of that net are precious, they are the blessed truths of the Gospel, the mysteries of the Gospel, and happy are those that are caught in that net: But the net of superstitious Priests and Governors it is made of other manner of stuff, they have their ness too that they spread and catch the souls of the people in. And the net that is here meant they had to catch the souls of the people (for at the first, Jeroboam and the rest of the Princes would not go on in a violent way to force people to a false religion, but would seek by their cunning devices to catch the hearts of people in their love of false worship, and they would spread their nets for people before they were aware, and) the threads and lines it was woven withal were these.

**Note.**

First, The plea of Authority. Doth not authority command you to do thus and thus?

Secondly, The Priests, the Authority of the Priestly Office. Do not the Priests, the holy fathers do thus and thus? and have you more wit than they? more wit than all the State-men and the Kings house? and more wit than all your Teachers too?

Thirdly, We worship God, we do not alter our Religion, we
we hope we worship Jehovah that you worship.

Fourthly, The things required of you are not very much; it is but a circumstance of place; you worship at Jerusalem, it is but worshiping at Dan and Bethel here before these two Images, you shall not worship the Images, but worship in this place.

Fifthly, We intend nothing but that which is for your good, all that we aim at is for your benefit, for that was Jeroboam's pretence. It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, to go twice a year so great and tedious and dangerous a journey, no faithhe, I render the good of my people more, therefore let them worship here.

Sixthly, Why should you be so curious and strict? The most, the ten Tribes do thus, there is but only Judah and Benjamin that go another way, the multitude go this way, and why should you when only a poor handful go another way desire to do as they do?

Seventhly, We have prospered a long time in this way. Hath not Israel prospered as much as Judah? hath not God been with us as much as with them? Judah pretends he worships God in the right way, we are sure God is with us.

Eighthly, They would raise reproaches upon the true worshipers of God, as in the 7. Chapter of this Prophefie, verl. 3. They make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their lies. That is, this was their cunning devise, to raise all the reproches that possibly they could against those that were true, forward, and zealous worshipers of God, especially against the Prophets and Ministers, and therefore in Amos you shall find (and he prophesied at the same time) that Amaziah said, the Land could not bear his words, they are a company of seditious men, that the Country could not bear their words, but they were even enough to set the people together by the ears, yea what are these men that oppose the Kings Laws but such and such? These were the snares that they set to catch the people, to make them out of love with the true worship of God. Thus they were a snare set upon Misphab and a net upon Mount Tabor.
Thus it hath been with us, how cunningly have men laid their nets amongst us to catch souls? Say they, it is but yeelding thus far, to this thing and the other thing; and authority enjoins it, if it were more it were no great matter, and other learned and godly men they do thus and they think thus; yea, and why should you hinder your self of the good you may do? It is but a matter of circumstance, it is but for decency and order, and there is much devotion this way, we may gain Papists in yeelding as far as we can unto them, there is none but a company of simple pleople against it, this is ancient, the Fathers of the Church have done thus, yea many Martyrs that have shed their blood did thus. Thus many have been caught as a bird in a snare, with these lines and twigs thus cunningly twisted together how have they caught souls? and so caught them that they could not tell how to get out, but being once in they were ensnared more and more; as a bird that is once caught in the net it beginneth to flutter a while but at length it is caught so much the faster; so men when they yeilded to one thing they could not tell where to stay but at last they have been so deep in and so far ensnared that they could not tell what to do; and the truth is, at length they have even given up their consciences to those things; as a bird that perhaps at first when the net is but stirred it is shie of it, but being once got in it is ensnared all over, so many men at first, being of tender consciences, have been shie of superstitious vanities, but with cunning arguments and devices they have been caught, and they thought they should never hear of them any more, but being once caught so as that they have power over them, they have come upon them with more violence than before, and so have been made to yeild so far that at the last their consciences have wholly been given up to those things. They have been vexed and troubled with their consciences at the first, but at length they have been resolved to trouble themselves no more but to yeild to whatsoever shall be enjoyned. Oh how many have been thus ensnared! This was the plot of the adversary, if possibly they could they would break the consciences of men. Oh it was the most de-
villish plot that ever was in the world that was lately among us. When they were together in their Taverns, or jocundly sitting together, then they were plotting & studying what it was that such and such men did scruple most at, and oh saies one, this, no saies another not this but this will catch such a one; Let him have it saied they. It may be the old ceremonies would catch some; others perhaps would break through the old, therefore there must be new ones devised; others again it may be would break through the new ones, Oh but the book of liberty on the Sabbath, that would catch them; and if they break that through, then the Oath of cannonical obedience that would catch them. Thus they laid nets to break the consciences of men, and they knew that if they could but once break their consciences they might do with them what they would; certainly they saw that there was no way to make them to be their own, to be filij Ecclesie as they call'd them, but to crack their consciences at first. Many men have found this to be true by experience, and we have seen it: For otherwise what is the reason when they have come with all the flatteries they could to some (that have flood out many yeers and perhaps God hath done good by their Ministry) to draw them but to any thing, and when they have but once prevail'd (they imagined that there was so much the more in it against their consciences, they saw men look pale and trembled and were loth to yeild, but) when they had got them once, they concluded that certainly they did that which was against their consciences, and now said they, we have got them, and then they would heap all their injunctions upon them one after another until they had broken their consciences all to shivers. And as it is with some birds and beasts that when they are caught they are presently fatted up, so it was with some Ministers and others, when they were once got in their nets, presently they had livings and preferment and some got to be Bishops Chaplains and the like; And as some other birds when they are caught they are presently nipped in the head or their limbs are broken; so when they had caught some others, they would deal riggeully, severely, ma-

simile

Mm 2
liciously with them, and would never leave until they had broke them all to pieces. These were our men that have been a snare upon Mispah and a net spread upon Tabor: But blessed be God that their snare is broken and our souls are escaped as a bird out of the hands of the fowler, Psal. 124. 7. My brethren when so many have been caught in such nets and snares that were laid, do not you think you would have been all caught one after another? It is likely every one of you would have been caught in their superstitious ways, for see how they prevailed in a few years. But God looked from Heaven and pitied the souls of his people and heard their groans and sighs. Oh many a poor Minister hath gone home to his wife, and having no other way of maintenance he hath out of fear of losing his living yeilded to their superstitious injunctions, do but you think how he hath wrung his hands and could not sleep that night but lay rolling upon his bed with a dismal conscience. Well, the Lord hath heard these cries and broken our snares and our souls are delivered. God forbid such a judgment should ever befall us again, as that God should bring these fowlers among us to entangle our souls as they have done!

Expos. 3. But there is another interpretation of this text and it is somewhat suitable to this and may well stand with this, and I think it is that which is intended by the holy Ghost here. Mispa and Tabor were two eminent mountains (I take them in their own proper sense, You have been a snare upon Mispa and a net spread upon Tabor, that they did spread snares and nets upon those very mountains) that did stand between Israel and Judah, between the two chief Cities, Samaria that belonged to the ten Tribes, and Jerusalem that appertained to Judah and Benjamin. Now Jeroboam and the other Princes his successors, they placed Watch-towers upon these two mountains, and there they set men to watch, to be as Spies to see who went from Israel to Judah. There were a company of precife people that would not be contented with that worship that was set up by authority, but they must have other manner of worship and they must now and then be stealing
l to Jerusalem at the times appointed: Now the Priests they counsell'd those that were in authority, say they, we shall never be quiet till we catch these men, they must be going to Jerusalem, therefore let there be some device to apprehend them: then comes another and faith, most of them when they go they go by Misphab and Tabor, and there are two convenient places, if you will set some watch-towers there and place men in them they may take every one of them. Now this counsel pleased the Princes very well, and upon it (as I find in Aris Momianus, who cites it out of the Jews histories) there were two Towers set upon these mountains and were intended to this very purpose. This God chargeth them withal, and judgment is against you for this. Oh you set snares upon Misphab: They were convenient places for such a business, and so they did catch poor people that sought to worship God in his own way. Oh this is that which provokes God exceedingly and will bring fearful judgment upon a people when Magistrates and Ministers will seek to catch poor souls that would worship God in his own right way.

And hath it not been so in our late High-commission Court? Apply when there was but a poor Reader in a Countrey Town, that could do nothing else, and if there were any eminent Preacher near hand, poor souls that were hungering after the bread of life would go to hear that Preacher, they would set men on purpose with pen and ink to take notice of the names of such men, just as Jeroboam did here. The Lord hath a special eye upon poor souls that are oppressed and are thus caught, to relieve them in due time; and blessed be his Name He hath done much for us this way, in relieving us and delivering us from these men, and the judgment of God is this day out against those that have been these catchers. What is become of those Proctors and Sumners and of all that rabble rout that were catchers and hunters of such poor souls as were desirous of worshiping God in his own way?
Ver. 2.

And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.

The Lord by his Prophet proceedeth in his charge against Israel for their Idolatry; And in the latter end of the 5. verse, he pronounceth the sentence against them.

1. The continuance of their charge. The revolters are profound to make slaughter.

The revolters.] The Apostates, those who once worshiped me according unto what I required in the way of true worship; But they are revolted. The brand of a Revolter is an ignominious brand; Especially when God himself chargeth this upon any; Once you were thus and thus forward in the ways of God, but you are revolted, you are an apostate; there can be on blacker brand upon a people, upon a man than this is, he is an apostate, a revolter. We must understand this their revolting especially in reference to their falling off from the true worship of God to their Idolatry: And so the next words.

They are profound.] Profunda verunt, they are grown very deep in this their way of Idolatry. At first they began but with a little, but by degrees they are grown into the very depth. When men begin in the ways of Idolatry they know not whether they shall sink. They think perhaps at first to go but thus far and thus far, but before they are aware they are sunk into the very depth.

It is a dangerous thing to venture upon the beginnings of false worship, especially when the tide is flowing in. If a man stand up on the shore of the Sea when the tide is coming in, and thinks the water is but shallow now, I may venture to stand here, it is but a little depth here; The Sea still comes in more and more, he thinks it is not much deeper than it was: But if he venture too long he may soon be swallowed up and sunk into the very depth of the Sea. Thus it hath been with many; They have been deceived in their ways of superstition: They have
have thought they might yield thus far, and yield thus far; but they little thought of the tide that was coming. It is true if the tide had been going out, it had not been so much danger. Therefore they are deceived in that their opinion of the first Reformers; they would yield for peace-take this thus and thus far; but then the tide was rather going out; and yet it was not without danger that they yeilded so far as they did: But of late time, the tide was coming in; and then the yeilding but thus far and thus far, hath swallowed up many into the very depths of those waies of superstition, they have even been choked and drowned by them.

Secondly, Profunda verunt radices in sua malitia. Their hearts are got very deep in these waies: (so I find some Interpreters carry it, and not improbably) they are grown deep, that is, they are deeply rooted in these waies, so that there is little hope ever to get off their hearts from them: They have continued in them a great while, and now they plead their forefathers, and custom; so they are deeply rooted in these their waies of Idolatry.

"It is a dangerous thing for a people to be deeply rooted in superstitious waies; What a great deal of fir is there in dealing with them that are deeply rooted in falfe waies of worship? By custom in them they grow to be deeply rooted in them.

Thirdly, Profunda verunt, they are grown profound, that is, they have revolted from God exceeding much, deeply revolted. It noteth the greatness of their revolt ing. In Eze. 31. 6. there is such an expression, They have deeply revolted, they have not only forfaken somewhat of my worship, but they have deeply, exceedingly, largely, very much revolted from me. So in the 9th of this Prophefic, verse 9. They have deeply corrupted themselves, They have exceedingly, very much corrupted themselves.

Fourthly, Profunda verunt, they are grown deep, that is (as some would have it) they grow deeper in their waies of Idolatry than God doth in the waies of his worship: As thus, They will punifh more the breaking of any of their rules in their
their invented worship than God punisheth the breaking of his rules. So I find Mercer that learned Interpreter quoting Rabbi Jarchi as having this expression, Qui non ascendit transgressurus, qui offendit occidetur. He which ascends not (to the feast) transgresseth; but he that offendeth (so) shall be slain. God only accounteth him a transgressor that comes not up to the feast at the appointed time; but they say, whosoever doth not come shall be put to death. They will go further in the punishment of the breach of their superstitious laws, than God doth in the punishment of the breach of his holy Law. So they are grown deep. Yea they would seem to go further, to be more zealous and earnest for their ways of Idolatry than God himself is for his ways of holy worship.

Applic. And have we not found this, that Revolters, superstitious Idolaters they have grown deep thus? that is, they will punish the breach of their superstitious ways more deeply than God punisheth the breach of His Law; they will stand more upon time, and will be more eager to have their Laws fulfilled abundantly than the true worshippers of God are eager to have the Law of God fulfilled.

But (though I think the holy Ghost hath a reference to divers of the things) the main and principal scope of the holy Ghost in this word I take to be this, according as you have it in your translations, They are grown profound; that is, They are very subtil in their ways of Idolatry, they lay their snares deep.

We spake before of the snares of Idolaters; now here the holy Ghost chargeth them for being profound, that is, They are subtil, they lay their snares very deep: As fowlers and hunters (to follow the metaphor) they will go into low places and into ditches, that so they may deceive the fowls, and that the birds may not perceive them: So the Holy Ghost here follows this metaphor: they are content to go deep, they are deep in their plots, they will deny themselves in anything almost, and will be content to lie very low to be it they may further their own ends. You find it in many great Promoters of superstitition and idolatry, they will crouch and seem to be very
very affable and courteous to gain people, and in many things deny themselves, and all to further their own ends. Thus they are profound in their subtilty; according to that expression we have in Psal. 10. 9, 10. He lieth in wait to catch the poor; he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net; he croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall.

Oh it should teach us to be willing to deny our selves in our own ends; that we may promote the true worship of God; for Idolaters will crouch, and bow, and deny themselves in their ends for the promoting of their Idolatry. There are many depths, many subttilties in their waies; their parts are imploied to the utmost to maintain their Superstition; And men that have strong parts and good wits, what a gloss are they able to put upon the worst things in the world! If there be any ability in any parts or strong wit that the Devil can affill them withal he shall be imploied in putting of glosses upon their false waies of worship; and so they grow deep. The Scripture telleth us of the depths of Satan, Rev. 2. 24. Satan in his instruments hath deep policies and doth go beyond many poor weak and simple people. And sometime we have in Scripture exprest, the devices of Satan, 2 Cor. 2. 11. τα νικατα the reasonings of Satan. And then the methods of the Devil, Eph. 6. 11. τας μεγασθεις the deep policies of the Devil; and in nothing more exerciseth than in the maintainance of the waies of false worship; There they appear with their gravity and profound learning (seeming profound learning) to countenance this their way of false worship. This was just the way of Idolaters at these times, they were grown profound in this their way.

First, That the hearts of Apostates are the most deeply rooted in wickedness.

No men are so deeply rooted in wickedness as Apostates are, Therewolters are grown deep, that is, are deeply rooted in this their way of wickedness, and amongst other wickedness, above all in the waies of Superstition and Idolatry. Apostates if they grow Superstitious and Idolatrous they are the most deeply rooted in those waies, yea and the most profound and
Apply Prelates to them. Hence you might observe in your own experiences the practices of our Prelates, they would choose to themselves Chaplains to be their Agents, such as had bin here-tofore Puritans, and so falling off and apostatizing from that strictness that they seemed to profess in former times; they made account that these would be their choicest and best Agents of all men; they thought their fittest men were such as did arise out of the ashes of a Puritan, as they themselves were wont to express it; they knew that such men as those that were formerly seemingly strict in their practice, were best acquainted wherein the consciences of godly men were most tender, and that they knew their ways and what would pinch their consciences most, and therefore these were the fittest Agents for them.

Obs. 2. Idolaters (especially Apostates) are profound and deep.

We had need therefore to beware of those that are superstitious when they come with the greatest show of arguments: They are deeply rooted and can hardly be gotten off from their superstitious ways; we had need likewise be deeply rooted in the truths of God or they certainly will undermine us. The Scripture telleth us, that the Spirit of God searcheth the deep things of God; 1 Cor. 2. 10. revealeth the mysteries of Christ; those that have that Spirit of God that searcheth those deep things of God, they are the only men and women that are like to stand out against the deep policies of Idolaters. And the truth is, every godly man and woman though never so mean parted, yet they are more profound than the greatest Scholer in the world that is wicked and superstitious; for they have the Spirit of God that searcheth the deep things of God; and this it is that keeps their hearts from being taken with greatest profoundness of false worship.

Obs. 3. Idolaters they are deep in their policies.

Use. It should teach us then to labor to be wise in the worship of Christian policy. When we would maintain God in his worship it should teach us to learn to seek to out-plot them; they are full of their plots, why should not the Spirit of God teach us wisdom as well as the spirit of Satan teacheth them? Why should
should we not exercise our parts as strongly in the true worship of God, as they theirs in the way of superstition and Idolatry? But we see it ordinarily otherwise, That the men of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light, they are deeper in ways of policy and so deceive such as are simple. If you take them upon the first presenting of things, the first shew of things, they will seem to come with such colour of arguments as will certainly deceive you. Therefore you should beg wisdom of God that you might not be deceived through the subtlety of Satan through these men.

I find divers of the Ancients have other interpretations of these words; I will not spend further time in telling you what those are, because I think already we have had the meaning of the holy Ghost in these words; therefore we will pass on. They are profound.

To make slaughter.] To make slaughter! what doth God intend by these words? By these he doth express their way of superstition and false worship. He meaneth by their making slaughter, their sacrifices unto their Idols, and so by the sacrifices which was the principal part of their false worship he meaneth all their false worship; they were deep in all their false worship, naming the chief for the rest.

But why doth He call their Sacrifices, making slaughter.

It is in way of reproach. All their sacrifices were no better than slaughter, their Temple was no better than a shambles, and their Priests no better than Butchers. God will not give them the honour as to say, they offered me sacrifice; No, but it is, to make slaughter. As if God should say, I look upon all your sacrifices as no other than upon slaughter, your Temple no otherwise than upon a butchers shambles, and your Priests no otherwise than butchers. Thus contemptibly doth God speak of the sacrifices of those that choose their own superstitious ways. Isa. 66. 3. He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a man; (saith God) be that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's neck; be that offereth up an oblation, as if he offered Swine's blood: and yet there, God speaks of the sacrifices of Judah, not of Israel. Let the sacrifices be for the matter of them, what
God requireth, and offered in the place that God hath appointed; yet when men make their sacrifices their own righteousness and think to put off God by them, faith God, I regard them no more than the cutting off of a dog's neck. But these sacrifices of Israel had a twofold error in them. First, they were not offered in the place that God would have them: Secondly, they relied upon them likewise; therefore God called these sacrifices no other than slaughter.

Obser. From thence the note is, "That whatsoever worship is tendered up to God, if it be not his own worship, or if in that worship (though it be his own) we choose our own ways, whatsoever shew of devotion there may be in it, God accounteth it a dispicable thing.

Expos. 2. Or secondly, The word [making slaughter] God useth not only to shew the contempt He hath of all their sacrifices, but by that He doth secretly insinuate the cruelty of the Priests and of the Princes to those that would not yeild unto their Idolatries, their grievous persecution of them, even unto blood. They are profound (faith God:) they are grown deep in their Idolatry, they are grown to the depth of malice, so as their hearts are enraged against those that will not do as they do, even unto blood; no matter what becomes of them, no matter if they were all hanged, a company of precise and scrupulous fools, that pretend conscience, and do nothing else but trouble the State, Doth not Jeroboam and the Council command these things? The Kingdom can never be well till it be rid of them.

Though I have been a rebuker of them all.] Though I have been an instructer, or corrector so the word may be turned as well as a rebuker. And have been, or am, or will be, you may put it which way you will, it is not in the Text, neither have been, nor am, nor will, but, Though I a rebuker, Eruditor, Corrector of them all. As if God should say, they cannot plead ignorance, indeed were it that they never had any means, then they might have some pretence for what they do, but I have been an instructer and rebuker of them all.

This
This particle [I] hath reference either to the Prophet, or to God Himself.

1. The Prophet, and then, either Actively, or Passively.

*I have been a rebuker, or, I have been rebuked: So some ἐπιμελέως.*

For the first, *I the Prophet have been a rebuker: From thence I. Actively.*

The Ministers of God they must rebuke sin. They must not suffer sin to go without rebuke.

2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ (faith Paul to Timothy.) And among other charges, this was one, That he should rebuke the offenders.* And Tit. 1. 13. Rebuke them sharply, ἀπεπιστάω, cuttingly, so the word is. Tit. 2. 15. Rebuke with all authority.

This is the work of the Ministers of God, to rebuke with authority, to rebuke cuttingly, when there is cause for it.

And indeed, the spirits of sinners are base and vile, and a Minister of God coming in the Name of God, is above them, let them be what they will be; And if the rebuke be administered in a gracious way, it will make the proudest sinner to shake under it; Let them seem to be never so scornful outwardly, yet I say, let a Minister of God come in God's Name, and carry the rebuke in a gracious way, and speak as the Oracle of God, he may make the proudest and stoutest sinner to shake under his rebukes, for their spirits are vile. And those that are under the charge of such, though it seems to be a hard work and grievous for the present unto those that are rebuked, yet they will bless them afterward, if God bless the rebuke; and others will curse them that would not rebuke them in their evil ways.

2. If we refer this *Rebuker unto God himself,* I have been a Rebuker, that is, Not I the Prophet only, but I the Lord have been a rebuker of them all. From thence the Note is, That God doth rebuke people in his Word, in his Ministers.
Obscrv. When the Ministers of God rebuke in a way of God, he doth then rebuke sinners. And if there be any means in the world to humble the heart of a sinner, it is this, *To see that God rebukes him in his Word.* You may put these two notes together. *God rebukes in his Word: and, This is a great means of humbling the heart of a sinner to see, that God rebukes him in his Word.* Thou comest unto the Word, and findest thyself rebuked for such and such evils that thou art conscious unto thy self of; know it was God rebuked thee the day, and He will call thee to account for those rebukes He gave thee there. Thou camest perhaps to hear what the Minister would say, but thou foundest before thou wentest that thou were rebuked for such and such secret evils thou art conscious to thy self of; Know (I say) God rebuked thee at that time, and look to it, God will call thee to an account for His rebukes.

God rebukes not only by His Word, but sometimes by His works too; When He doth appear against sinners, when He suiteth His works so as He doth evidently shew that He sets Himself against such and such sinners, then (I say) God rebukes them for such and such evils, howsoever they will not see it. *Isa. 26. 11, 12. Lord when thy hand is lifted up they will not see, but they shall see. God lifteth up his hand to rebuke wicked and carnal men, and evidently sets himself against them, and they will not see, but they shall see."

Obscr. Again further, Hence note the stubbornness of men's hearts, especially of Idolaters; they were profound to make slaughter in their wais of superstition, though I was a rebuker of them all; they cared not for My rebukes, they regarded not My words, their hearts were stubborn and stout against them.

Mercer. *Verbi contemptus, Idolatriae comes.* Faith Mercer upon the place, *The contempt of God's Word is the companion of Idolatry.* You shall find by common experience how your superstitious false worshipers fliht the Word of God; they are above it, they speak jeeringly of the Scripture and of warrants from Gods Word; Oh you must do nothing but you must have Scripture for it: They cry up Fathers and antiquity, and such and such Writers, but for the Word of God they usually contemn and scorn it. Thus
Thus it was here, they regarded not what God said in his Word. Idolaters are very stout against the Word of God and contemn it. There are no commands no rebukes of God in his Word, but they stand out against them: Poor vile worms that they are! who are they that they should dare to stand out against the rebukes of the infinite holy God? Know, howsoever thy spirit swells against this Word of God, it will certainly cast thee. The Psalmist in Psal. 76. 6. faith, 

At thy rebukes O God, the Chariots and Horse-men are cast into a dead sleep; And to Psal. 80. 16. They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance; And Psal. 104. 7. At thy rebuke they fled, And Psal. 18. 15. The foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebukes. The rebukes of God they have a great deal of power in them, and Heaven & Earth cannot stand before the rebukes of God, how then can that stubborn heart of thine stand out against them?

Let us not be troubled my brethren, nor discouraged at the stoutness of Idolaters. They have been always stubborn and stout against the rebukes of God in his Word, and therefore let us not think it much though they stand it out now against the evident truth of God and against the works of God that apparently make against them. Revel. 16. 9. They were tormented with the wrath of God, but repented not to give Him glory. Many men are ready to think that their cause is good because their spirits are so stout against all that appear against them, and flight them. Let not us have higher thoughts of them because of this, for it hath always been the course of Idolaters to stand out stoutly against all the rebukes of God in His Word and Works, because the Lord hath an intent to destroy them.

Observe, Sin after rebukes is very sinful.

It is too much to stand out against God's commands; but Observe to stand out against any intimation of God's displeasure, is a Sin after greater evil. God expects that the heart of sinners should rebuke melt before him upon any expression of his displeasure: And it was the commendation of J o s i a h, That when the Law was read, his heart melted; And indeed an ingenious spirit is soon rebuked. But when the heart of a sinner is got above all rebukes then it hardneth exceedingly,
ceedingly and then it treasureth up wrath against the day of wrath. We our selues cannot bear it in others to stand out against our rebukes, we cannot bear it in a child or in a servant; if we rebuke a child or a servant, and they care not for it, and their spirits rise against it, how do we hate such, how do our spirits rise up against them? Nay if we rebuke a dog and the dog cares not for it, we cannot bear it. How shall the Infinite God bear our slighting of his rebukes.

Use

Oh let us charge this sin upon our spirits! How often hath God rebuked me in his Word and in his Works, and yet the Lord knows this wretched and stubborn heart of mine hath stood out against it. Certainly this standing out against rebukes will lie heavy upon thy conscience one day. Nothing will make sin more heavy upon thy conscience than this, that I have sinned and that in my sin I have stood out against the rebukes of God: As in Pro. 5. 12, 13. At the last, when thy flesh and thy body is consumed, thou shalt mourn and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? The words are spoken of a gallant, a brave young gallant, that blustereth it out in the world, and carres all before him and cares for nothing that is said; but when the hand of God is upon him and his flesh and body is consumed, then he falls a lamenting his condition, Oh how have I despised reproof, and have not enclined mine ear to them that instructed me? This is the aggravation of sin indeed.

And that we may humble our souls for our standing out against Gods rebukes, ad but this consideration to it, That God hath such rebukes as will force us to yeild unto him in spite of our hearts. If we stand out against His rebukes in his Word and lesser chastisements, against his loving rebukes; let us know that God hath furious rebukes; so they are called in Ezek. 5: 15 and 25. 17. When thou comest to the Word, or when thy parents, or thy governors, or thy friend rebukes thee for thy sins, God rebukes thee in them, and these are loving rebukes; but thou that art a child or a servant, or any wicked and ungodly man, thou rejectest those rebukes; Know, God hath furious rebukes for thee one day, yea rebukes with
with flames of fire, so they are called Esa. 66. 15.

I have been a rebuke of them all.] This (if you apply it to the Prophet, for he must not be excluded, he is meant here as well as God) shews the Prophets impartiality. And from thence the Note is, That

"Prophets rebukes must not be like cobwebs to take small "flies and to let the great ones go thorough, they must be im- "partial rebukes. Oh how many Prophets have sharpened their rebukes against those that have been most conscientious, and have sadned their hearts even out of their Pulpits; but they let those that are loose go quiet away, nay not only quiet but rejoicing. When the hearts of the Saints have been sadned, they have sharpened their rebukes against these; but the looser of the parish, or many times the great ones have gone away rejoicing. Thus if you take the words actively, I have been a rebuke of them all.

But if you take the words passively (as some do) that is thus; They have rebuked the Prophet; as if he should say, they have been profound in their Idolatrous waies, and I have been faithful in preaching to them, and what hath been my recompence? All of them have rebuked me. All of them, not only their Priests have rebuked me, cryed out against me, not only their chief and great men have rebuked me; they indeed (their Priests and their Magistrates) would bitterly inveigh against me for pleading against their Idolatry; But all the people have done it too, I have been a rebuke to all the people, they have all been bitter against me, and sharpened their very tongues against me; Oh say they, here is one that likes not our way of worship, he must have another kind of Religion, he tells us that we must all go up to Jerusalem and worship there, and nothing will serve turn but that. Thus they scorned him and rebuked him and even flew in his very face. From thence the Note is this.

It is a hard thing for a few men to stand out against a State or multitude in matters of Religion, in matters of the worship of God.

If there be but some few unto whom God hath shewn ano- ther way, and the generality go a different way; Certainly...
those few are like to meet with hard measure, and like to be a rebuke, not only to Ministers, but generally unto all the people; they must expect to be under the rebukes of all sorts. Thus it was with the Prophet and with all that went his way; he was a rebuke unto them all.

Ver. 3.

I know Ephraim, and Israel is not bid from me &c.

I know Ephraim.] This is, Notitia judiciarius, non approbationis. A knowledge to judge, not a knowledge of approbation.

Exposit. I know Ephraim, that is, I know all his shifts, I know all his evasions, all his cunning devices, all his plots, all his pretences, all his base ends. These may be hid from men, but I know them, they are not hid from me. Mark, first, I know Ephraim, and then, I know Israel.

Ephraim First, Ephraim. By Ephraim (as you have heard heretofore) we are to understand, the Princes, the great ones amongst them, because Jeroboam was of the Tribe of Ephraim. I know Ephraim, that is, I know the politic ends of all the great ones amongst them: They bear men in hand that they desire to worship Me, and they say, "Oh God forbid that they should change Religion, and they cry out of all men that should raise up such suspicions of them amongst their good people. But I know Ephraim, that he, I know what his aim is, I know what his thoughts are, and what his counsels are, and what was plotted at such a time, and what his Chamber-counsels with such and such Priests were; I know what correspondence he hath with such and such that corrupt my worship, and all that retain to him and all that favor him, I know them all, I know all their devices and depths. I know what hath been working these many yeers; I know how he seems as if he would serve me, but I know that that he doth is meereiy to serve his own ends and no further. I know the poor people they are deluded by his fair and solemn protestations, they think he means nothing but well, and there are
none but a company of precise people that are jealous of him, but I know what they intend and what their ways are whatsoever colour they put upon them. Ephraim, that is, the great ones, the Princes, they persuade the people that Jeroboam and his successors aim at nothing else but to reform things for the best, but I know that things are far otherwise, I know Ephraim.

Israel is not hid from me.] That is, the people, they pretend Israel that they do but as they are taught, and they do but submit unto authority, they could be glad indeed if things were better, but some things must be yielded unto for peace-sake.

"It is true, these Prophets and some others are good honest men, and they would have us to do otherwise, but things are not clear yet, we cannot see but we may do this and this in case of necessity; that way they would have us go may bring us a great deal of trouble; Indeed what they say, seems to be like that which is in the Scripture, but then these and these inconveniences will follow; we should be glad if things were better reformed according to the Word, but for peace-sake we must be contented to yield to the judgment of such and such learned and wise men; and though we yield to these and these things yet our hearts are right for God. But faith God, Israel is not hid from me.

Israel. That is, The base, cowardly, temporizing, revolting, superstitious spirits of the people, they are not hid from me, their being loth to come under my government, their love to their ease and estates, the lothness of their carnal hearts to venture and suffer any thing for my Truth and Ordinances. Israel in these his distempers of heart is not hid from me; all these things are plain before Me, he may blind men and baffle his own conscience, but he cannot hide it from me faith God.

From whence the observations are these.

First, That God's eye is upon the secrets of men's hearts, upon their Obl. aims, and plots, and all their ways.

Certainly therefore Hypocrites must needs be Atheists; Use, they that think to put off God with outward shews must needs deny.
deny God, as if God did not see the secret turnings and windings, and plottings, and contrivances, and aims, and ends of their hearts.

And then, O the patience of the infinite God, that notwithstanding he sees what villany there is in the world, colored over with Religious protestations and professions, yet he bears with them. I know faith he, I know what all their ends are, what they aim at, and what they would have if once they get the day; yet I see that they colour and cover all these vile ends of theirs with such protestations of Religion and of setting up the profession of it. Oh the infinite patience of God that can bear with men that colour such vile aims and ends with protestations and professions of Religion in such a sacred way as they seem to do! Here is the patience of God that we must admire at.

Again, God knows all the hearts and secret aims of men; let us pray unto God to make our own hearts known to ourselves. He knows them, and except we be upright in that, to be willing to know our own hearts, and unfeignedly to desire God that he would shew us our own hearts, we possibly after many duties performed may come to perish for some secret sin that we do not know our selves. I say, it is possible for a man or woman to go on a long time in the profession of Religion and to make conscience of all known duties, yet to perish at last for some sin that he doth not know in himself.

A hard saying. You will say, This is a hard thing, what shall become of us then?

To mollifie this therefore a little, take this along with it, that is, Except thou hast a heart unfeignedly willing to know thy own heart, willing to search into thine own heart, and earnest with God that He who knows thy heart would make thy heart known to thy self: If indeed thy heart be thus upright that thou canst appeal unto God and say, Lord I know I have a vile and false and hypocritical heart, and there may be much evil lie secretly in my heart that I have not known all this while, and such evil as I may justly perish in it; but good Lord make it known to me, let me know the worst of my
my self, let me know the evil that is in me, and my purpose is to resist it: If thou hast such an heart, thou hast no cause to think that thou shalt perish for any evil that thou dost not know by thy self. But if thou hast any secret evil in thy self, and thou dost not in the uprightness of thy heart unfeignedly desire to know it that so thou maist forsake it and get thy self rid of it, and canst not appeal unto God that thou art willing to have it made known unto thee, thy condition may be dangerous notwithstanding all the duties thou performest.

But further, This that the Prophet saith [*I know Ephraim*] is brought in to be a means to humble Ephraim, to humble Israel. From thence the Note is, That

*God's eye upon our hearts and waies, is a special means to humble Obser.*

No more powerful means in the world to humble the heart than to behold God looking upon our hearts and waies. The discovery of our evil to others may be some means to humble us. O how would it abase men if God should discover to all their friends and acquaintance all that evil that is in their hearts. And hereafter at the great day of judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall come to be disclosed, how will the wicked and ungodly be abased before men and Angels! We reade of the adulterer in *Job*, 24. 17. that the morning is unto them even as the shadow of death, and if any one know them they are then in the terrors of the shadow of death. Wicked men (especially adulterers, for it is spoken of them) they hate the light, and the morning is unto them as the shadow of death, and if they come once to be discovered they are terrified as with the shadow of death. Now I argue thus, if the knowledge that men have of our secret wicked waies is so terrible unto a guilty conscience, what is it then when this guilty conscience shall have real apprehensions of the infinite God? He hath seen thee when thou hast been such a wretch in such an Inn, in such a Tavern, in such a secret place. He hath seen what thou hast said and plotted, yea what thou hast thought and plotted. Look upon God thus seeing thee and try
try if it will not humble thine heart. Oh labor to humble thy heart by this, How fhe was I to know such a truth, how glad was I when I got such a thing out of my conscience, such a thing that would have put me upon that which I was loth to do? and whatever I pretended, love to my self, to my estate, made me decline such a truth of God; and God saw all this. When we feel such base workings of our hearts, such plottings and contrivings of them for our own selves and for our carnal ends and aims, let us cast our eye upon God and consider that his eye is upon us. Let us conceive as if we heard the voice of God from Heaven saying unto us, “I know what you are plotting, I know what your aims are, I know the base workings of your spirits.” Did we but apprehend God thus speaking from Heaven unto us, as here He speaks by the Prophet, “I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me, it would be a special means to humble our hearts for evil present, and to prevent evil for the future.

For now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

Now] There is somewhat in this word, it is a great Emphasis: Even still Ephraim goes on in wickedness; he hath gone on a great while, and even now when I am coming against him, even now he continueth in his wickedness. From thence the Note is:

Obliev. God will deal with men according to their present ways.

In what He finds them for the present, He will deal with them for that especially. Not but that when he finds them in evil for the present, He will call them to an account for all things that are past too; but He points Himself at them as they are in their present ways.

Use. I note this the rather, for this end, to shew unto sinners this useful lesson. “Whatsoever thou wast before, though thou hast continued a long time in thy wickedness, yet if thou hast but now a repenting heart, to return unto God, there might be hope and help for thee.” Oh consider this thou wretched sinner. As if God should say here, Ephraim hath continued
continued wicked a long time, but if he had Now a heart to return unto me, it should be well with him, but Even now, to this very moment Ephraim committeeth whoredom. So say I unto the vilest sinner in this place, whatsoever thou hast been, here is salvation if now at this instant thou hast a heart to turn to God; thou canst not tell whether God will ever give thee another Now; God gives thee [a Now] now, if thou return now unto Him and repent and believe thou mayest be saved: But if God come upon thee after this Exercise and find thee continuing in thy sinful ways, and say, Even Now, yet for all this this sinner continueth in his sin, this will be a heavy thing indeed. So here he cometh upon Ephraim, Now Oh Ephraim! He makes an exclamation against him; O Ephraim after all the means that hath been used to recall thee, yet still, O Ephraim thou continuest in thy Idolatry.

And, Ephraim, Thou committeest whoredoms, Thou dost it, thy sin is greater in this continuing, for thou carriest the people with thee, and little hope there is of reformation till the great ones reforme; If Ephraim commit whoredom, Israel must needs be defiled, so it follows.

Israel is defiled.] There is a Twofold defilement of the people of Israel.

First, Defiled morally; that is, by their wicked works: as Defile here, by their murders, and thefts, and adulteries, that was before in Chap. 4.

Secondly. Israel is defiled: that is, They defile My Worship and that defileth them. They have defiled My Worship and by defiling My Worship they come to be defiled. And that I take to be especially meant here. Israel is defiled, that is, among other ways of defilement, they mingle with Heathen, and they bring them in to defile my Worship. In Isa. 47.6. God threateneth to defile His Sanctuary, and to pollute His Inheritance: That is, when He suffereth by His just judgment, Idolaters and Heathens to come into His Sanctuary, to mingle with His Inheritance.

And then Israel is defiled another way; that is, Israel both mingleth his own inventions with my Worship, & Israel doth bring
bring in or suffer the Heathen to come in to my worship and so my worship is defiled and they are defiled by defiling my worship. From whence the Note is, That

**Obs.** Defiled worship, exceedingly defiles the souls of people.

Nothing defileth the souls of men more than defiled worship. And among other defilements in worship, the mixing with wicked and ungodly men in ways of worship, the mixing with such as God would not have come into the ways of his worship.

**Object.** But you will say, Doth the mixing of wicked and ungodly men defile the worship of God, or defile others in it? Is the Sacrament of the Lords Supper the worse if there be wicked men partake and mix in that worship? Am I the worse for it, or is the Sacrament the worse, is that worship defiled? How may we refer this defilement of Israel to our defilement at this time? Is there any Church in the world but hath wicked ones in it? And will you say that they are defiled and that the worship is defiled because there are wicked ones amongst them? Then we can go no where in the world but we must be defiled, and the worship must be defiled?

Many men think they have a good argument of this, to say, all Churches are mixed, there is a mixture in the best Churches, therefore if mixtures make the Communion defiled, then all are defiled. It comes fully in my way to speak a word or two of this, and it shall be but a word or two.

**Answ. 1.** First, I know none living on the earth hold any otherwise but that the best Church in the world may have wicked men creep in amongst them, and be amongst them. Who knows the hearts of men when they come in? and therefore the best Churches may have wicked men amongst them. This (I say) all men do hold; therefore this Objection, Will not there be wicked men in the best Church? can have no strength in it, for there is no man denies it, and therefore they that make it fight with a shadow.

But secondly, I lay this, for another position, which I think all men whatsoever will grant also, That the Sacrament is not defiled to the receivers meerly for the presence of wicked
ked men there. I verily believe everyone will grant this; I know none in the world for my part, denies this to be a truth, namely, that the Sacrament is not defiled to the right receivers of it, meerly because wicked men are present there. No man affirms the contrary to this, but all that I know of, that are the strictest in the way of Church order and discipline will grant this to be a truth, that the Sacrament is not defiled to true receivers meerly because wicked men are there.

But what then, you will say? How shall we distinguish mixing? Quest. true of communion, or mixture of worship?

Not meerly because wicked men are there. But first, then Anfw. a Congregation is defiled if they do not use the power that Christ hath given unto them. As he hath given a power unto every Church (let the Church-state be what it will) to cast out all the scandalous persons that are amongst them. Now if this Church shall (under what pretence soever, as saying they have no power, or that the power is taken from them or the like) neglect the duty of it, viz. to cast out those that are unworthy then the Church cometh to be defiled, and their communion to be defiled. So that their communion is not defiled because the wicked are there, but because they neglect their duties of casting out the wicked from thence. For let a man be wicked, let him be a hypocrite, it is not the duty of the Church to cast out that hypocrite until he discover himself; but if that hypocrite discover himself, if then the Church perform not her duty as it ought in casting him out, then it cometh to be defiled. And the example of the incestuous Corinth, in 2 Cor. 5. is a plain place for it; A little leaven (faith the Apostle) leaveneth the whol lamp. What is that lump there? It is the Church communion, and the leaven there is the incestuous person; and the Apostle gives order to cast him out; now faith he, while this leaven continues, if you do not do your duty to cast out this scandalous person, your whol lamp, your whol communion will come to be defiled. So Churches come to be defiled.

2. How

Again further, Not only Churches come to be defiled; but particular persons.
secondly, particular persons and communicants come to be defiled in this if they neglect the duty that belongs unto them as Christians. That is thus: Christ requires this, If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more: And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church. Now if thou hast done this thy duty to all scandalous persons in the Congregation, then the sin be upon the Church, thou maist receive the Sacrament with comfort though wicked men be admitted there. So that though the communion be defiled, that is, defiled to those that are guilty, to those that have neglected their duty (wheresoever the power lies in a Church, whosoever in that Church neglects their duty of casting out those that offend, they defile the communion so far as in them lieth, and if any of you that are particular members neglect your duties, so far as in you lieth the communion is defiled by you:) but if you do your duty once, then, though wicked men may be there, you may receive the Sacrament with comfort; For though the communion may be defiled in respect of others that have neglected their duty, yet it is not defiled in respect of you that have done your duty. Now then, to conclude this with that place in Psal. 119. 1. Blessed is the man that is undefiled in the way. Blessed are those men that in their way, in the course of their lives, keep themselves from defilement, and especially keep themselves from defilement in the ways of God's worship. Blessed is he whose heart is cleansed from secret filth, that by the vain carnal plots reasonings and cunning fetches of wicked men he doth not defile himself in his way.

Again, A further Note from hence is this:

A defiled Nation, is near unto ruin.

Israel is defiled (He speaks of Israel that is ready to fall, for so it follows verse 5. Israel and Ephraim shall fall, and here just before he tells us, that Israel is defiled.) When cloathes are filthy and nasty and will not be purged, are not worth the cleansing, we usually cast them upon the dunghil; so when there is defilement and filth amongst a people and they will not be purged,
purged, and are grown even rotten in their filthiness, the
Lord calleth them upon the dunghil. While God is indeed
purging of a Nation (I beseech you observe it) there is all
that while hope of that Nation. As for example, though a
piece of cloath be very foul, yet if you see the servants of the
house washing that cloath, you will say, surely this piece of
cloath is not intended for the dunghil: It is foul indeed and
it is noisom, but you see there is care taken and cost bestowed
upon it for the purging of it, and that is an argument that
there is an intention for the preserving of it. So while the
Lord is taking care and bestowing cost to purge a Nation, there
is much hope that the Lord intends to save that Nation. And
we may comfortably hope that this is God's intention to-
ward us. God knows we have been a defiled people, and
have defiled ourselves; never a one of us but may lay his
hand upon his heart and say, I have been defiled and so
may deserve to be cast upon the dunghil. But behold, the
Lord is bestowing cost upon us, and He is cleansing and pur-
ging of us, and therefore we may hope that the Lord will not
cast us off.

But no mirvail that the Lord letteth us and our brethren
lie abroad in frosty nights. Many complain of much hard-
ship, our brethren many of them are sent from their houses
where they have had their beds and fire, and now are fain to
lie in the fields in the cold. No mirvail I say, this Nation
hath been defiled. When cloathes are much defiled, it is not
enough to wash them and rinse them, but you lay them a-
broad in frosty nights. Yea there are some defilements that
cannot be taken away but by fire, and if the Lord will not on-
Fire
ly wash us and rinse us and lay us abroad, but put us into the
fire for to cleanse us at last, blessed be his Name. Israel is
defiled.
Ver. 4.
They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God.

Here lies the evil. Though we be defiled, if God be about to cleanse us there is hope; but if the words that follow in this 4th verse be applied unto us, then we are as lost people indeed. Israel is defiled indeed, but Israel may be brought back again and regained to the true worship of God; Oh no faith God, Israel is not only defiled, but he will not frame his doings to turn unto his God.

He will not frame his doings.] The word is very elegant, you have not such an expression (that I know of) in all the Scripture besides. Some read it, * Non dabunt cogitationes, he will not give himself to think of such a thing, of turning unto the Lord. And others they turn it thus, * Non dabunt ope-ram, they will not do their endeavors to turn unto the Lord. And others, * Non adhibent actiones, they do not apply any action of theirs any way to turn to the Lord. And others, * Non permittunt opera, & falsa sua; their custom in their ways of sin will not suffer them to turn to the Lord. And thus, * Καὶ ἐν τῇ ἡσυχίᾳ ἑαυτῶν, they give not their counsels, their studies to turn to the Lord. These several translations I find of the word. And by all these together we may come to have further light to know the meaning of the Spirit of God in these words: For the words are somewhat strange, therefore we had need of several expressions to find out the sense of them.

They will not frame their doings.] They will not give their mind to turn to the Lord, they will not put forth themselves into any posture that way. It is true, we can do nothing without the Lord, but yet the sin lies in our wills rather than in our power, thence the will is charged by God. They cannot turn unto God of themselves, but yet they may do somewhat, they may bend their thoughts upon it, they may think of it, they may attend upon the means. But faith the holy Ghost, they will do nothing tending that way, they will not so much as set them-selves...
selves into any kind of posture of turning unto me. This is to shew what little hope of good there was in them for time to come. They are far enough from turning unto Me faith God, there is not so much as any inclination in them of turning unto Me, they are fully bent another way; though they cannot do it of themselves, yet they will not so much as give their minds to think of what may be a means to do it. Israel will not frame his doings to turn unto his God.

As thus, First, He will not so much as set his heart to think of anything that will bring him unto God. Not so much as to think thus, Are my waies right or not right? What if it should prove that my waies are not right, what shall become of me then? This were one degree of a peoples or a particular souls turning unto God; if a man did but thus frame his doings to turn unto God; if he had but such thoughts as these, Lord, what am I doing? What is my way? Am I right or no? what if it should prove that my way were not right, what would become of me? This were somewhat. But faith God, they are far enough from any such thoughts to make any stop in their sinful course, they run on violently and heedlessly, and will not so much as frame their thoughts and studies to turn unto Me.

But Secondly, Though a man cannot turn unto God, yet he may do this, be to hear, may be willing to hear what is said for the waies of God, he may consider whether there is strength in what is said or no: But faith he, they are carried on with prejudice against the waies of God. Let what will be said, they will not frame themselves to hear any thing that is said for Gods waies and against theirs.

Thirdly, They will not set themselves before God, to wait upon Him in the use of means for His Grace to turn unto Him. It is true, we are poor, weak, and ignorant creatures, but if we would wait upon God to know His mind, if we would set our faces that way, it may be God will reveal further of his mind unto us. In Jer. 50. 5. When God intendeth good unto a people, it is promised, that they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces stiberward. A true repenting people and a repenting soul, will
will be enquiring after the waies of God with his face standing thitherward. But faith God, they will not do so much as do this, they will not set themselves to enquire after the mind and waies of God with their faces thitherward.

Fourthly, They will not apply the rule of the word unto their actions; but whatsoever they see will make for their own ends, that they will follow: but to take the rule and apply it unto their actions and waies, they reject that, they will not frame their doings so far.

Fiftly, What light they have they will not use that, so as to do the outward acts that that light doth direct to do, and what they have power to do; As, not to break off gross offences, such things as they cannot possibly but see to be evil. As a people though they cannot fully turn unto God presently, yet there are somethings that are so gross that they cannot possibly but see they are evil: faith God, they will not so much as break off from that; though they have power to reform that which they are convinced to be evil, but faith he, they will not improve that light which they have, what should they have more light for?

Sixthly, They will not joyn with the work of God; When he is in his way toward them, when he himself is about to frame them, when he hath them in his hand they will oppose Gods work, they will not join with it to frame themselves to turn unto God. Therefore in 2 Chron. 30. 8. Hezekiah exhorteth the Priests and the people, that they should not be stiffnecked, but yeild themselves unto the Lord; mark, the yeielding of themselves unto the Lord, is contrary to stiffneckedness. But now this people are stiffnecked, they will not yeild themselves unto the Lord, though the Lord by his gracious works toward them be a framing of them to turn them unto himself, they oppose Gods work, they riggle and keep a fire and stand out against it: Just as when you have a child that you would fain frame to such a gesture, and you take him and put him into such a way; but now he is so far from doing of it, that he riggles up and down and will not suffer you to frame him;
why faith God, I have been a framing of them my self, I have not only shewn them what they should do, but my works have been so toward them, that I have been framing them, but they are stiffnecked, they will not be framed, they will not joyn with my work in framing of them, they will break out in their wicked wai^e: even at that time when I am framing of them to turn them unto my self; According unto that expression you have in Hos. 7.1. When I would have healed Israel, then the wickednes of Samaria was discovered, that is, when I was about to turn them unto me, then, even at that time they break out in their violence and wickedness.

Seventhly, Whatsoever means is used to turn them unto God, they will stick to their old customs, to their former wai^es, to what they have received from their forefathers, to what they have been brought up in, those they will keep to; but to frame themselves to turn unto the Lord, that they will not.

Lastly, What advantage they can have against the wai^es of God; that they will take and improve to the uttermost. Those people that are against framing of themselves to turn unto the Lord when God is about to turn the, they discover it in this thing, if at that time there be any disadvantage that their corrupt hearts can possibly take against the wai^es of God, they will take that and improve it to the uttermost they can; just as a child that you would frame to such a way, if it be an untoward child, he will take any advantage to give you the slip and to run from you; so it is with people that have no heart to turn unto the Lord, if they have any advantage in the world, they will take it, to harden their hearts against Gods wai^es. There is no preparation of their hearts, what then shall I do with them faith God? if their hearts were in any preparation it were somewhat, but they are not. We read in 2 Chron. 20. that the high places were not taken away, because the people had not prepared, their hearts to turn unto the Lord. It is all one with this expression in the text: the parallel'd people were not in a frame, in a teachable, in a convertible disposition. The Lord grant that this Scripture may not be true.
true of us at this day, that the reason why there remaineth so much evil in God's worship, is, because the people have not prepared their hearts, they do not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, they do not seem to be in any posture that way. It was a charge upon Rehoboam, in 2 Chron. 12. 14. That he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord: But you will say, what power had he to turn unto the Lord, he was a wicked man? Yea but this wicked man though he had no saving grace, yet he is charged for doing evil in that he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. God therefore expects that people, though they are not able to turn unto him thoroughly, yet they should be in a posture that way; And as a people in general, so every soul in particular.

Some that are not yet turned to the Lord, yet are in a way of turning, they are in a readiness to receive what God shall reveal. This is a happy condition. If God shall see a Nation (though it be not fully reformed) ready to receive what he shall reveal, Oh this is a happy thing. As the Scripture speaks, that the regions were white unto the harvest, that is, there was a preparation in the hearts of people to receive the Gospel; if God shall see such a frame of heart in a people; it is true this people are not fully reformed, but their hearts are prepared, they are ready to embrace what the mind of God is when it shall be revealed unto them, Oh that this might be said of this people, they are willing to entertain what God shall speak, they are listening to it!

God is about to bring us from a way of superstition, both the Works and the Word of God tend that way; but there are multitudes of people that will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, their spirits are perverse, they are full of prejudice, froward, and they hang off, and then we know they cannot be convinced. The Apostle Peter bids the Saints in Acts 2. 40. save themselves from that untoward generation. Oh let not this charge be upon us, that we are an untoward generation, that God is framing of us for good, but we will not frame our doings to turn unto the Lord: As we see a workman when he hath a piece of timber that is knotty and will
will not work in his hand, he casts it into the fire; or as clay
that is not well tempered it will not work in the hand of the
workman, he many times calleth it away in an anger, it will
not work in my hand, what shall I do with it? The Lord is
hewing of us by his Prophets, and seeking to frame this Na-
tion to his will, Oh let us work in Gods hand, let us joyn
with the work of God, and yeild our selves to the work of
God, that the Lord may not cast us into the fire.

If we will not frame our doings to turn unto the Lord, he
may break us, break that frame that we raise in our own ima-
ginations: perhaps we are framing to our selves a strange,
kind of Common-wealth, to enjoy our ease and honors and
prosperity, and so we build Castles in the air. Oh but let us
rather frame our hearts to turn unto the Lord. If we will
not frame God may put us into the fire again. A workman-
you know puts the Iron into the fire because it might be fra-
ed to such a work as he would have it, but still the iron is
hard and it will not frame to his hand, then he puts it into
the fire again and then falleth a knocking again: So the
Lord hath begun to put us into the fire that we may frame our
doings to turn unto him, and if the fire we have been in will
not bring our hearts to a framable disposition, the Lord may
put us into the fire again and again. And let not us com-
plain of the heat of Gods fire, but rather let us complain of
the unframableness of our own hearts, that we do not frame
our doings so as to turn unto the Lord.

But yet through Gods mercy we cannot say but that there
are many in Parliament, many in the Assembly, many in the
City, and many in the Country that are framing themselves
to turn unto the Lord; and so far we are gone; Let us take
notice of Gods goodness therefore. As.

First, It is one argument of a people framing themselves, that they have abolished what is sinful. It was a great plea a-

among us, first let us know what we shall have, and then we
will cast out his that we have. This was a plea fomented by
the Antichristian party; but certainly it was the way of God;
and we have cause to bless God for it that put it into the heart

U
of the Parliament and of the Kingdom, to be willing to put
down and to cast out (and that by a solemn Oath, by lifting
up hands unto the most High God) whatsoever was
naught.

Assembly And further, in that the Parliament hath called an Assembly
(such as I beleive never yet was in this Nation, nor scarce in a-
ny other Nation) men of more gravity, and judgment, and
holiness, such as they could possibly pick out and whom
they thought might best direct them in the ways of God, such
they have chosen to help them to know what is the right way
of God; and they do profess that whatsoever shall be revea-
led to be the way of God, they will walk in it. That is a good
frame of heart.

And then, That the Assembly hath begun with a solemn
day of humiliation, to humble themselves before God that so
the Lord might guide them in chusing a right way to direct
those that had called them together for their assistance. There
was never such a work in England before that was begun
with such a day of humiliation. Did your Convocation e-
ever keep such a day unto God to beg of him directions in the
work.

Let not people run away with thoughts of discontent, or
discontent: lay any kind of flanders and clamuries upon them, because of
some failings in particulars: for you must know when God
looks not at particular fail-
ings of a
State, but at the pub-
lick work:

Short
spirits;
God looks upon Kingdoms and States, he doth not so much look
at particulars as at the publick work; Now that there is so
much done in a publick way, that there is so much framable-
ness, though there be much failing in particulars, yet we have
cause to bless God. It is true, those that would fain have a
perfect Reformation they would fain have men thoroughly
frame themselves presently, and set up all presently without
any more ado, and banish all presently. I suppose this co-
meth from a good intention, from love unto Christ and his
Ordinances: but we must know it is not so easy to reform a
whol Nation that hath been so corrupted and defiled: there-
fore though there be not so perfect a Reformation at present,
yet let us bless God for what is done, that there is so much
framing of the doings of the Nation to turn unto the Lord, and not murmur and repine because all is not done that we desire.

And though perhaps they may never bring the work thoroughly to the pitch we desire, yet I make no question but what the Parliament and Assembly hath done, will be enough to lay a foundation for another generation, if they bring it not to perfection themselves. Oh that the Lord would yet further frame our hearts and doings to turn unto him!

Hath God at any time put into your heart a framable disposition to turn unto the Lord? Hath God begun to make you think of your ways? Hath he begun to stir fear in your hearts concerning your eternal estate? Hath he wrought in you some desires to know him, to attend upon him in the use of means? Make much of this framable disposition, for it is very much pleasing unto God; God complains where it is not, therefore he likes it where it is, and improve it: O happy had it been with many had they improved that framable disposition that God hath wrought in them. Cannot you remember when sometimes you came to the word what a melting frame of spirit had you? and in such an affliction you were as iron put into the fire (and you know then it is in a framable disposition to be brought into any fashion) and hath it not been so with you? But what is become of this disposition? Is it not worse with you now than before? Have you not lost it? The time was when the word wrought upon you, and you have had good desires and dispositions, and you have thought, Oh now I hope God will turn me unto himself; Now I hope I shall never be at such a pass again as I have been; and thou begannest to abandon such and such a corruption. This was a good frame, and now if you had gone alone and sought God, and Oh that the Lord would perfect this work and put it on, and so improved this framable disposition, it had been well with you; but you have fallen upon other business, and gone into company, and it may be upon the next temptation you have bin overcome & your hearts have
have been hardned, and iron you know, when it hath been once in the fire and is grown cold, is more unframable than before: so it is with many, after they have had some workings by the Word and after some melting by affliction, they have been more unframable than they were before.

And let us make much of it likewise in others. Is there any friend, or child, or kinsman, or acquaintance of yours brought into this framable disposition? doth the Lord begin to melt them, to soften their hearts? Is the Lord by such a Sermon or by such an affliction beginning to work upon them? Oh let me put it on as much as I can. The Devil doth so, when he sees us in a framable disposition to sin, he setteth tempters on work to improve it; and we know it was the way of Idolaters, when they saw England in a framable disposition to Idolatry, what abundance were sent amongst us to improve it. Oh the mercy of God toward England, that when we were framing our doings to return to Idolatry, the Lord cometh and putteth the frame of England more from thence than before it was! Oh let not us lose this framable-nest; though it is not so much as we desire, yet let not us lose what it is. England would be in a lamentable condition if it should lose what it hath got from God already.

Yet further, They will not frame their doings.] The Note from hence is, That

Apostates seldom have any inclination to turn unto God.

No melttings of spirit, no yeildings, but their hearts are hardned, and they depart farther and farther from God (for so he speaks of Israel as an apostatizing people.) I dare almost challenge you all: when did you ever know a notorious Apostate turn unto God? very rarely: (I will not say it is impossible) but especially for Apostates that are men of parts and have gone far from God, if they have but proceeded so far as to turn to be persecutors of the truth, or contempters of it, (as these Israelites here were) when did you ever know any of them to turn unto God. They will not frame their doings.
To turn unto their God] Their God: 1. By profession. 2. Their God who hath shewed much mercy to them, and hath done them much good. 3. Their God who is yet willing to be their God. They will not return unto Him.

This is the aggravation of their sin, that they will not turn to such a God. What, not turn unto Him whom they profess to be theirs, whom they flatter with their mouthes, and they say that all their good and happiness is in Him? Not to Him that hath done so much good as He hath done to them all their days? Not to Him who is yet willing to be reconciled unto them? O this is a sore and bitter evil indeed that they will not turn unto this God.

But yet there is a further thing observable here, [Their God] that is this; That

True repentance, it is not only to leave evil and to do good, but

to turn unto God as our God.

To turn unto God as a God in covenant with us: as a God in whom is our portion and happiness: as a God willing to be reconciled. Here indeed is the very formality of repentance. A man may by the terrors of the Law turn from the practice of a sin, not to live wickedly so as he hath done heretofore; he may by the strength of natural conscience and self ends, set upon good duties, but here is no true repentance. True repentance is this, When we look upon God as a God tending Himself unto us in the way of a covenant in Christ, and so we turn unto Him. In Jer. 3. 22. Return ye back sliding Israel (faith the Lord) and I will heal your back-sliding. Now mark the answer of explained true penitents: Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Here is true repentance. When God shall call upon a sinner, O wretched vile sinner, return, O return unto the Lord, for He is willing to be your God in an everlasting covenant; He manifesteth His grace toward you in His Son, and offereth mercy there, yea He is willing to heal all your backslidings; He is willing to be your portion, He is willing to be the happiness of your souls: When a sinner shall answer unto this call of God, Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God; True indeed, we have sought after vanity, but here
is not our happiness and our portion; Our good, our happiness is in Thee; We come unto Thee the Lord our God. It follows.

For the spirit of whom disdains, is in the midst of her.

Here is the reason why they turn not unto the Lord. The spirit of whom disdains, is in the midst of her.

Expos. 1. First, That evil unclean spirit that did possess them. So I find divers do take the words. And then the Note is, That

Obser. The danger of forsaking the truth.

Do not excuse thy sin by saying it is the Devil that tempts thee, for this may prove to be the aggravation of thy sin, that by the just judgment of God thou art now given up to be under the power of the Devil and to be acted by him. As in Eph. 2. 2. the scripture speaks of the miserable estate that men are in by nature, Dead in sin, the children of wrath, and amongst other aggravations of their misery this is not the least, they walk according to the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. The word translated working, there, ἐργάζεσθαι signifies the greatest activity that can be; the spirit, that is, the unclean spirit, the prince of the power of the air that now worketh in those children of disobedience. This is an aggravation of their misery and not any excuse unto them for their sin. Thou hast rejected the good Spirit, the holy Spirit of God, and now the spirit of whom disdains, an unclean vile spirit hath possessed thee.

Expos. 2. But rather thus, The spirit of whom disdains: A violent inclination of spirit unto uncleanliness, to spiritual and bodily uncleanliness, that they have got by custom. We have had this phrase before, in Chap. 4. 11. The spirit of fornication, that impetus of spirit, that violent inclination of spirit. So then, faith the Prophet, they will not turn unto the Lord, for there is a violent inclination of spirit, an impetus with which they are carried on in the ways of wickedness, but there is little hope
hope of turning them unto God. The spirit of whoredoms, that is, that efficacy that there is in that wicked disposition of their hearts that carries them on so violently. In 2 Thes. 2. 11. the Scripture faith, that because men love not the truth the Lord gives them up unto the efficacy of error; God (faith he) for his cause shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lye; so it is in your translations, but the words, εὐαγγέλιον ἀληθίνος, signify the greatest active efficacy of errors, to carry on with the greatest strength unto error that possibly may be. We find sometimes men that are carried on to erronious opinions, and come to speak with them about them, and you shall perceive such an impetus of spirit, such an efficacy of the error in them, that it doth so hurry on their hearts, that they cannot with any calmness, with any quietness of spirit hearken unto anything that may take them off from their error. That's a spirit of error, God gives them up to the efficacy, the spirit, the activity, the power of error, to believe a lye.

Is in the midst of them. That is, it is come into them and sitteth as a King and ruleth in their hearts. An evil spirit may beset the godly, may compass them about, but it getteth not into the midst of them, they keep it out from the throne, it doth not come to reign over them. The coming into the midst of them, noteth the full possession that this unclean spirit, that this Impetus and strong inclination of spirit hath over them. And therefore, you find in Prov. 8. 20. that it is said of Wisdom, I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment. [In the midst of the paths] that is, wisdom doth not only bring men to the verge of God's ways, to be a little taken with the outside of them; but brings them into the midst of the paths of judgment; that is, they come wholly into them, so as they are even possessed of them. So here, the spirit of uncleaness is in the midst of them. So in the 1. Sam. 4. 3. you have the same word, Let us fetch the Ark unto us (say they there) that when it cometh among us it may save us; the words in the Hebrew are, that the Ark may come in the midst of us, and there have the full operation to do us good and save us. They depended much upon the Ark, and yet it failed them. By the
A good cause may be lost by too much depending on it.

way then, we may depend too much upon a good cause, the cause may be good, and yet depending upon the goodness of the cause and neglecting our own persons in reforming our lives we may fail as they did here: (But that by the way.)

*The spirit is come into the midst of them.* Many men receive an evil spirit quickly into the midst of them, when God knows the good Spirit of the Lord standeth knocking at the door of their hearts, and can have no entertainment so much as into the outward room. It follows.

**Exposit.** And they have not known the Lord.] That is, they know not My greatness, My holiness, they know not what a jealous God I am. Idolaters have low and mean apprehensions of God. The right knowledge of God will put the heart upon seeking after the right manner of the worship of God: but when men know not God, see not God in his glory and greatness and excellency, they think to put off God with any kind of worship. Here is the reason that men do so flick to their own ways, to will worship, to their own fancies and conceits, because they know not the Lord, neither do they understand the glory and holiness of God, nor what a jealous God he is. When once the soul cometh to know what God is, such a soul dares not tender up unto God any worship but His own.

Now from the connection of these words, *The spirit of whoredom is in the midst of her, and they have not known the Lord,* the special Note is this, which indeed is very observable.

When men have an Impetus of spirit (that is, a strong bent and inclination of spirit) in any evil way, it is that which blinds their minds.

*The spirit of whoredoms is in her;* and then follows, they have not known the Lord: Whatsoever is said then against their way they cannot be convinced of it. And men do not consider how they come to be blinded. We find it in ordinary experience, when men are stirred in passion, they have a spirit to such and such a thing that they have a mind to, their spirit is strongly set, and they must have it, and I will, and I will, and I will have it; Come then and say any thing to them and they understand nothing, they are blinded: When their spirit
rit is up, when there is an Impetus, a strong inclination of spirit to any thing, say what you will they do not understand you. So it is true in other affections (of love) when the heart is set upon a thing, to love by an Impetus, a strong bent of spirit, though the love be falsely placed, come and say what you will against their way, they do not understand it, their minds are blinded, they do not know any thing. So it is true of fear, of sorrow, any affection, when it is set with a strong bent and inclination to the object of it, it doth much blind the mind. Some have a spirit of sluggishness and they love their ease; a spirit of covetousness and they must have their estates; a spirit of ambition and they must have their honor and respect; a spirit of pride and self-love & they must not yeild themselves as ignorant and mistaken by no means; therefore they cannot see the truths, the waies of God. But now let God humble these men that have such a spirit of pride, self-love, covetousness and the like, let the edg of their spirits be taken off, let God come and but mortifie this their lust in them, and then they come to see that which they could never see before, and that with far less ado; then a little hint of any truth prevails with their hearts; whereas before all the means of conviction could not do it.

Oh my brethren! when we come to examin truths let us look to our spirits. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, him will the Lord teach in his way that he should chuse. When a man humbling his soule before the Lord, and being jealous of his own spirit, examineth a truth; and crieth unto God to subdue what is evil in him, and then cometh with a teachable heart to find out the truth; suppose that yet he cannot find it: let such a man walk according to his light, whereunto he hath attained, and he may have comfort, God in due time will shew him more. But that is the thing that is evil in Gods eyes, and in the eyes of the Saints, when men are hindered from seeing a truth, by a spirit of opposition to it. There is no gracious heart can take it ill, if he see one that hath a spirit subject unto God, a spirit wherein the fear of God appeareth, so that he desireth unfeignedly to know what
the mind of God is: suppose this man for the present I cannot make him understand what I would; he is not of my mind; yet so long as his spirit is thus under God, I have no cause to be provoked against him, but in all love and meekness and gentleness to deal with such an one, and expect that God in due time will reveal himself unto him. But now when any one cometh and will make profession that they desire to know the truths of God and what his mind is: but when it appeareth that there is a spirit of opposition, pride, a vain glorious a vain spirit; Oh this is it (I say) which is grievous, is tedious in the eyes of God and of his Saints. It follows.

And the Pride of Israel doth testify to his face.

Mark another connexion here. As there is a connexion of a spirit of whoredom and not knowing God, so there is a connexion of not knowing God and of the pride of Israel. They know not the Lord, and the pride of Israel doth testify to his face. From whence the Note is this, That Ignorance and Pride useth to go together.

There is no man so conceited of their knowledge as many ignorant men are: For the truth is, where there is knowledge there is no man finds that he knows but little, and he is able to discover his own ignorance; but an ignorant man is not able to discover his own ignorance, and therefore usually he is proud. You shall have many men and women too, that will pretend such abundance of knowledge, and their hearts are puffed up, because they have got some expressions more than others have, as if they were somebody, & had some manifestations of things to them more than others have; yet come and examin things at the bottom, & the truth is they are ignorant of the very principles of Religion. 1 Tim. 6. 4. He is proud, knowing nothing faith the text, and yet he speaks of those that are full of vain questions and anglings about matters of Religion, that will come with such objections and curiosities of questions, yet the holy Ghost faith he is proud and knows nothing.
thing. And certainly the man that is there spoken of is a man as much conceited of his knowledge as you can conceive a man to be, as appears plainly in the text.

But now wisdom and humility, they likewise go together too. Prov. 11. 2. With the lowly is wisdom. If the heart be brought under God, put in a gracious, humble, lowly frame, with the lowly there is wisdom: the Lord delighteth to reveal himself to the humble.

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face.] The Seventy they read the words otherwise than you have them in your books: The injury and the wrong that Israel hath done unto God, shall be brought down, shall be humbled: for I suppose their meaning in that translation is this, that whereas Israel by his wicked ways hath wronged God, hath been injurious unto God, he shall be humbled for it, he shall be brought down and made to know what it is for him to wrong God so as he hath done. And indeed those that do corrupt God's worship they are the greatest wrongers of God in the world, they do the greatest injury unto God that can be.

But we may safely keep unto that which is translated in The English reading. Your books, as more suitable to the Original than that of the Seventy, and then the Note is this. That

Idolaters are proud men, and Idolatry is a proud sin.

For that is the scope of the Prophet here, chiefly to rebuke them for their false worship; though he speaks of other sins yet that is the main; O the pride of Israel doth testify to his face; Israel they will have their own way of worship and forsake God. O proud hearts that they have! Idolatry is a proud sin.

In all disobedience against God there is much pride: pride is not only in cloathes and in fine things, but in disobedience against God, there is the pride of the heart: And as in all sin there is pride, so in a more peculiar manner in the sin of Idolatry. As,

First, Idolaters in their way, they look upon the true worship of God as a mean thing, as a thing below them, beneath them. Oh their way of worship is the pompous, brave, and gallant way; but for the true worship of God that is poor, low,
low and mean. All your superstitious and Idolatrous people look thus upon the simplicity of the ways and worship of God.

Secondly, And then there is pride in it in this, That a wretched worm should dare to presume to put more upon a creature than God hath ever done, to put more upon places than God and nature hath ever done. God hath made them thus and thus, but I will put them higher than God hath done, I will put an excellency, a spiritual excellency, a divine excellency upon them; for so Idolaters take upon themselves to do, and this is horrible pride.

Thirdly, It is pride, because they presume to prescribe God in worship. That is the dearest thing he hath in the world; and for any creature to take upon him to prescribe which way he shall be worshiped, this is the most notorious pride in the world.

Lastly, Herein appeareth the pride of Idolatry, that it honors what is a man's own because it is his own, rather than what is God's. Do not you see it apparently in all superstitious Idolatrous people? As in that one thing of days. God hath set one day apart for the honoring of himself and for the celebrating both of the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and of the whole work of our redemption. How is that day slighted, neglected, made nothing of! But what a horrible wickedness is it accounted not to keep that which man seteth apart by himself, that day which is a man's own! Men will set apart a day for the honor of Christ, and Oh! Christ will be quite forgotten if that day be forgotten; and Christ is much dishonored if that day be not regarded. I appeal unto you, Who sets it apart? whose is it? Is it God's or is it yours? God's? Certainly if there were such a thing so acceptable unto God as men take it to be, we should have some little hint, somewhat in the book of God of such a thing. We have the story of all the Acts of the Apostles, what they did in several places, and there is not the least mention of any such thing, of their honoring Christ, by setting a day apart.
apart for the celebration of his nativity: We have the Epistles unto several Churches upon several occasions, and we find no notice that they ever took of any such thing in any Church they established. Surely therefore it is men's own, there is nothing in God's Word for it how highly soever it is honored. But we have enough in Scripture for God's own day, the Lord's day, and it is appointed by God himself to be a day of thanksgiving for the birth, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and for the whole work of our redemption altogether; But man, he out of his pride will have another day and so set his feast by God's post; he thinks it is not honor enough unto Christ to put the celebration of his birth, death, resurrection, ascension, all together in one day; no, he thinks it is more for the honor of Christ to have several days, one for his birth, another for his resurrection, and another for his ascension; whereas God hath put all into one, and would have his Son to be honored by the observation of that one day.

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face.

Testifie.] In the Original it is, answereth to his face. When any thing is returned suitable to its work, that is said to answer that work: that is thus; when the ground brings forth Corn for the husbandman, then it answereth unto the seed and labor of the husbandman. Gen. 30. 33. My righteousness shall answer for me faith: Jacob to Laban, I shall have that which is suitable to my righteousness. So here, the pride of Israel answereth to his face (so you may read it) that is, the fruit of Expos. their pride shall be (in the punishment of it) fully answerable unto the sinfulness of it: so I find many turn it. Mic. 1. 2. Let the Lord be witness against you, (testifie against you, it is the same word) or answer you according unto your sins, in the way of punishment; that's the meaning. When the Lord bringeth judgments suitable unto, and full up to men's sins, those judgments do answer to men's sins; yea and they witness against them, they witness to the faces of those men the guilt of those sins.

Well, but we will rather take it (and so it is to be I think) according to what you read in your books, The pride of Israel doth
Expos. 2. *doth testify to his face:* that is, the pride that doth appear in Israel doth fully testify that horrible wickedness, stoutness, obstinacy that is in Israel, it testifieth to his face. Israel is a stout and an obstinate sinner, and his heart is very wicked, vile, and abominable against God; How do you prove that? His pride that manifests it, it felt outwardly doth testify this his inward wickedness. It is true, you cannot see the heart; but pride doth use to discover it self; pride in the heart seldom lies there long secret; for that is a sin that must be above-board; pride must vent itself; it is the glory of that sin to vent itself; Now that coming and venting it self, what doth it but-witness to the face of the sinner what vilenees and wickedness is in his heart? You could not see the vilenees & wickedness that was in his heart before; but now here this [Pride] that is sent out (and pride is a foolish sin it cannot keep in) and that coming forth it is a loud witness against him of that filth, vilenees, stoutness, and obstinacie that there is in the heart of this sinner.

There is a secret pride, and a witnessing pride. *Isa. 3. 9.*

The show of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin like Sodom; they manifest it outwardly in their very countenance: It is taken from harlots, some harlots that are at first departed from their husbands; they keep things very secretly, and you shall perceive them very demure in their countenance, but at length they come to be bold and impudent in their filthiness, and you may perceive adultery in their very countenance; and they witness apparently in their words and countenances what the wickedness of their hearts is. As that sin of adultery, so almost all sins are witnessed where pride is discovered. No sin disgracest men more than pride, and that is the curse of God upon this sin; pride seeks for the greatest honor to a man, and there is nothing that doth more dishonor him; Why? because pride doth testify that there is a woful deal of evil in that mans heart. As I will instance a little.

A man that differs in judgment from his brethren in divers things; he differeth and he pretendeth this, he cannot see the truth
truth of God which he would fain see; he cannot do as his brother for his conscience bindeth him otherwise. But you will say, every man pleads conscience, how shall we know whether it be the stoutness of his heart or the tenderness of his conscience? Thus, If this man behaveth himself humbly, and the rather humbly in all other things, because he cannot see what his brother doth in such and such particulars, and so is in danger to be an offence to his brother, and therefore his fool is humbled: This is a good witness that it is more conscience and not stoutness that makes him differ. But now if his behavior be high and proud when he differeth from his brother, he doth not take it to be an affliction to him that he cannot see what his brother doth, but confirminthim and thinks that it is either through his weakness or through his willfulness, that he will not see, and doth carries himself high and proudly before his brother, this witnesseth to his face that it is stubbornness and singularity. Thus his pride testifieth to his face the inward wickedness of his heart.

And as in a Church, this is a principle and maxim, That though a man be guilty of many and great sins, yet he is not to be call out but upon obblinacy. You will say how shall we know that; for obblinacy is In a man's heart? I know many observe such and such rules, for if, as, if you do not reform when such and such learned men tell you what they would do &c. But we have another rule: If after an offence and admonition there be a proud behavior of any one in a Congregation, if he carries himself proudly; this his proud behavior witnesseth to his face that it is not out of tenderness or scruple of conscience, that he yeildeth not to what his brethren would have him, but through the stoutness of his heart. His pride testifieth to his face.

Of the pride of mens hearts witnesseth much against them. I remember I have read in Ed a story of a Synod, an Assembly of Divines that were in England, in the time of Austin, that Austin the was then Bishop of Canterbury. And they assembling together Monk, they go to a holy man, an Anchorite, to advise with him whether they should yeild to what Austin did impose upon them?
(who was then the Arch Bishop) This holy man answereth them. If he be a man of God yeeld unto him, if not stand out against him. They reply, A man of God? How shall we know that, whether he be a man of God or no? He answers, If he be humble; for Jesus Christ faith, Learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart: if he be an humble man, he is a man of God faith he, and then learn of him. But how shall we know that say they? He answers, You shall perceive it by his behaviour; when he is come to the place of assembly, let him be there before you, if you perceive him to behave himself churlishly, imperiously, proudly, not so much as to rise to you, to give no respect to you, then take it for granted that he is a proud man and reject what he imposeth; but if he behave himself meekly, humbly, and lowly to you, then regard what he faith. So when they came to the Assembly, He sitteth in his chair in a proud imperious way and would not stir to any of them: upon that they rejected whatsoever he said, for according to the counsel of that holy man, his pride did witness to his face that he had a vile and a wicked heart and did not come unto them in the Name of Christ.

Humility. Oh it is much that is to be regarded that comes from those that are humble and lowly. Humility doth witness to the face of a man that he doth know much of the mind of Christ; and pride witnesseth to the face of a man that he is not acquainted with the mind of Christ.

Expos. 2. The word here translated [Pride] I find by a learned Interpreter, Livelius, that because in it itself it signifies Excellency, he thinks it to meant of God, who sweareth by the Excellency of Jacob, Amos. 8. 5. and so he carries it thus, That God who is the Excellency of Israel in whom Israel should glory, it is He that doth witness against them. And I find some inclinable to this. But the other I conceive rather to be the scope of the Holy Ghost, taking the word as it is translated for Pride, and the testifying to his face, for an open witnessing, apparently witnessing, so as it may easily be seen. It follows.

There-
Therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity.

Ephraim, is the Princes of Israel, they were proud because of the honor they had: And Israel, the People, they were proud because they had great men to bear them out, and they could plead Authority for what they did. But they shall both fall, both Ephraim and Israel. The Note is, That

The fruit of sin is casting down.

It is rather here said, They shall fall, than that they shall be punished, in reference unto what went before; for before, he speaks of the pride of Israel, and from thence a further Note is, That

Pride goes before a fall.

God will call down the proud, and certainly when those that are proud fall they must needs fall very low because a fore a fall, a proud man lifteth up himself so high, and you know according to the height a thing falls from so is the fall of it: now a proud man lifts up himself on high, so high indeed as he lifteth himself up above God, therefore he must needs fall down very low: And upon that I remember Bernard hath this Note, Here is the reason (faith he) why a proud man can have no grace from God; why? God is the fountain of grace, and it is a rule in nature that the stream that cometh from a fountain, it ascendeth no higher than the top of the fountain is. (You may find it in all Aquedunts, according to the height of the fountain so high may the stream be carried, but it will go no higher.) Now faith he, God being the fountain of all grace, surely grace cannot rise higher than God himself; but a proud man lifteth himself above God, therefore he is above grace, grace cannot reach him.

1. A proud man goes from God, as if he could live without Pride goes him; for that is the pride of mens hearts, when they have outward prosperity they go from God as if they could live without him.

2. He goeth against God, as if he were able to resist him.

Y y

3. He
Chap. 5. An Exposition of Ver. 5.

3. He goeth beyond God, as if he made himself the end of all his actions.

4. He lifteth up himself above God, as if there were more excellency in him than in God. He lifteth up his will above God, and that two ways:

1. Saith he, My will shall be followed rather than Gods.

2. Whereas God is contented to have his will only in just and good things; saith a proud man, I will have my will. But it is whether it be just, whether it be good or no. Come and deal justly with a proud man and say, do you well in this? Is this fit? Because God will have his will in nothing but in that which is good and just; thou wilt have thy will, whether it be just or no: thus thou goest beyond God and lifteth up thy self above him, therefore surely thou shalt fall.

I need not shew you any example of the falling of proud men. This our age manifesteth it clearly enough. How hath God cast dirt upon proud superstitious men? You know what a height of pride they were grown to two or three years since; and now two Kingdoms if not three have lifted up their hands to the most high God to extirpate them. Their pride did testify to their faces, and no marvel that they are fallen; and the Lord cast them so far down as they may never be able to rise up in their pride again!

Ephraim and Israel shall fall in their iniquity.

Expos. In their iniquity.] The Hebrew [Ba] signifies for, as well as in: fall for their iniquity, as well as in their iniquity. But to keep to the word, They shall fall in their iniquity. Surely they fall hard who fall in their iniquity, they fall so as to break their bones, yea oft times their necks.

Use. My brethren, these are falling times, let us labor to remove our iniquities beforehand, and then if we fall we shall fall soft and not hard. If we fall in our iniquities we shall fall hard; but if our iniquities be removed by faith and repentance, though we should fall in these times, yet we shall fall into the bosom of our Father and into the arms of Jesus Christ. How much better is it seeing that men are like to fall,
to take such a course before their fall cometh, that when they do fall they may fall soft, fall into the bosom of their Father and into the arms of Jesus Christ, and not fall in their iniquity; And if we fall thus, if our fall be not in our iniquity, but in the cause of God, and rather for our grace than for our iniquity, then we may be of more use in our fall than we were in our standing. As it is with the Corn, the Corn that falls into the ground doth fructifie, and is of more use when it is fallen than it was when it was in the granary; And so many godly men, many young ones that are fallen within these two or three yeers, (but God knows it hath not been in or for their iniquity, but in the Cause of God and in the exercise of their graces) they are fallen, but they are fallen into the arms of God, and into the bosom of Christ, and they are as fruitful in their fall as they were in their standing, for no question but there is much fruit to be reaped from their falls, and God hath a plentiful harvest for England that will come out of their falls.

Judah also [shall fall with them.] Mark, first Ephraim shall Expost: fall and then Judah, for indeed Ephraim was first in sin; the ten Tribes they first forfak the true worship of God and they brought in Judah together with them, and the text faith, that Judah shall fall with them. This is here mentioned to aggravate Ephraim's sin and the judgment of it, thus. Oh this shall lie heavy upon Ephraim one day, that not only he hath ruined himself, but he hath ruined Judah too, he hath brought Judah into his sin and involved him in plagues together with himself. From hence the Note is, That

It is a great aggravation for anyone to think what misery be Obl. r bringeth others into.

If God do but enlighten any ones conscience, it may be Gods hand is upon thee for thy sin: This is grievous: Oh but together with the sin have not I by my counsel, by my example, by my countenance brought others into sin? and I have brought them into misery as well as myself: It may be there be many in hell at this time that I have holpen thither. It is true Gods hand is upon me, I am falling, and whither I shall
fall I know not; I see hell open, and I may fall into it; how ever I am afraid of this that there are some fallen into hell al- ready of whose sin I was the cause, and is it possible that I should be preserved out of it? must I not follow them and fall thither too when they are already fallen thither through my wickedness? You therefore that have been Company- keepers and ringleaders to wickedness, and many of your companions are dead and gone, without any manifestation of repentance; you had need to be thoroughly humbled.

Obser. 2. Further, it is no plea you see for any one to say, I will fol- low the example of others. If you will follow the example of others you must perish with others. Judah followeth the ex- ample of Ephraim and Judah must fall with Ephraim.

Obser. 3. Gods people suffer if they sin with o- thers.

Gods people suffer if they sin with others.

Ufe why so many fall in these times.

Chap. 1. But here is a difficulty: In the first Chapter you heard there that God though he threatened Israel, yet he faith, I will have
have mercy upon Judah; but here he faith, Ephraim shall fall and Judah also shall fall with him. Now for the reconciling of that we are to know that, though Judah fell with Israel, yet there shall be a great deal of difference in their falling. Israel, the ten Tribes shall fall, be brought into captivity, so as never to return again, I mean never to return from their captivity in that way as Judah did; Judah was to return again after seventy years; so Judah fell with them, but they fell not as they fell. Though the Saints therefore may be scourged with rods, yea with scorpions as they are at this day, as well as wicked men, yet the Lord doth not, he will not, take his loving kindness from them.

There is yet one particular more to be observed, and it is from the Hebrew particle עם, Judah also shall fall with them; and I make no question but the Spirit of God holds forth this Note from it, viz. That

The falling of the Saints together with wicked men it is of special consideration. There is much in it; some special matter to be considered of in the falling of God's people together with the wicked. Indeed it is that which in these daies puts us to a stand; we admire at the waies of God, his judgments are past finding out; we must adore them in what we do not understand; That the hand of God should be stretched out against wicked ones, against such as have corrupted his worship by their own superstitious waies, it is no marvel; but that so many of his dear Saints, so precious in his eyes, in all Countries about, should suffer such hard things and fall together with the wicked; we are at a stand, and we know not what it meaneth. What, Judah fall also with Israel, when God had no other people upon the face of the earth, surely there is some great matter in it; It is I say of special consideration: And indeed there are many things that God would have us to observe in the fall of his people together with wicked men.

First, He would have us take serious notice how holy a God He is. He spared not His own Son, and He spareth not His dearest Ones. He will give the dearly beloved of His soul in-
to the hands of His enemies. God had but one Son that never sinned against Him; but He hath not one Son that never was afflicted by Him. And therefore we have no cause to wonder that the godly sometimes suffer, for His own Sonne did.

2. None presume on former services. Secondly, God would have us take into deep consideration this meditation, That none must bear themselves upon any former services they do for God. When Israel forsook God, Judah did cleave unto God's true worship, and in that God was much honored: But Judah must not bear himself upon that, Oh I have done service for God, when others did forfake Him I did cleave unto Him; and so think to take more liberty afterward: No faith God, though Judah hath much honored Me and cleave to My worship when Israel the ten Tribes forsook Me, yet if Judah shall afterwards comply with Israel, Judah shall likewise fall. None must bear themselves upon former services. It is usual with men that if they have been useful in some things; they begin to presume, and to be heady and take liberty to themselves to do what is not convenient; thinking that because they have done some service, they must not now be contradicted in any thing they do. Thus we find it many times among men; and upon this boldness many among us have fallen: How many have there been that in the beginning of this Parliament and in the beginning of these Wars, have done good service for the Common-wealth; and afterwards begin to be high, and maliperc and proud, and they must have what they will and none must contradict them but every body must submit unto them; and so through their pride though they have done good service yet afterward they fall? Let every one take heed of this both in regard of God and also in regrd of man: you that have been most forward in the publick Cause, never think to presume because of what you have done, but walk humbly now, and be serviceable still, for otherwise you may fall notwithstanding your services as Judah did.

3. God no engaged to any. Again, Another thing that God would have us take into consideration is, That he tieh himself unto no people, if they offend,
offend, be they what they will be, God can be without them.

Judah also shall fall: By that God declareth that there is no 
men though never so useful, but he can be without them. Per-
haps you may think, if you desert the Cause where will there 
be any to stand up in your room? Take heed, though you may 
think you are the most useful man either in the Ministry, or in 
the City, know that God can be without you, and you may 
fall as well as other men.

Last, God would have us take notice of this. That if His 
own people fall with the wicked, what then may wicked men 
expect? If such things be done to the green trees, what shall be 
don to the dry? If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall 
the wicked and ungodly appear? It follows.

VER. 6.

They shall go with their flocks and their herds to seek the Lord.

Shall they fall? No they have a way to prevent it, they will 
prepare God with the multitude of their sacrifices, their 
flocks and their herds, they are content to spend those all in 
sacrifices unto God, and shall this people fall? They will make 
God amends with these; they will make up their sins with 
these, with the multitude of their sacrifices. There is much 
to be observed from every word here; the difficulty for interpre-
tation is not much, and the Observations I shall pass 
briefly.

They shall go] Ibunt huc & illuc, modo ad hunc, modo ad illum 
monem, as Interpreters render it. They shall run up and down 
from one place to another, from one sacrifice to another, in a 
kind of hurrying of their spirits. And from that word there 
may be this noted, That

Those who depend upon duties, are in a hurry and distraction 
of spirit, when they do not prevail with their duties in that 
they desire.

They often change their duties, but they do not change 
their hearts. Many think, Well, I have done thus and thus, 
yea but if I shall add to what I have done, and do thus and thus,
then I shall prevail: whereas those that do their duties in obedience unto God, and go out of themselves and depend for their acceptance upon a higher sacrifice, upon Jesus Christ: these go on with much sweetness and quietness of spirit, though for the present they see not the thing performed which they aim at in their duties: their spirits are not in a hurry and in a distraction so as the spirits of others that depend upon their duties are. This is to be noted from the clause: They shall go, cursitando, running up and down.

They shall go with their [flocks and herds.] He meaneth, with their sacrifices, but he gives them not the name of sacrifices, but only their flocks and herds, for they are not worthy of that name. From hence the Note is.

God contemneth the services of hypocrites, of superstitious and idolatrous apostates.

Their flocks and their herds.] Mark, They make use of their own, according to their own mind, in their own ways, to worship me as they list, and therefore God doth not call them His, doth not own them as His, but he calls them their flocks and their herds; What they do faith God, what they offer, it is their own, their flocks and their herds, I will not own them. From thence the Note is this, That

It is a sad thing that what we tender up unto God, God will not own as His.

When in our sacrifices (that are typified by those legal sacrifices) in our prayers, there we seem to tender up unto God our parts, our abilities, our inventions, our expressions, our wits, our memories, and the strength of our bodies: But now when we have done all, faith God, All these parts and all that is come from you all this while in your prayers, I do not own them, these are none of mine, they are all your own. This is a sad thing.

There is no such way to put an excellency upon anything we have, upon our parts, and abilities, and estates, as this, To tender them up first unto God; and if God shall please to own them, then to receive them again out of God's hands; we shall then
then receive them with abundance of sweetness and excellency. But here, he calleth them, Their flocks and their herds, though they were tendered unto God in sacrifice, yet He will not say, they are His, but their own. Thus it is with all Hypocrites and formal and superstitious persons in what they tender unto God. Self is the principle of what you do and done of self-love is our own.

Herein lies the sweetness and true comfort of a man's estate, and of his credit, and parts, or of whatsoever he hath, when he shall consecrate and devote them unto God so as they remain no longer his own. This is a sacrifice that God is well pleased with. These are my parts faith God, this is my estate, here I give them back to you again: And when a man shall take what he hath as having first consecrated and devoted it unto God and taking it out of God's hand again, Oh this addeth a sweetness and a blessing to his estate. All we have is God's as He is the first cause of all; but mark, God rejoiceth as well, if not more in a second right that He hath to what we have (namely by our tendering up all unto Him in a gracious manner) than He doth in the first right of being the cause of all. I beseech you observe it, God hath a twofold right to the estates, parts, and abilities of His people. First, He hath a right to them as He is the cause of them; I gave them to you therefore they are mine. But Secondly, There is a second right that God seemeth more to rejoice in, and that is this, When His servants by an exercise of grace, shall tender them up again and give them back again unto Him; Now faith God, they are mine by a second right; and this second right unto them, they being tendered up unto me in a holy way, is the right that I rejoice in; and this will be most comfortable unto you. Oh my brethren, let us not deprive God of this second right to all we have or are or can do; for this will not at all weaken our right of our own to what we have, we may enjoy our estates and parts and abilities; but this will strengthen, and sweeten, and bless them abundantly.

Zz
They shall go with their flocks and their herds.] Another Note is

Ob. Superstitious and Idolatrous people they are abundant in their

They are content to go with all their flocks and their herds
to seek after God; thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers
of oyl, any thing to offer up unto God, but mark, it is in this,
their own way of worship; and whatsoever is mens own that
they will be abundant in their worship, but what is Gods
that they will be scant enough in; as might be again instanced in in regard of setting of daies apart for God.

Natural conscience telleth us that when we have to do with
God in our services, that great things are futable to a great
God. Your Papists, in times of straights, they have a kind of
praying that they appoint for fourety hours together; but it
is in their own way, they will be abundant enough in that.

Many of you think much to spend a quarter of an hour in a
morning or in an evening in seeking God in your families;
when superstitious and Idolatrous people are abundant in
those services, in seeking God in their own way.

But observe it, though superstitious and Idolatrous people
be abundant in their services to their Idols, yet they are not
infinite in their services to them. But the Saints of God if
their spirits be right, they are enlarged to a kind of infiniteness
in Gods service. As thus, still they would know more of
Gods mind, they would do more, and are never satisfied with
what they do. There is no Idolatrous and superstitious person,
but there are some limits that he puts himself to, and he
thinks that when that task is over, when the fourety hours is
over, the work is done: But now here is the difference be-
tween a natural work and a spiritual; A natural work is al-

supernatu-
r
ral works
 unlimited,

infiniteness in it; Thus, though I am not able to do what is
actually infinite, yet my heart is infinite in this, that it is ne-
ever satisfied, but it would fain have more, and if I were able to
do ten thousand times more than I do, yet my heart would be
as eager to do more as it was at first, I should not think I am
any
any nearer to the end of my journey than I was at the first day; for I am to deal with an infinite God, therefore let my services be never so great and many, yet still, Oh that I could rise higher, Oh that I could do more. Here is the supernatural work of grace which doth go beyond all Idolatry in the world.

Again observe, Superstitious and Idolatrous people they will spare no cost in God's service in their own way. They will go with their flocks and with their herds, bestow all their estates upon the service of their Idols. How shameful is this for us to be so sparing and scant in the true service of God? Never men had more large opportunities to honor God with their estates than at this present we have. And certainly men should rather rejoice that they have an opportunity to serve God with their estates, than murmur that the service of God is so chargeable to them as it is. Although some men think themselves wise in appearing little in what may be chargeable unto them, yet they lose the chief comfort in and blessing upon what they do, in withdrawing themselves from such a service as God requireth at that time.

They shall go with their flocks and their herds and seek the Lord. From whence the Note is, That

There is a time when vile and wicked men shall see need of God. Though wicked men when they have all about them suitable to their carnal desires, they slight and neglect God, yet there is a time when they shall be brought into such a condition as they shall see their need of him. Oh let us remember this in the midst of our prosperity! We find by experience that God doth bring men to times wherein they see need of Him, Oh therefore now the love of God, now the mercy of God and pardon of our sins, and peace with God, how precious should it be in our eyes! It is good to make God our friend whom we are sure one day we shall have need of. We all conclude that it is a point of wisdom to make such a man our friend of whom we can certainly say, we shall one day have need of him: Oh let us be sure to make God our friend, for certainly
certainly one day we shall have need of Him. Blessed are those souls who have an interest in that God whom all the world shall see one day they have need of.

Further, They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; Thence this Note likewise,

**Obf. All pretend to seek God.**

Whatsoever they do, Oh they do it for the honor of God, and for the service of God, and out of respect unto Him; and why should not we do this and this, we have good aims and good intentions, do we not seek to honor God in what we do? When those Idolaters of Israel set up the Calf, they proclaimed a day unto Jehovah, a day for the honoring of God, they pretended that what they did was out of respect unto God and to honor Him. The worst men and the most superstitious will yet pretend the honoring of God. So it is again in regard of those days that men have set apart for God, and it is that which hath setted men in the superstitious observation of them, that it is for the honor of Christ, what (say they) shall we not honor the birth of our blessed Savior? what a profaness, what a disrespect is this unto Jesus Christ? well let others do what they will, for our parts we will do it, for hereby we shall do honor unto our blessed Savior. So the Papists for the adoration of Images, say they, What not regard not to reverence the Image, the Picture, of our blessed Saviour, and of the holy Saints? And the truth is if it be duly weighed, there is the same reason of Images of Christ and the Saints, and of days set apart for the honor of Christ by man's invention; and there is as fair a presence of honoring Christ by setting up His Image before me to put me in mind of Him; as of honoring of Him by keeping a day of mine own appointment. There is (I say) the same reason of both, and whatsoever argument any man shall bring me against the one, I dare undertake to make it good to be against the other. As now, is not natural reason as strong to set up the picture of the King to honor him (and you do it for that end) is not this as much as to keep a day once a yeer to remember him? So the reason...
reason may be as strong to honor Christ by way of picture, as to honor Him by observing any day set apart for that end by the inventions of men.

We are (my brethren) to take heed of men that are pretenders to the honor of God. These here will seek the Lord though in a false and superstitious way. But those that are pretenders to the honor of God they prevail much with weak spirits and with such as are most conscientious: As your greatest Hereticks that have ever been in the Church, have been great pretenders to godliness; and many there are at this day that out of pretence to honor Christ have leavened the hearts of people with dangerous errors, and especially leavened young converts; for your young converts as soon as ever God is pleased to work upon them, to convert them first unto himself, Oh they love Jesus Christ, their hearts are taken with Christ and inflamed with love unto him, and they honor free grace that hath pardoned the sins of their youth of which they have such fresh sense: Now false teachers they take advantage of this, and therefore if they shall bring any thing unto them that hath the Name of Christ, and the Gospel, and free grace, they know they will greedily drink it in; and many dangerous errors that are sweetened with such pretences are strongly maintained. By this means their leaders attain their own ends, and they see it not.

Again, Superstitious and Idolatrous men in time of their afflic- tions and straights, then above all they are abundant in their services. They will go with their flocks and their herds, when they are in extremity; O then God shall have any thing from them. Self-love drives men far and enlarges them much. Men in a storm are content to cast out much of that which is precious to Self-love, them. Isa. 29.16. They powdered out prayer when thy chastening was up-sinful.

on them. They are straitned in prayer before, it commeth our Isa. 26.16 by drops before, but when thy chastening is upon them, then they powre it out. And this is the baseness of our hearts, that we can find enlargement for God only then when it is futable to our own ends. Those whose hearts are more enlarged in adversity than in the enjoyment of mercies, had need to examine their hearts.
Further, Superstitious formal professors, think to make God amends for former and present evils of their hearts and lives, with outward performances.

Obser. If they bring their flocks and their herds, much sacrifice, they think that will do it. But let us learn to take heed of this; take heed of this vanity, to think to make God amends for former or present sins by any sacrifice thou performest to Him thus. Some of you perhaps that are negligent in the duties of your relations, you are wicked in your ways; servants, children, stubborn, stout against parents and governors, and wives neglecting their duties to their husbands, and so they theirs to their wives; and you think though you take liberty in those things, yet if you pray much, and hear much, and speak of good things, and be forward in the profession of Religion, that will make amends for the neglect of your duties. Oh take heed of that for ever you that are forward in your profession, and abundant in the performance of holy duties: take heed of this deceit of your hearts, to think to put off God with these things, and that that shall make up the neglect of your duties: Other kind of people are accused for injustice and uncleanness & much wickedness: & yet they think to put off all this, by going with their flocks and their herds. Here is their sinfulness, they rest in the bare duties. But the Saints they have a further sacrifice to offer to God, to be a sweet favour in His nostrils. They have first the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that these sacrifices typified. And then they have their souls and bodies which they tender up to God as a reasonable sacrifice.

Applic. Saints. But mark, They shall go thus with their flocks and their herds, but they shall not find him. Observe from hence,

Obs. God found no where if not in duties. First, If God be to be found any where he is to be found in his Ordinances, in the performance of holy duties.

These sacrifices they were materially good, but yet they should not find God in them. Exod. 29. 42, 43. When the Lord appointed the Tabernacle to be erected (a type of the Ordinances we now enjoy) faith he, There will I meet with thee, and there will I meet with thee again the second time. If God be to
to be found any where it is in the performance of holy duties.

But secondly, The end of all holy duties we perform unto God, it
should be to find God in them.

It should be so. They pretended that end here. When
either God is coming unto us in mercy, or when we are draw-
ing neer unto God in duty, we must be restless till we find him; Especially in the latter. Many men and women (I beseech
you observe this one thing) perform duties, but they do not
look at finding God in them. They do not examin after the
duties are done, Have I met with God in this or that duty?
Have I met with God this day in the word? I have been in
my closet and there I have prayed, have I found God in prai-
er? Found God? what is that? You should never be qui-
et in the performance of holy duties till you meet with God
one of these two waies. Either that you find God coming
to you in the communication of himself and the sweetness of
his love and mercy to you; Or at least till you find your hearts
got neerer unto him. And either of these waies we find God.

Thirdly, God will not be alwaies found when he is sough-

They shall go with their flocks and their herds, but shall not find me.

As thus. Men are never like to meet with God.

First, When they seek him in any superstitious way. These kind
of formal superstitious worshipers of God, they did much,
they spent much time in Gods worship, I appeal to their
own consciences, and unto all men that knew their lives,did
any thing of God appear in them? It may be manifested in
their frothy, vain, and carnal conversations, that they never
met with God in those worshipings. When God is sought and
not in his own way, he will not be found.

And then secondly, When we seek our selves rather than God, then he will not be found.

And thirdly, When we do not seek God as a God; that is,when
we tender him only external services and not soul-services al-
so; when we seek him not with the uprightness of our hearts,
when we seek him not with our whol heart, when we seek
him not with those high and reverent apprehensions of him,
when we have not that fear of his Name as is suitable to such

God will not be al-
waies found.

1. when supersti-
tiously sought.
2. when our selves
chiefly.
3. when not as God
an infinite God as the Lord is, then God will not be found.

4. And then lastly, When we seek him too late. There may be a seeking of God too late. Seek Him while He may be found. Oh then we had need lose no opportunity of seeking God, for He will not be always found. And this is just with God; for God often seeks unto us when we will not be found, and therefore it is just that He should not be found when we seek Him.

And then it follows, He hath withdrawn Himself from them.

Expos. When the Saints of God seek Him in a holy way, He is presently found. Nsa. 58. 9. They shall cry and He shall say, here I am: Perhaps they do not take notice of God, he is many times with us and standeth by us, He is present and we do not know that he is there; But now that we may know that he is there, he makes that promise, that when we seek him as we ought to seek him, He will say, here I am.

He hath withdrawn himself. The word that is here translated [withdrawn himself] may as well be translated, Divisit se; or Erupit se; He hath divided himself, yea snatched himself from them; that's the propriety of the word; they go to seek him and cry after him, God snatcheth himself from them, as one that refuseth their friendship, he turns his back upon them. This noteth, That God hath no delight in the services of superstitious and formal professors. But to the humble and contrite heart, he delighteth to be with them. The flocks and the herds of the wicked are rejected and God withdraweth himself from them; but small things from the Saints are accepted. As you shall observe in 1 Sam 7. 9. when holy Samuel there did but offer a fucking lamb for a burnt offering unto the Lord, presently followed that the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel. Here are herds and flocks and yet God withdraweth himself; but Samuel there offers but a poor fucking lamb, and presently the Lord thundereth with a great thunder upon their adversaries.
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ries. So you have it Revel. 8. 4. after the the Incense with the prayers of the Saints were offered up there followed voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. Great things are done by small services of the Saints, when done in uprightness, but the greatest services of Hypocrites and formal Professors God regardeth not but but withdraweth himself from them.

And then observe, It is a heavy and sad condition when Ob. 2. God withdraws himself from his creature seeking him, yea seeking him and that in a time of distress. As in 1 Sam. 28. 5. when Saul was seeking God, and God was departed from him, mark what Saul faith, I am sorely distressed, for God is departed from me. And in the 9. Chapter of this Prophesie, vers. 12. Wo unto them when I depart from them faith God. Oh that is a sad condition. It is a sign,

First, of a dishonor that God puts upon a people (as I Reaf. 1. shewed you more largely when I spake of the rejecting of their sacrifices.) What greater dishonor can it be unto a people, than for God to take more pleasure in their howlings under his wrath than he doth in their cryings unto him for mercy? And yet to such a condition may a people, a particular foul be brought into, I say that God may take more pleasure in your howlings under his wrath than in your cryings unto him, and that in your Temples, if you do not reform as well as cry unto him: and for that you have that evident place in Amos, 8. 3. In that day faith the Lord, shall the songs of the Temple be howlings; As if he should say, the songs of the Temple were loud, but I will take more pleasure in their howlings than in their songs. And that place is very famous, Esa. 29. 1. Wo to Ariel the City where David dwelt &c. and vers. 2. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow, and it shall be unto me as Ariel. The Text seemeth to be obscure at the first reading, therefore the meaning is this. By Ariel, is meant Jerusalem, the City where David dwelt, the place where the sacrifices were offered unto God; And Ariel signifies an Altar of God, Gods Altar that did devour the sacrifices like a Lion: Now faith God, Thou shalt be come as Ariel, thou Jerusalem

Ariel.
where my famous Altar was, where so many famous sacrifices were offered, thou shalt be to me as Ariel, that is, you indeed offer many sacrifices unto me, and you continue still in your hypocrisy, in your wicked lives, know faith God, I will make that City as an Altar upon which your blood shall be offered, and I will take as much pleasure in the sacrifice of your blood offered upon this Altar, as in all the sacrifices that were offered upon the Altar from whence the City had its name, your name shall be Ariel, that is, your City shall be stained with your blood as the Altar was with the blood of the sacrifices. God rejecteth and calleth out the services of such as are superstitious and ungodly.

And certainly my brethren, when God withdraweth himself no creature can help us; they will say, how can we help for God will not?

And some great judgment must be expected when God withdraweth himself; As when a poor Petitioner goes to the Prince with a Petition, and the Prince turns his back upon him; surely thinks he now some evil is nigh me.

And no protection from any evil can be expected when God withdraweth himself.

And then conscience flies in thy face and terrifies thee, Oh the blessed God is gone, and mercy is gone, and Christ is gone, and that for such and such sins of mine, and such and such lusts of mine that lay so near my heart. Oh how terrible will it be to conscience when God shall appear to withdraw himself!

And this withdrawing of God is but a forerunner of God's eternal withdrawing himself from the soul, and from the body too.

The Saints had rather have God's presence though angry, than God withdrawing himself from them. When God withdrawing himself but a little, Oh they could never be at quiet, till God returned again, O cast me not from thy presence faith David.

Applic. My brethren, when we perceive God withdrawing himself in any degree from us, Oh let us stir up our selves and
cry mightily, as the Church doth, Jer. 14. 9. O leave us not, Jer. 14. 9. the Church gives a strike as it were, she saw that God was going, as God is said, first to go to the threshold; God goes by degrees from a people, and Jeremiah a holy Prophet, he saw God going from them; Carnal hearts they do not perceive how God withdraweth himself from a people by degrees, but those that are acquainted with the mind of God and search into the word, they are able to discern God withdrawing himself from a people, and they cry, Lord leave us not, if thou be gone all is gone.

Yea, but doth not God withdraw himself from his Saints? how then is this a judgment peculiar upon Idolaters and wicked superstitious persons?

The answer is this, It is true, God withdraweth himself Answer sometimes from his Saints, but his withdrawing himself from them is not like unto his withdrawing himself from the wicked. As

First, Though God withdraw himself from the Saints, yet they retain good thoughts of him in his absence; whereas the wicked pine, and vex, and fret against him. A husband may be gone abroad about his business from his wife a great while; yea but if she be a faithful wife, she still retains good thoughts of him as of her husband and loveth him still. But another, when her husband is gone and hath withdrawn himself, she beginneth to have hard thoughts of him. So wicked men do upon Gods withdrawing of himself, in judgments and afflictions, they begin to have hard thoughts of God, and to say, I this is to serve God & to walk in his ways, what good have we got by all that we have done? But now you shall observe in the Cant, when Christ had withdrawn himself from the Church, she still calls him her King, and her Beloved, still gives him honorable titles.

Secondly, Though God withdraweth himself from his people, yet so, as he draweth their hearts after him to cry more earnestly. As a mother will withdraw her self from her child, she gets behind the door and hides herself, but to this end, that the child may be more earnest to come into her arms,
arms, that the child may cry after her to come to her, and the mother loves it. So the Lord loveth to hear his children cry after him to come to him. The Lord shall hear none of our cries in Heaven, for there we shall alwaies be with him; but here he somtimes withdraweth from us that he may hear us cry after him.

Thirdly, God though he withdraw Himself from His Saints, yet so as He leaveth some light behind Him that they may see which way he is gone and so follow him. As when a Torch or Candle is taken out of a room, yet you may see some glimmering light which way they went; so when God withdraweth Himself He useth to leave some glimmering light that his people may see which way to follow him.

Fourthly, God withdraweth Himself from His People, yet so as his bowels yern toward them. Jer. 31. 20. Is Ephraim my dear son, &c. I thought of him and my bowels yerned faith God, or my bowels were troubled. He hath an eye toward them for much good in all his withdrawals.

Fifthly, When God is withdrawn from the Saints, nothing will satisfie them till God come again. When God withdraws Himself from others, they will seek after vanities to make up the want of Gods presence; As an Adulteress in her husbands absence will seek other loves. But the Saints say, if God be gone I will enjoy nothing else, at least I will be satisfied in nothing else until I have Gods presence again.

Sixthly, Though God withdraw himself from the Saints, yet he doth not utterly forsake them, as David praieth, Psalm, 119. 8. I will keep thy precepts, O forsake me not utterly. It seems that then God had somewhat withdrawn himself from David, yet mark, his heart was toward God, I will keep thy precepts, thou hast forsaken me in some degree, yet I will keep thy precepts still, O forsake me not utterly. If thou canst say thus, Indeed God hath withdrawn himself from my soul, yet though I have not that comfort in him that my soul desires, I will keep his precepts as long as I live, I will do what I can to honor him: Thou mayest pray with comfort, Lord do not utterly forsake me.
As those that are godly may depart from God, but yet as in Psalm, 18. 21. I have not wickedly departed from my God; they do not depart from God as other men do. So God may depart from the godly, but yet not so as he departs from the wicked.

Let us take heed of withdrawing from God, of withdrawing our souls from any way of truth. If we in prosperity withdraw from God, and think we can live without him, he will make us know in adversity that he can be blessed without us too. It is usual for men in prosperity to rub out with God well enough, but when thou comest into adversity, the Lord will make thee know, though thou perishest as dross and dung from the earth, yet he will remain a blessed God without thee to all eternity. God hath no need of us. If thou thinkest thou canst do well enough without him, he will shew that he can do well enough without thee. And thus much for this Sixth Verse.

Ver. 7.

They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.

In the words before, the Lord threateneth to withdraw himself from Israel. When he shall be seeking of him with his flocks and herds, he shall not find him. A dreadful sentence, that the God of mercy shall withdraw Himself in a time of mercy from his creature that seeks unto Him for mercy.

But what is the cause of all? Why will God withdraw Himself from them though they seek Him with their flocks and their herds?

There is reason enough for it, They have dealt treacherously against the Lord.

The word that is here translated, Dealing treacherously, signifies Perfidie agere, to deal perfidiously, they have been perfidious.
And it signifies likewise, Decipere, they deal deceitfully. And it signifies especially that fraudulent dealing that there is in breaking of covenants (that's the propriety of the word) and it is often applied unto men breaking of covenant with their wives, as in Mal. 2. 14, 15.

And I find Luther translate it, they have contemned the Lord, (and so according to some it is divers times translated, Sperno, to contemn God) And from thence Luther hath this note. What (faith he) do they seek the Lord with their flocks and herds and yet despise God, how can this stand together? They seem as if they would honor God exceeding much, yet here they are charged for contemning and despising God? He answereth it to this effect. Whateover men pretend (faith he) in honoring of God, yet if they do not obey and keep to his word, and that especially in the way of His Worship, these are guilty of contemning and despising God. We may be plentiful in outward services, and yet in the mean time our hearts despise God, despise the Authority and Majesty of God.

But the word ordinarily is used according to that we translate it here, they have been treacherous, they have been false with me.

And mark the connexion: They come to seek Me with their flocks and their herds, but I have withdrawn Myself from them, for they have dealt treacherously. Hence the Note is briefly this, That

When ungodly men come to seek God, then God remembereth all their wickedness that they have formerly been guilty of, and looketh into the wickedness of their hearts as it is for the present.

They have dealt treacherously As if God should say, Here comes a company of wretches, base, false-hearted hypocrites, treacherous, perfidious, ungodly wretches to seek Me with their flocks and herds. Are they like to be heard? are they like to be regarded in all their services? No, they are bale, perfidious wretches, they have vile, wicked, and cursed hearts.
Oh consider this you that have not yet done away your sins Use of in the blood of Christ, and made up your peace with God: Admonit. The guilt of your sin is yet upon you, and the filthiness of it yet doth stick: you will come to God in prayer, and seek Him, and cry unto Him for mercy: Know that all the wickedness that ever you committed in all your lives, is fresh in the presence of God; God looks upon all as if it were now present. Here cometh faith God, a filthy old whoremaster, Praspoo an unclean wretch, he cometh now to pray unto me: and here cometh an old drunkard, a wicked scorners and blasphemer. When thou comest to seek God, then all thy wickedness is remembred before him; and upon this, God justly doth cast thy services back again in thy face. Thus it is here. Oh learn therefore to cleanse thy heart in the blood of Christ by faith in Him and by repentance, and then though thou hast been vile heretofore, when thou comest to seek the face of God, thy sins shall not be remembred before Him. That for the connexion.

But for the words Themselves, and first in that proper signification of them. [They have dealt treacherously;] the meaning is, they make a great deal of shew of Religion, but it is only for their own ends, and under that shew of Religion they do that which dishonoreth me, they betray my glory. Here is treacherous dealing indeed, treachery against the God of Heaven; these are treacherous spirits, to make profession of Religion, to make protestations, to make any use they can of Religion, so far as it will serve with their own turns, but when it will serve their turns no longer, to cast it off; yea if it prove cross to them, to persecute it. This is treachery against God in a high degree.

Again, Treacherous, in that they break their Covenant with God: that is the special treachery here intended, they have broken that Covenant in which they were engaged. Treache- They did give up themselves to be the Lords, O but they have ry against basely forsaken the Lord and dealt treacherously with him. God, as So that this treachery relateth either to the Oath of allegiance unto God as our King, or to the Covenant that we make with him.
him as our Husband. And from thence Note, That

Other mens sins are transgressions against God, they are
disobedience to the will of God; yea but they are not so pro-
perly treachery: but the sins of those that are engaged unto
God in Covenant have another stamp put upon them than
the sins of other men, their sins are treachery against God.
And we know there is nothing accounted more vile amongst
men than treachery; It is the highest expression of our indigna-
tion against a man that can be, to say, such a man, take
heed of him, he is a treacherous man. Certainly the sins of
those that have engaged themselves unto God, go nearer to
the heart of God than any mens sins do else; they are more
dishonorable to him, they provoke the eyes of His glory more
than any sins whatsoever.

O let us then look back to what we have done ever since we
entred into Covenant with God; ever since our first Cove-
nant, when we first gave up our names to Him, And let us
charge our souls with this aggravation of our sins, Oh my
foul what hast thou done? Thou hast not only trespassed and
disobeyed as others have done, but thou hast been treache-
rous against the Lord. Let us keep our selves from sin and
awe our hearts and strike fear upon our spirits with this me-
ditation, what, shall I that have so deeply engaged my self
unto God now forsake Him and deal treacherously with
Him?

Take we heed of this evil of dealing treacherously with
God, not only in regard of the particular Covenants be-
tween God and our own souls; but in a more special man-
ner, let us take heed of breaking our publick Covenants.
England hath been guilty of great sins against God, but Eng-
land was never so engaged unto God as it hath been of late;
We never entred into such solemn Covenants with God as
we have done of late, therefore if we keep not our Covenants
with God now, Englands sins will prove to be greater than
they were before, they wil prove to be treacherous sins. Do not account your entering into covenant with God any at time to be a slight matter; do not dally, do not trifle with Him: When you come to the Sacrament there you renew your Covennants; Perhaps in your closets in the day of your affliction you renew your Covennants; but especially when you come in a solemn way to joyn with the people of God, to bind your selves in a Covenant with God to amend your lives, and to enquire after the true worship of God, and to conform your selves according to his Word; Oh now take heed what you do; now to walk as formerly you have done, Oh this is a treachery against the God of Heaven. Certainly God expects much from us after such a Covenant as we have lately entred into, the most solemn Covenant one of them that ever was taken; for people to come and lift up their hands to the most high God as they have done; And a National Covenant, and therefore more to be regarded than a private: yea an uniting Covenant, that uniteth two Nations if not three together; And a Covenant that is more for the Kingdom of Christ, and more directly against the Kingdom of Antichrist, against the Antichristian party than ever yet was taken since the world began. Antichrist quickly did arise and there hath bin much opposition of him; but for two Nations to solemnly to lift up their hands to the most high God to oppose all Antichristian government, it is that, wch if it be kept as careful-ly as it was made solemnly, is the greatest honor that ever yet Christ had in regard of his government here upon earth. And we had need look to it, because it is such a mighty work as should take our hearts, that ever we should live to see that God should bring about such a strange thing in our generation. I appeal unto you, was it possible four yeers since for any man in the world, yea for an Angel to conjecture such a thing as this, that two Nations shall joyn together, the Representative body of the Kingdom, and Assembly of Divines, in one day should be lifting up their hands to the most high God, to do what lies in them to extirpate Prelacy; that is, government by Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, &c.
&c. Now the more miraculous the work of God is in bringing this strange thing about, the more bonds lie upon us, to keep that Covenant with God. Oh therefore let us not now ad treachery unto all our former apostacy, our sins now will prove sins of treachery.

Object.

But if it be such an aggravation of our sins, to be Covenanters with God, if we neglect our engagement, then we were better (perhaps some will say) never to enter into Covenant; for it seems if we had not taken the Covenant there would not have been such an aggravation of our sins.

Answ. 1.

The answer to that is this, None but a carnal heart is sorry for his engagement unto God, neither because of afflictions that are in the ways of God, nor because the bonds of obedience unto God are stronger, nor because the danger of breaking them is greater. Perhaps when thou art engaged to God and his ways, thou meetest with many afflictions that are in those ways; take heed of repenting of thy engagement because of those afflications. Perhaps thou feelest thy self so strongly bound that thy conscience will fly in thy face if thou dost go but a little awry more than before; Oh take heed of recollecting from thy engagement notwithstanding that. For one whose heart is gracious, certainly will never repent of his engagement though there be more danger of his sin now than before; why? because he hateth his sin: Now let there be never so much danger to keep me from that which I hate, I will never be sorry for that; as for instance, suppose there be a deep gulf, that if I fall into it, will destroy me, I tremble to come near it, well there is a fence to keep me off from that gulf full of sharp iron pikes, so that if I should but try to get over it, they will gore and prick me; shall I be sorry that the fence is so full of sharp things that will gore and prick me if I endeavor to get over, when the fence is but for there to keep me from destroying myself? So a gracious heart will never be sorry that it is engaged in the ways of God, and that if it should break the engagement there would be an aggravation of his sin, for why? this my engagement is but as a fence full of pricks to keep me from that which I would be loth to come
come to, which would destroy me. And those that begin to think their engagement to God and his ways, to be a hard thing and could with more liberty, these kind of men will certainly deal treacherously with God, yea their hearts are even already departing from God. Take heed of this it is a great degree of Apostacy (remember it my brethren it is an argument of marvellous use) it is I say a great degree of Apostacy for any man to begin to be sorry that he is so deeply apostacy engaged to God and His ways. All that are the Saints of God, when they are engaged, they bless God that ever they were engaged.

Again, They have dealt treacherously against the Lord.] Against Jehovah. This is the vileness of mans heart. Though God be never so gracious, so merciful, so faithful; Though He be never so blessed, so glorious in himself and worthy of all honor, yet so vile is mans heart that it will deal treacherously with God Himself. To deal treacherously but with a friend, with a fellow creature is an evil; but to deal treacherously with the infinite and blessed God is a far greater evil. When others therefore deal treacherously with you, and you are vexed at them, and you go to your friends and complain, was ever any dealt so with as I am? Oh consider how treacherously God is dealt withal in the world. Thou thinkest none was ever so dealt with, ever so wronged, as thou art; God is more wronged, more contradicted, more treacherously dealt withal than ever any was. And how many are there that think it a dishonor to them to be suspected to deal treacherously, and will often say, what, deal treacherously with my friend, I were not worthy to live if I should; yet these men deal treacherously with God every day.

Thus much for this charge, For they have dealt treacherously against the Lord. Next he shews wherein.

They have begotten strange children.

That is a further aggravation, that they have not only sinned themselves, but they have sought to propagate their sin and
their wickedness: For it might otherwise be said, It is true, 
Israel hath sinned very grievous against the Lord, but may 
there not be hope of another generation coming on? No, for 
they bring up their children in the same way of superstition, 
Idolatry and wickedness that they themselves walk in. That 
is the meaning, They have begotten strange children; they should 
beget children unto God, but they beget them unto Idols, 
and so this wickedness, this treachery against God is propage-
gated from one generation to another, there is a succession of 
it; as are the old so are the young.

When any draw others to evil ways, they are said in Scrip-
ture to make them children of the Devil, to beget them as 
children of the Devil. Mat. 23. 15. Ye compass Sea and Land 
to make one Proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold 
more the child of the Devil than yourselves, you beget him to the 
Devil. So parents, first by way of natural generation they 
beget children to themselves, and then by educating, their 
children in ways of wickedness they beget them the second 
time to the Devil. And they are called strange children, be-
cause God will not own them, they are none of mine faith 
God, they are strangers from me, I will have nothing to do 
with them.

The words being thus opened, the Notes are these.

First, Parents, have by God committed to them the charge of 
their children.

That is implied here, That is, it is their duty to look to 
beget their children unto God, and to take heed that their 
children be not begotten to the Devil: For Ephraim here, the 
ten Tribes are charged, that whereas they should have 
brought forth their children for God, and so they should be-
long to God's Inheritance and God should have owned them, 
now they beget them to their Idols, and they are strange chil-
dren. God certainly doth not give you children to beget 
them for the Devil and for Hell. It should be a sad thing to 
parents to think here is a child coming from my loyns, con-
ceived in my womb, and what, shall an enemy unto God come 
out of my loyns? shall a firebrand of Hell be conceived in my 
womb?
Certainly it should go to the heart of a parent to see his child to be estranged from God, though he were not the cause of it: But much more when a parent shall come to be convinced, this child is thus wicked and ungodly, and as he hath received the seeds of his corruption from me at the first, so those seeds were nourished up by my example, and encouragement, I have led him to such wickedness. Wo to such parents, and such children may even curse the time that they were born of such parents, and rather wish they had been of the generation of Dragons, and off-spring of Vipers, than begotten of such parents. God when he gives you children, expects that you should labour that there may be a succession of godliness in the world, that not only you should be godly, but that you should bring up your children to be so too. **Psal. 78. 5.** He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers; that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children. This is the way of God, He commanded you to make known His Statutes and Laws to your children, that the generation to come might know them, and not that you should bring up your children in ways of wickedness and superition. I have read of the Romans, that it was wont to be their way to sue such Roman parents as were not careful of the education of their children. The educating of children amidst bear an Action amongst the heathen Romans. Therefore Cicero inveighing against Verres hath this expression, Quod filium tuum &c. You have not only done thus and thus your self faith he, but you have educated your son amongst those that were intemperate in riotousness, in feasting, in drinking amongst wantons and unclean persons, and by this means faith he, you have not only wronged your child, but the Common-wealth. Thus he laid his action against him. Now how might Heathens shame us in this thing, they account those men to deserve punishment not only from God but from men that are not careful of the education of their children? There is a great deal of
of reason for it, and it were very good now that there might be a Law enacted to that purpose, upon this ground, because the Common-wealth hath a part in the children as well as the parent, and the parent not being careful to bring up the child in the fear of God, he wrongs the Common-wealth as well as the child, therefore to be punished by the Common-wealth.

The second is this. That

Obser. 2. Children usually are as their parents are, and as their education is.

The parents they were Idolaters, they were ungodly and strangers from God, their children are so too. In many families we see that the father is an enemy unto God, and the son an enemy unto God, and his son is an enemy unto God, and his son after him is an enemy unto God, and so there goes a line and a succession of wickedness and profaneness and enmity unto God. It is usually so.

Use for Therefore let those children that are born of, and brought up under godly parents, bless God that they were not born and brought up by wicked parents. It may be if thou hadst been born and brought up of Papists, thou wouldst have been a Papist thyself. If thou hadst been born of one that is a stranger to God, of a Malignant, of a contemner of God, thou wouldst have been so too.

And being this is ordinary for children to be as their parents.

2. to those that are born of wicked parents.

Oh then what a mercy is it for any child that is born of wicked parents, yet that God should work His grace in him. This is not any ordinary mercy. There are some that are born of godly parents that do bless God that they are kept from wickedness that way: but there are some that are born of wicked parents, and so brought up by them in the family; yet so gracious is God unto them, that in a more than ordinary way, He goes further in mercy to them and works grace in their hearts notwithstanding. This is His extraordinary mercy, a mercy that thou art to admire at unto all eternity, that notwithstanding thy birth and education, yet God should reveal himself unto thee.

But
But how vile are they that being born of good parents, are wicked? It is ordinary for such as are born of wicked parents and have wicked education, for them to be wicked; but for those that have godly parents, and godly education, for them to be wicked and strange children, this noteth a notorious height of wickedness.

The third Note is this, That

It is a dangerous thing for children to follow the Example of Obser, their parents in wickedness.

It is from hence that they are called strange children, they are strangers to God. It is not enough for them to plead, I did as my father or as my mother taught me. No, if thy parents be wicked and superstitious, and they bring thee up in wickedness and superstition, and so thou art wicked and superstitious thyself, know that notwithstanding this excuse, God looks upon thee as a strange child, thou hast no part nor portion in God, thou art an Alien, thou art estranged from God.

Children therefore had need to examine their parents waies and actions: And above all, the children of superstition people, for there is nothing more natural in succession, in a line, than Idolatry and Superstition. Never plead thus then, we do but as our forefathers have done. That place we have in Peter, one would think should be a Scripture for ever to stop the mouth of that plea, 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. We are not redeemed by gold and silver, nor such kind of things, from our vain conversation, received by tradition from our fathers, but by the blood of Jesus Christ that immaculate Lamb. Mark the text; that the being redeemed, from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers, is so great a mercy that it cost the blood of Jesus Christ. If God accounteth it such a mercy as that He is willing to lay down the blood of His Son to purchase that mercy for a poor creature, shall not this creature prize this mercy? And yet you think it rather to be a mercy to go on in these waies that you have received by tradition from your fathers, and you think it a great plea because you have this by tradition from your fathers: Mark what you do, I say those
men or women, whether young or old, that shall plead for any superstitious way upon this ground, because they had it from their forefathers, they do in effect say, we look upon the blood of Jesus Christ as a common, as a worthless thing. He shed His blood to redeem thee from that which thou thinkest is worth nothing to be redeemed from. Thou thinkest it a good thing to go the way of the traditions of thy fathers; and Christ faith, I account it so great an evil, that rather than any that doth belong to Me shall go on in that way, I will lay down My blood, My life to deliver him from it.

The fourth Note is this, That

Obfer. When the succeeding generation is wicked, there is little hope of such people, of such a Nation.

I have withdrawn my self faith God, I have done with them, and afterward he telleth us, that they shall be desolate, and this is the reason, they have begot strange children: The children, the generation that is coming after they are idolaters too, they go as their fathers did, and what hope is there of them? When in a Vineyard or an Orchyrd not only the old trees are rotten, but the young trees, they likewise come to be corrupted and blasted by them, then there is little hope of any great cost to be bestowed about it, but it is likely to be digged up for the beasts to be let in up on it.

Use. Much care is to be had therefore of the succeeding generation. And there is no better argument whereby we may come to divine (as we may say) what God intendeth to do with a Nation, than this; look how the children are, how the yong ones are that are coming up in that Nation, and by that you may come to divine what God intendeth to do with the next. We have much cause to bless God for His mercy toward us herein, in that He hath in a great measure (we hope) taken away that sign of His dreadful wrath upon us in this particular. I say in a great measure; though the truth is, we have a great many of the young generation extream rude, abundance of Apprentizes and others that are fit, prepared, and ready to make riots and tumults to maintain their Fathers, their Masters old superstitions; and if ever there be any firs
in a Kingdom about such things (as seldom superstition and idolatry can be banished from a Kingdom but some his will be) usually they are begun by the young ones, What, if you take away their Holy days from them, you take away their lives. I make no question but so far as is fit, times of recreation will be allowed them, and there is good reason for it: though such kind of superitious days be taken from them. But because they find liberty in those days, and their masters and many of their parents stick to the old wales of superstition, therefore many young ones they do accordingly, and had almost rather lose their lives than lose them, and being heady and naught they will soon be brought to raise tumults and make seditions for them. But though there are many that are very vile that way, and such as they are, are the faddest Omen of God's displeasure against a Nation; yet on the other side we should wrong the grace of God if we should not observe His goodness towards us in the workings of His Spirit upon Young ones. Yea many whose parents have been superstitious, wicked and ungodly, and their masters have bin do too, yet we find that the Lord hath delivered a great number of the young generation from those old superstitions, and they are not willing to fully themselves with such vanities as their parents and masters before them did; they do begin to know the Lord, and to enquire after God; And blessed are you of the Lord, you are our hope, that God intendeth the good unto us, and that He will not let out the wild beasts to devour us, but will rebuke them for your sakes. And although perhaps many of these gracious young ones may perish, yea many have been slain already in this Cause, yet let not others that remain behind be discouraged at it, for it is an argument that there is some great and special mercy that God intendeth for us, in that He is willing to venture such precious ones for the procuring of that mercy. We may well reason so, that if so much precious young blood that might have lived to serve God, be shed in this Cause, if God come to grant unto England mercy, He will grant such mercy as will be worth all their blood; and that mercy must needs be great.
that shall be worth all the blood of those that are so precious, which might have lived to serve God so many years here in this world.

And seeing God makes use of them, it is because the mercy that is to come for the next generation is so precious, that indeed such as have defiled themselves with superstitious vanities are like to have no share in it; and as they are not like to live to see it, so God will not make use of them to prepare that mercy for the next generation: But because God hath a love unto the young generation that are godly, therefore He hath reserved much mercy for many of them that are like to see and enjoy it; and others of them that are not like to see it, yet he will be so gracious to them as he will employ them in making way for that mercy: And whether it is better to be made instrumental for the glory of God and the good of another generation, or to live to see the fruit of this, it is hard to determine. Certainly those that in one generation are made so instrumental, as to lay the groundwork of mercy for another generation, they are as happy as that other generation that comes to reap the fruit of their labours and sufferings; and those that do come to reap the fruit of their labours shall bless God for them, and when they enjoy the good and liberty of the Gospel, they shall say, Oh blessed be God that stirred up such a generation of young ones to shed their blood, and now we reap the fruit of it, and blessed be God for them; they will bless you to all generations. Therefore let there be no discouragement to godly young ones though it pleaseth God to cut of many by death in this Cause, for God hath some excellent end in it beyond all our reaches. Thus much for these words; Only one Note more, and that is this. That

God takes it exceeding ill at men's hands, that they should corrupt young ones.

This Note is as full in the words as any other. God takes it exceeding ill, it is a part of treachery against God for any to be a means to corrupt young ones. Take heed what you do in corrupting of young ones. Those young people that are
are coming on and beginning to enquire after godliness, take heed what you do; that you hinder them not; Especially parents and governors; Oh let your consciences fly in your faces when you begin to curb them for their forwardness: Many times your consciences cannot but misgive you when you think, I have been wicked and naughty most part of my days, I spent God knows many of my years in vanity and profaneness, here are young ones that begin betime to enquire after God, and yet wretch that I am my heart riseth against them.

And as these people that hinder young ones are to be rebuked, so such as seek to corrupt them by false opinions. Certainly it is that by which God is much provoked at this day; and as on the one side there is hope of mercy in regard so many young ones begin to enquire after God, so I know no such dreadful argument of God's displeasure against this Nation as this. That as soon as young ones begin to come to know Jesus Christ, there are presently corrupt errors infused into them, and that under the notion of honoring Christ and free grace and the Gospel so much the more; whereas indeed they do no other than infuse principles of libertinism and looseness and such as will even eat out the heart of godliness. Certainly the Lord hath a quarrel against such as corrupt young ones by their false principles: for there are none so ready to drink in false principles as young ones, especially young converts, who begin to enquire after the ways of God: and these men that are their corrupters, they have this advantage, they come not to them to persuade them to profaneness, but they come to them with seeming pretences of giving honor unto Christ and of magnifying free grace, and in the mean time sow seeds in them that will eat out the power of godliness. Oh to corrupt children and young ones and when they begin to enquire after God and to know him, for you to do that which may estrange them from God, this is that which God will have a quarrel against you for! And it is a greater argument of God's displeasure against us, that it is so common and frequent at this day, than any one I know;
there is not any one argument (that I know) that is a greater discouraging argument to us of God's displeasure, than this thing. But so much for those words, They have begotten strange children. It follows.

Now shall a month devour them with their portions.

Explanatory Note: I find Interpreters have a great deal of do about this expression. Many think that God aims at one special month, and they tell us of one month in the year which answered to our July, that there were many grievous things to befall the Jews in that month in former times, and in latter times too, as if that were a more ominous month than any other. I will not spend time to speak further of that.

But there is certainly somewhat else in this expression. I find an expression parallel to this in Zech. 11.8. the holy Ghost there speaks of three Shepherds that God will cut off in one month; these Idol Shepherds, faith he, My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me, I will cut them off in one month. There is the most exact description of your superstitious Idol Shepherds, even such as we have at this day amongst us in many places, faith God, My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me. Who do more hate the power of godliness than those kind of men, and against whom is the soul of God more than against those kind of men? And I will destroy them in a month, faith God. Wherefore by this Month I take the meaning of the holy Ghost to be in these two things.

First, It seems to have some reference to the way of the Jews in those times, they were wont to have their days of reckoning with their workmen and with their debtors, usually at the beginning or ending of every month, and this expression seems to allude that way of theirs; A month shall devour them, that is, the time of their month shall come when I will reckon with them, and when that fixed time shall come of my reckoning, they shall be undone, they shall be devoured and destroyed.
So that it noteth.
First, *That God hath a set time to reckon with sinners.* Though Obf. 1
He be patient for a long time, yet He hath a month, a set time that He appointeth, and He will not go beyond that time.
Secondly, *When God cometh to reckon with wicked men,* that is Obf. 2: the time of their destruction. The time of their reckoning will be the time of their destruction.
Secondly, *A month shall devour them.* I find yet many Interpreters go this way, that is, *a little short time shall devour them,* it shall not be long, it shall not be an hundred and twenty years, as it was when He threatened the old world, but it shall be very speedy; As if God should say, when once I begin with them, a month shall make an end of the work. And indeed what will a month do when God letteth the sword come upon a Nation? (for that (the sword) was the judgment here threatened.) As in many parts of England, what a great deal of havock have the enemy made in a month? How many that were rich and had great estates, yet before a month went about, into what a miserable condition were they brought? So that God seemeth to have reference to the Assyrians that were let out upon them, let them but once come faith He, and they will not be long about the work, a month's time shall devour them.

Luther, hath another Note, and so some agree with him, by the month, he thinketh is here meant, their Solemnities and new Moons, and so it hath reference to their superstitious and Idolatry. But that I think to be too far from the meaning: I rather conceive that by a month is meant the short time of their destruction when once the adversary cometh upon them.

*And their portions.* I find the Seventy translate it, Cleros, their lots. And it may be turned, their lots, upon this ground, because in the division of the land of Canaan, that which they had for their estates, was given unto the ten Tribes at first by Lot. Well faith God, I did give you your estates by such a special providence of mine, by lot; but though I did in ano-
ther way measure out your estates than I do measure out the estates of any men upon the earth, yet a month shall devour your Lot, all that you had in that way of my special providence it shall now be devoured. From thence then the Note is this, and of exceeding use to us, That

Obser. The more special the providence of God is toward us, in bringing any mercy to us, the more grievous is it after, if God be provoked in his judgment to come and take that away from us.

That mercy that I had by a special hand of Gods providence, that I can relate Gods providence how it wrought about, from this passage to the other passage, how strangely the Lord did work about His ends, to bestow such a mercy and such a mercy upon me; Well, thou canst speak of Gods providence and blest His Name, thou dost well in it, but take then heed thou dost not abuse that mercy that thou enjoyest by the special hand of Gods providence; take heed of provoking God to come and devour that mercy. So it is threatened here, a month shall devour their portion, their estates that they had by special lot it shall now come to be destroyed because of their sin.

Expos. 2. But then secondly, Take it according as we translate it in your books, and so likewise it is suitable to the Original, A month shall devour their portion, that is, all their portion that they have here in their outward estates, all their riches, all their outward comforts, whatever they have, that which they account to be their portion, a month, a little time shall destroy it. And from thence there are these two Notes.

Obf. 1. Carnalists portion outward. First, That all the portion of a carnal heart, it is the enjoyment of a few outward things in the world.

Here is his portion, he hath his portion in this world. And then, by the special providence of God, shall be devoured. If thou hadst the whole Kingdom and many

Obf. 2. Secondly, Here we may see the poor condition of the greatly pittance
pittance for thee that hast an immortal soul, who art made for eternity, a month may devour it. That man is but a poor man that hath no other portion but that which a month may devour. But now the Saints they have God Himself for their portion, that portion that neither month can devour nor time destroy, but that portion which they shall enjoy fresh, and green, lively, and full, and that unto all eternity; that portion which liveth for ever, and that portion which will keep them safe to live for ever too.

Ver. 8.

*Blow ye the Cornet in Gibeah, and the Trumpet in Ramah; Cry aloud at Beth-aven; after thee, O Benjamin.*

The Prophet seeing how little impression his words of threatening made in the hearts of this people: O these are but words of wind, that we should be devoured &c. therefore in the Name of the Lord, he putteth upon himself another person. He speaks now in this verse rather as a Captain, as a General of the field, calling an Alarm presently as if the enemy were now come to the gates; *Blow ye the Cornet in Ramah, and the Trumpet in Gibeah:* as if he should say, you have often heard that the Lord would bring the sword upon you, now it is come, it is come, the enemy is even ready to break into your Cities, to rifle your houses, to ravish your wives, to murder your children, *Blow ye the Cornet in Gibeah, and the Trumpet in Ramah, and howl ye and cry out, O ye of Beth-aven; after thee, O Benjamin.* It is a summoning of them, as if one should come to the City and cry. The enemy, the enemy is come to the gates, Arm, Arm: So the Prophet here, that he might strike into the hearts of those that are stupid and senseless; faith he, I have often in the Name of God threatened His wrath, that He will bring the sword upon you, I see you are a stupid and senseless people; Know, that the Lord is upon you in wrath, the enemy is come, now is the time come of your destruction; *Blow ye the Trumpet and refill it as well as you can, set your selves in battel array as well as you can,* for
for now wrath and misery is upon you. That generally is the scope of the words.

But yet there are Three things to be considered for the further opening of these words. (The Cornet and the Trumpet, those you know were instruments of war, the one was made of horn, the other of brails.) But why in Ramab and in Gibeah? that's the first thing: And then, why Cry aloud at Beth-aven? And thirdly, what is the meaning of that, after thee, O Benjamin?

1. Ramab and Gibeah; I find many take these words not as proper names for Cities, but to signify the hills and high-places of the Country. And the Seventy indeed translate the words, Upon the hills, and upon the high places; for so Ramab doth signify an high place; and Gibeah doth signify by way of excellency, an Hil. Now then they would carry the meaning thus, as if the Lord should say to the Prophet, Go to the highest places that are in the Country, the highest hills, and there let the Cornet and the Trumpet be blown as an Alarm to awaken the whole Land. And then the Note would be this:

ObS. I. When a people is in danger of God's wrath, it is fit for all the people of the Land to be awakened.

It is fit that it should be made known to them. Not only that they should go to the Governors and those that are in high places of authority, but go where they may make known the danger to all the people of the Land. It is true, in the first place it is fit the Governors should be awakened, but if they be awakened and not the people it will prove to little purpose. It is that which many men of vile spirits of late could not endure, that Ministers should tell people of dangers, or tell them of the fore-runners of God's displeasure against a Nation; to preach such things in publick Auditories, this their spirits mightily rose against: But it is the way of God, in times of publick dangers to have the people made acquainted.

But further, Ramab and Gibeah, they were two eminent Cities, and they did belong both to the Kingdom of Judah. Indeed
Indeed they were in the Tribe of Benjamin, but Benjamin and Judah were joined in one Kingdom under the house of David, and the other ten Tribes were rent away under Jeroboam. Now these two Cities (I say) were in the Kingdom of Judah and eminent Cities, and it is likely they were fortified Cities, and two of the strongest Cities in the Kingdom. Now God is here threatening of judgment against Judah as He did before when He said, Judah also shall fall with them. Therefore faith he, Blow ye the Cornet in Ramah, and the Trumpet in Gibeah, in the eminentest places of Judah, in the most fortified, and let us see how they are able to reist the miserie that is coming upon them.

And further, I find this to be the translation of the Chaldee paraphrase, that they would import as if the meaning were, because that Gibeah was the Civie of Saul; and Ramah was the Civie of Samuel, therefore that God did threaten judgment for their making of a King against his mind, and for their disobedience to the words of Samuel. So they paraphrase the text. But I think that to be somewhat too far fetched. The other two I conceive are the mind of the holy Ghost here, in the high places of the Countrie, and especially in those eminent Cities that were the most fortified, that though they were in the Tribe of Benjamin, yet belonged to the Kindom of Judah.

2. Cry out, O Beth-aven.] Beth-aven I find was another Civie different from that of Bethel where one of the Calves were; But there are near ten Interpreters to one, that make it to be the same Civie Bethel wherein one of the Calves were set, and this belonged unto the ten Tribes.

Now this Bethel, which signifies the house of God, is call’d Beth-aven here, which signifies the house of vanity, because of the Idol that was there. Therefore mark the emphasis, when he speaks of Ramah & Gibeah, saies he, blow the cornet and the trumpet, but when he speaks of Beth-aven, faith he, Cry aloud, or as the Latin signifies, howl out, O Beth-aven, for that was the great place of superstition. He nameh this Civie rather than Dan (where the other of the two Calves was placed) because
it was so near unto the Kingdom of Judah.

3. O Benjamin. 3. After thee, O Benjamin.] That is, Benjamin was upon the back of this Beth-aven, it was next unto the Kingdom of Israel. Now faith God by the Prophet, the wrath of God shall come out against Israel, Ephraim shall be left desolate, and Beth-aven shall howl and cry out, and you Benjamin that are so near them, take you heed to your selves, after thee, O Benjamin, thy turn will be next. You have reason to look to your selves when your neighbors house is on fire; so faith God here, Howl Beth-aven, after thee, O Benjamin; Benjamin lived hard by Beth-aven, and when Benjamin saw the wrath of God against the ten Tribes and in that City of Beth-aven that was so near to it, Benjamin should look to it self. That's the meaning of the holy Ghost in these words.

Now for the Notes of observation from them. The first is this,

Offer. 1. When danger is apprehended as present and real, then it takes the heart most.

The Lord had threatened the sword many times by the Prophet, and their hearts were secure, stupid; but now he comes and presents it as present and real unto them, Blow ye the trumpet, the danger is now at hand, here it is faith the Prophet. There is a great deal of difference between mens hearing of wars and rumors of wars, and the very reality of the evil it self when that cometh before their eyes. This judgment of war, of the sword, it hath been threatened against this Nation long ago. I dare appeal to you, for a matter of twenty years since (you that remember the way & the common strain, almost of all the godly Ministers in the Kindom) was not their usual them about such an argument as this, to shew what were the forerunners of Gods judgments against a Nation? Ever since I was a youth and took any notice of Sermons, I know no argument that kept the sound in mine ears more than that: Usually it was the them almost of all the places in the Kingdom, of all your eminent Ministers to search into Gods word to see what were the sins that brought publick judgments upon a Nation and apply them unto England.

Use to England.
what were the forerunners of destruction upon a Nation and apply them unto England: But this was ordinarily flighted. Some indeed of our brethren that feared the Lord and feared his judgments, and thought that they did foresee a storm, upon that they withdrew themselves, and they were scorned and contempt for their labors. But now we see the thing that was feared and threatened is come, it is upon many Countries: & do we not apprehend it after another manner than we did when we only heard of it? In those Countries where the sword hath been raging, do not they apprehend the evil of war in another manner than ever they did when they heard it threatened in Sermons? O when it is come indeed and made real it works after another manner than it doth when it is spoken of. Those men that continually have their ears fill'd with the noise of the Drum and Trumpet, with the neighing of Horses and roaring of the Cannon, they will tell you that war is a dreadful thing indeed. So it is in all other afflictions that are threatened; how little are they regarded in their threats? but when they come indeed, Oh then how do the hearts of men sink within them! Oh now God is coming against me, now wrath is upon me faith the guilty soul, how far it may go out I know not; I heard often of such and such things, now it is come, it is come. Oh the dreadful apprehensions that are in mens hearts of the wrath of God when it is come! whereas before when it is threatened it is never feared.

And this is a rule, an everlasting rule, That the leffe a judgment is feared when it is threatened, the more dreadful apprehensions there are of it in the heart when once it cometh to be executed. That's the first Note.

The second is this,

The Ministers of God they must make the things they are to preach to the people as real before their eyes as possibly they can.

They should study all waie and means they can to make what they preach to the people to be real to them, not to be as notions to them. So the Prophet here, he had preached often
often times of the judgments of God, of the Sword, but this would not do it, therefore now he strives to make what he had delivered to appear in the most real way that possibly he could to the eyes and hearts of the people, & he saw that to be the only way to do them good. It is not therefore enough for a Minister barely to tel the people truths, to tel them what danger they are in, but by all means of expressions that may be to make this appear in the reality of it unto them. We know how Ezekiel was wont to do, he threatened their carrying away, and he went and made before them a kind of siege to make it real to them. So Jeremiah and other Prophets. Now though Ministers cannot do so as they did, yet they are to study all manner of expressions that possibly they can to present things in the greatest realitie that may be. And indeed this is a great part of the skill of a good Minister, not barely to tel truths unto people, but to be able to make things appear real to them. The art of preaching I say lies especially in this, to make things appear real to the souls of an Auditory. As now, when we come to tel you of the danger of sin and of the wrath of God that is due to it; we tel you this and we quote Scripture for it, this perhaps flirs not the heart; but now if we can so present God’s wrath to you, to make it real before your eyes, to put you upon this, to be think your selves in what a case you would be if now all creatures were taking their leaves of you, if now you were standing before the great God to receive the sentence of condemnation, if God were now at this instant coming upon you: If I say we could put you to it, and so preach as that you should apprehend these things as real before your eyes, this would stick, and more good might be done in one quarter of an hour this way, than perhaps in divers yeers before. The power of a Ministry consisteth much in this. And I suppose some of you know by experience what that is that now I mean by the Ministers making things real to your hearts. Have not you found sometimes some truths made so real to you out of the word, to your consciences, that you have thought that you have even stood before the Throne of God.
and you have thought that God was even pronouncing sentence against you? Some have expressed it thus, and have said, such a time I went to hear the Word, and me thought there I was summoned before the great God unto judgment, I saw the Lord God Himself speaking to me, I had represented before mine eyes the wickedness of my life, my danger, the wrath of God, and even the very flashes of Hell fire upon my conscience, I felt this upon me. Now God was in the Word indeed when the reality of things were presented to my soul. And certainly it is the labor and endeavor of godly Ministers in their studies, not only to speak an hour or two out of a text and to wear out so much time; but they are thinking, what way shall I take (as they pray that God would help them to take such a way) to present such and such Truths in the greatest reality to the souls of their Audience that possibly they can. This is apparent from hence, that the Prophet doth not only tell them of their danger, but speaks as if it were at hand, and makes it thus real before them.

Another Observation is this,

*That though the Ministers of God are at first to be the Ambassadors of peace and reconciliation, to preach peace between God and people; but yet if this their Ministry of Reconciliation do not take effect, if it prevail not; then they are to come in the Name of God to proclaim the war of God against a soul.*

For they know that God must have honor one way or other, either by peoples subjecting themselves unto Him, or by God's revenging Himself upon them. *Honor, God must have: howsoever you may think the Word of God will pass, yet those that are faithful Ministers, they know God must have His Honor one way or other; either willingly you must come in and give it unto Him, or He will force it out from you: If the joyful sound of mercy be not received, the dreadful sound of war must fill your ears.*

*Fourthly, What occasions of war soever there be in a Land, the principal cause is, God's displeasure against the sins of that Nation; and especially the cause is those that are superstitious and idolatrous in that Nation.*
An Exposition of Ver. 8

For so it is here, they have dealt treacherously, they have begotten strange children; therefore a month shall devour them. Blow ye the cornet in Ramah, and the trumpet in Gibeah, &c. Upon this ground, because of their treacherous dealing with God, and bringing up of their children in ways of idolatry. It is true, when danger is come to a Nation, the people of the Land are ready to lay it upon those that are most free from it. Who is it that men at this day lay the troubles of this Nation upon, but upon those that have all this while stood in the gap to prevent dangers to the Nation, and that have with more prayers & tears fought God than those that are so ready to charge them with it? But this hath been in all ages, the Saints have been made the troublest of a Nation: But is it not Thou and thy fathers house, faith the Prophet, speaking even to Ahab Himself? The troublest of Israel lie not in the Prophets, lie not in the Ministers as men cry out, that they preach sedition.

And it was wont indeed to be the title of Luther that great instrument of God, they called him the trumpet of rebellion: and not a new thing therefore is it, that the Ministers of God that first preach the word of Reconciliation, and then seek to shew people their danger, no marvel they will be accounted the causes of their troubles, because they will not let people go on quietly in their ways, but in the Name of God oppose, and reprove them. But we know where our troubles lies, it lies in those that are most superstitious and idolatrous, they bring the sword: Do not attribute it to this and the other cause, it is the provocation of the most high God that brought these wars in upon us, If therefore we be weary of war, let us be weary of our sins. I remember Polanus upon this text hath this Note, and indeed he hinted it unto me, faith he, The Jesuits they cry out of the Gospel in Hungary; a place which is near the Turks, and the Turks you know have often made incursions upon those Countries, and your Papists and Jesuits they cry out of your Evangelici, of your Gospel- lers, as if they were the cause of the Turks coming in amongst them. But the Lord knows where to lay the burden right.

Again
Again, in the next place, from those words, [Cry aloud at Beth-aven Beth-aven] According to that interpretation I gave you, it was the place where one of the Idols were set, and a most superstitious and Idolatrous place. Now mark the difference, it is but only blow the Cornet and Trumpet in Ramah and in Gibeah; but it is cry aloud, or strike out, and howl, Oh Beth-
aven. From thence these two Notes.

First, That superstitious places in the time of God's judgment Obser. 1: are in the greatest distress of all: and so superstitious per-
sions.

When God's hand cometh out against a Nation, it will fall heaviest upon those that are Idolatrous and superstitious. It is true, God's hand hath hitherto fallen heavy and very heavy upon many of our brethren, upon God's dear Saints; but hath it not fallen heavily upon Idolaters and superstitious ones? How ever, mark the end, say till God hath done, and you will find that the hand of God will be heaviest upon them; Howl O Beth-aven. Those places that have been the nests of superstition and Idolatry, those are the places that His wrath will be most against. And indeed they do begin to howl and cry out already: For though some of God's people have felt hard things, yet, Have two Nations lifted up their hands to the most high God to extirpate Gods people? But they have lifted up their hands to endeavor to extirpate a superstitious people amongst us; therefore God's hand is hea-
vieft against Beth-aven.

Secondly, In times of greatest trouble those that are ungodly Obser. 2: and superstitious, they are in such perplexity as they know not what to do.

Instead of repairing unto God by faith and repentance, all that they have to do is to cry out and to howl. Howl O Beth-
aven; they were far enough from coming to humble their souls to the Lord, and in a gracious manner to accept of the punishment of their iniquity; and to bear the affliction that God laies upon them; Oh no, but their spirits were vexed and enraged, they could howl and cry out, and that is all. Is not this the way of many that heretofore, Oh how diligent were.
were they in their prayers and worshiping of God, yet when they come into affliction what do they? but vex and rage, howl and cry out; but far are they from giving glory unto God according to that way he requireth; they howl upon their bed, faith God, but they did not seek unto me. And God threateneth this in Amos, 3.10. (and that Prophet was contemporary with Hosea) I will turn the songs of their Temples into howlings: They had their singing service before, faith God, I will turn those into howlings, for it is no other, their crying out under affliction and trouble, it is no other before God but as howling. The Lord accepteth in another manner of the cryings of His people under oppression; they cry unto God and tend up their prayers of faith, and the incense of a broken heart, and God accepteth of the lights, and of the moans that they make unto Him, and they do prevail exceedingly with the Heart of God. But for the crying out of wicked and ungodly men under Gods hand, He regards it not, no more than howling. Thus it is here, Howl O Beth-aven; much like those in Esa. 51. 20. that in the time of distress, are described to lie in the head of all the streets as a wild bull in a net, filled with the fury of the Lord; howl and cry out, and that is all.

**Benjamin**

After thee, O Benjamin.] The meaning of the words I gave you. The Notes from thence are these.

**Obser. 1.**

First, That it is an ill thing to have ill neighbors. Benjamin was near Beth-aven, therefore he must fare the worse for Beth-aven.

To dwell amongst ill neighbors is a dangerous thing, and we should take heed of it. I remember a Commentator upon this place, upon this occasion makes a grave exhortation to men, that when they are to hire Houses and Farms they should enquire what neighbors were to be neer them, and to take heed of dwelling nigh unto wicked men, for faith he, when Gods judgments come out against them you may smart, you being so neer them they may find you at least. I have Themisocles, often read of Themisocles a Heathen, that having a Farm to let (and their way was to publish it at the Marketplace) and
he added, there is such a place to let, and there are good
neighbours, thinking it were more comfortable for men
to live near those that are good than those that are wic-
ked.

Secondly, which indeed is the main observation from
hence and that which concerns us nearer.

*When the wrath of God is out against our neighbours, we had* Obi. 2,
then need look to it.

Though we have been in security before, yet if God's
wrath come near to us we had need to stir. It is high time
to look to our selves when our neighbors house is on fire.
The truth is, we in *England* have been a long time in deep se-
curity, though *Germany*, though *France*, though the *Low*
Countries, the Palatinate, *Italy* and almost all the Countries a-
bout us have been on fire, the Sword hath raged amongst
them, and it hath been threatened that it is likely we were the
next, and been told us that the Sword takes its circuit and
that the Lord is going about to judge the Nations of the earth,
and had judged the Nations about us; but because we felt
nothing, though it was near us, we had no hearts to prevent
it: Therefore God is now come amongst us, and come into
the very midst of us. The truth is, we in *England* did lie a
great while as it were like a faggot upon the fire, you know
when many faggots are on the fire, the under-faggots they
are on fire and they flame, and the faggots a little above they
begin to be taken, and the next above those they grow black;
but if so be you would not have the uppermost faggot burnt,
will you let it lie there and say, though the neathermost fagg-
gots be burnt yet this is not touched? Is not that faggot
think you in danger? So I compare several Nations to fagg-
gots in the fire: It is true, *Germany* was the under-faggot and
was in the flame, and other faggots have been burning, and
we in *England* lay as it were on the top of all, and it was a
good while eee the flame took us and though we were cryed
unto to pluck our selves as a fire-brand out of the fire, yet we
through security lay still, and now the flame hath got us, yea
though we be now burning in many places in the *Kingdom,*

*Eee*
yet because we find that the heat of the wars are it may be twenty, thirty, or forty miles from us; how secure are we, as if God did not intend us at all, as if we had nothing to do to take notice of Gods hand upon our brethren. Wrath is pursuing, but because it is not upon us, Oh the security and desperate folly that is amongst us in the mean time! Just so it was in Germany as travellers observed, that if the wars were but a Town or a few miles from them, they went on in their trading as quietly and securely as ever till at length it came upon them and devoured them. Hath it not been so in many places in England: May it not be said of many places amongst us, as here in the text, Ramah, and Gibeah, and Beth-aven, after thee, O Benjamin? So may we not name several Towns, Banbury and Worcester, after thee, O Exeter, O Bristol? It may be those in Bristol and in Exeter when the wars were in Shropshire and Coventry and other parts, they thought they were free, and they were safe enough: And truly though God hath delivered us; all this while, yet if we be secure, it may be as well said of us, Exeter and Bristol, and after thee, O London.

But you will say, What shall we do upon this, when the hand of God is stretched out thus near us?

First, Humble our souls before God, go forth to meet this mighty God with repentance, cry mightily unto him that if it be possible His wrath may be appeased before it fasten upon us. As in that Luke 14. 32. it is said of those that are wise, when a great King cometh out against them with twenty thousand, when he was a great way off, they send Ambassadors to desire conditions of peace. Mark, when he is a great way off; So we must not stay till God is come to our gates, till he be just upon us, but while this great King, the Lord God is a great way off, at a distance, we must send unto Him, and meet Him by repentance and by humbling our souls and making of our peace with him. Let not us think Tis true, the hand of God was against our brethren of Scotland, but they were quickly delivered; but I may say, after thee, O England. We have not done what our brethren did;
For it is observed that though the generallity of that people were notorious vile, wicked, and rude before these times, but yet partly through the Covenant they have entered into and otherwise, (though no question there is much evil there, and perhaps not the power of godliness so thoroughly as in many of Gods people here,) but there is certainly abundance of reformation more in the common people than there is amongst us at this day; which speaks hard things to us: Oh let us go forth and meet our God by repentance.

Secondly, We should rise as one man, sensible of our brethrens misery, and go out and help them. For this hath been our evil, that we have suffered the Kingdom to moulder away, our brethren to be destroyed; Oh faith one place, what need we trouble ourselves? and so the Land is destroyed by piece-meal. Certainly it is the duty of the Kingdom and of those that remain, that when they see their brethren though at a distance to suffer so much wrong, they should all rise as one man to venture themselves for the releif of their brethren, and not think themselves secure because it is not yet upon them. We see our brethren of Scotland do so, they were willing to come in with their help, and though the sword is far from them yet no question some of them think of this very text, now the Trumpet is blown in England, in the Northern-parts, after thee, O Scotland, they think after our turn is over, theirs is next, therefore they are willing to prevent it, though it be in such a hard season as this, to help their brethren.

Thirdly, We should be so wise in a way of true prudence to our selves, as to meet with our danger before it cometh; not suffering our adversaries to make our Country the seat of their war. It is easier to keep an adversary at a distance than to repel him when he is clozed with us. This hath ever been the policie of wise men, rather to go out to meet an adversary than to think to have strength enough to repel them when they come. Thus in general.

And then, As Kingdoms, so particular persons they should lay to heart Gods judgments neer to them; As thus: Doft thou see Gods hand upon thy neighbor, after thee, O sinner;
thy turn may be next: what is God's hand stretched out upon your fellow-servant, upon your brother, upon your dear friend? after thee, O sinner, thou art guilty of the same sin, thy turn may be next: Is God's hand out upon thy companion, after thee, O sinner. Oh lay this to heart, think with thy self, my turn may come to be the next, and it may soon come to be my turn. The very thought of this, when God hath struck some with sudden death in a fearful manner, God hath sanctified this to some; what (thought they) if God strike me next? such a one is sent down for ought I know to his place, I may be the next: the thought (I say) of this hath been so settled upon the heart of some, that it hath been a means of their conversion. The Lord make it so to every sinner, that sees his fellow, his neighbor sinner struck before him.

Ver. 9.
Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke; among the Tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.

In the words before you heard that the Lord by the Prophet did not only threaten war, but summon the Cities of Israel, Judah, and Benjamin, as if war were at the gates. But what if troubles do come, we shall do well enough, they will have an end, and blow over again, we shall wear them out: we have been delivered out of great troubles and so we may be out of these. No, 'tis otherwise now, Ephraim shall now be desolate, Ephraim (that is the ten Tribes) shall be desolate; Lehammene, the word signifies a most stupendous thing, the hand of God shall be upon them even to amazement, they shall come into desolation, in the time of his rebuke, in the day of his trouble: The words are plain; the Notes from them are these.

That the day of God's peoples affliction, is the day of their rebuke. See this proved in Numb. 12. 14. Moses faith: If her father had spit in her face should she not be ashamed: When God afflicts His people, he doth as it were spit in their faces: and ought not they
they much more to be ashamed? what ever that wanton generation think or say, that God never chastiseth his people for sin, there is nothing more frequent in Scripture, than this, that God chastiseth His for sin. But they tell us it was in the old Testament; and herein they shew their weakness and a Old Testament cavel, but that which seems to have some show of strength is this.

They tell us, That it derogates from the satisfaction of Christ.

But the force of this is nothing, for Christ satisfied for Answer them under the Law, as well as for us; they were saved by the same satisfaction that we are, therefore if it now derogates from Christ's satisfaction under the Gospel, it did then also under the Law.

A second Note is, God hath his set times of rebuke. As they have Observe, their daies of sinning, so God will have his daies of correcting; you have your daies of prosperity now, riches honor, & plentiful in abundance, but remember it may be the day of rebuke is coming: 'Tis good to put this very case to our selves. I have mercy now both for soul and body, and Oh how comfortable is it, and how happy is my condition! but is there not a day of rebuke coming, when all these will be taken from thee, and then what wilt thou do? Oh my soul? Is. 10. 3. and what will you do in the day of visitation?

When wicked men stand out lesser judgments, and corrections, they have cause to fear a day of utter desolation. Ephraim had daies of lesser chastisements, but slighting them, God would try him no more; there are times in which God will utterly pursue sinners to destroy them not for instruction, but destruction: the Lord hath his houses of instruction, correction, and execution, when the first cannot effect God's end, the third shall, and yet the Lord be just and righteous, for the Lord hath no need of us, what is it to him if we should perish everlastingly, He could have his glory from us in our damnation.

That is a dreadful time, when the Lord comes so to rebuke a people as to destroy them; when the hand of God shall be so upon them, as he is resolved never to take it off again, even as it was upon Ephraim
Ephraim at this time, I intend not to mend him, but to ruine him: this now is a most dreadful time; For

Reaf. 1 1. All that wrath which they have treasured up breaks in then upon them: Now as wicked men treasure up wrath, so doth God Rom. 2. 5. Now God lets out the flioudgates of His wrath against such a people.

Reaf. 2 2. Because then, all a mans sins comes together into Gods remembrance. In that day I'll visit for this faith the Lord God. It may be you are for the present spared, but the time is coming that God will visit, and then look to it.

Reaf. 3 3. In this day the cries of justice prevails against such men, (I speak of wicked men mingled and intermixed with the godly) In this day God will not call back His anger; there are times in which God doth not stir up all His wrath, as in Psal. 78. 38. Many times Gods anger is coming against a Nation, family, or person, but God calls it back again; but in this day of rebuke God will not call it back again, but let it forth to the uttermost.

Reaf. 4 4. Because in this day Mercy leaves such a people, and will never own them to to them any good. Ezek. 7. 5. An evil, an only evil, behold, it is come. But that place is most remarkable for this, Ezek. 22. 20. I will bring you into the furnace, and there I will leave you. God brings His people into great troubles sometimes, but never leaves them there. But there are some whom Mercy leaves and forsakes in their troubles, and this is a most fad condition, for by this God shews that He will have no more honor by them in their servings of Him, but in their sufferings. God faith thus, Seeing they would not give Me My glory in a way of duty, I will extract and force it from them in a way of suffering.

Reaf. 5 5. Because the Lord then intends hurt to such a people, the Lord perhaps brings you out of an afflication, but in that deliverance He intends your hurt and no good at all, Jer. 24. 9. I intend nothing but hurt to such a people in all My dealings.

Reaf. 6 Because then al Creatures leaves such an one and dares not own him; God being against thee, the Creatures cannot help in the least degree.

Lastly,
Lastly, Because then all services are rejected, and God will Real. 7. be no more intreated for them, now conscience smites and torments the spirits, and all the miseries that come upon them are but the beginning of eternal sorrows, and this is a most sad case; therefore let us pray with David, Psal. 6.1. Lord rebuke us not in thy wrath: And as the Prophet in Jer. 17. 17. Be not a terror unto me O Lord. But now, because tender consciences are ready to think when God rebukes them, or lays any affliction upon them, that it is to ruin and destroy them; as the Israelites said, in Deut. 1.27. Because the Lord hated us, therefore he brought us out of Egypt. In every strait they were in, they conceived God hated them in it, though God had done them good so many times. And hath not this been the reasonings of our unbelieving hearts, and the murmuring of our spirits in our afflictious? Oh take heed of such unbelieving reasonings, they are very much displeasing unto God: There is a great difference between the rebukes of God upon the godly, and the wicked, though perhaps rebuked both in one and the same affliction: as the Apothecary breaks Bezar stones to powder, but is very careful of it, and will not lose the least grain of it. So the Lord's people even in the furnace are as dear to him & have the most experience of God's love to them then that ever they had. Jacob when he lay upon the ground, and had the stone for his pillow, even then he had that heavenly vision from God.

But now the question is, How shall we know whether these rebukes that are upon us are intended for our good or our hurt, our desolation, or our restoration?

It may be known thus: If God's displeasures be such, that we find Him more set against our sins than our persons, *tis an argument He intends our good, not our hurt in His rebukes upon us.

But you will say, *This is as difficult as the other, How shall we know God aims at our sins, and not our persons?* Thus:

If His rebukes work us to a humiliation for our sins, a resignation of our selves up unto God's dispose, and to accept of the punishment of our iniquities; this is an argument God aims...
aims at our sins, and not at our persons in His rebukes, and so in them our good and not our hurt: But 'tis usual for wicked men in their rebukes to cry out of their sins, 'twas their sins that brought this upon them. But here the difference is thus discerned.

First, They cry out of their sins but per accidence, but of the judgement per se, as we use to say, the judgement troubles them more than their sins the cause of the judgment: but the godly cry out of their sins per se, and of the judgment per accidence, their sin troubles them.

Secondly, A child of God more desires the sanctification of an affliction than the removing of it; but the wicked care not for removing the cause of judgment [even sin] so the smart the correction may be taken off. It follows.

Expos. 1. Among the Tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.

Some conceive that these words are spoken as the aggravation of this peoples misery; and if so, the Notes from them are,

Obs. 1 That God smites not a people with judgment before he warns them off judgment. Among the Tribes of Israel have I made known this.

Obs. 2. When God threatens He is real in His threatenings. That which shall surely be.

Ephraim thinks that God intends not him. Sinners think that when God warns them he is not in good earnest, it shall not be, but God faith it shall be, God esteems more of His Word than Heaven and Earth besides, nay Heaven and Earth shall pass away before the least jot or tittle of it shall fail, and cursed be that peace that hath no other ground or foundation than this hope, that those things are not true which the Ministers of the Word from the Word threaten against sinners. And yet this is the condition of many people, which doth mightily provoke God, as you may see in Deut. 29. 19, 20, 21. If notwithstanding what is written in this book be bless himself
self, saying, He shall have peace; the anger of the Lord shall smite against such a man. Oh the bitter aggravating circumstances in this Scripture against such a sinner as this. Now if God will be so punctual in His threatening word, that it shall be made good, how much more His promising word, for God hath not done so much to make His threatening word good, as His promising word. For,

1. God hath not call'd such witnesses to His threatening word as to His promising word, there are Three in Heaven and Three on Earth who are Witnesses but not to the threatening word, sometimes in the general he calls the Heavens to witness to His threatening. Hear oh heavens, and hearken oh earth, I have nourished up a people and they rebel against me.

2. To the verifying of a promise there is not only God's faithfulness, but 'tis His faithfulness in Christ, all the promises are in Him, yea and Amen; there is in God's promising word, not only His faithfulness, but His faithfulness in Christ, all the promises are made in Christ, so are not the threatenings, Judgments have not such immediate relation to Christ.

3. More sure, because promises are not only God's Covenant with His people, but His Testament, and so more sure than a Covenant, for a Covenant may be broken on the one party, but a Testament cannot, it being confirmed by the death of the Testator; the promise on our part may be broken, but when we look upon them as confirmed by the death of the great Testator Jesus Christ, we have strong consolation: as 'tis a great evil not to believe the threats of God, so 'tis also a great evil not to credit the promises of God. Christians, you wonder when wicked men believe not God's threatenings and His judgments to tremble at them, Know Oh Christian, that not only men but Angels stand and wonder when thou dost not believe the promises of God when they be so confirmed that we might believe them and walk comfortably.

The revealing of sin before a judgment comes, aggravates Obs. 3.
both the sin and the judgment, the punishment will be so much the heavier, it aggravates the sin, because then there is the greater contempt against God: If a father should desire his child not to do such a thing, nay not only desire him but forbid him, yea threaten him with punishment if he doth it; now if he shall after all this gainsay his father's will, he puts a greater contempt upon his father, for now he breaks through hedges and fences, which should have kept him in: so when God shall forbid, yea threaten if we will break out it puts a great contempt upon God.

1. The goodness of God is not honored by us, when the Lord for our good shall give us notice of our sins that so we may prevent judgment the desert of our sins, and we notwithstanding shall sin, it dishonors God's goodness.

2. The truth of God is not honored, when we do not obey, this is no other than a venturing whether the word be true or no; whether God's words are yea and nay, Oh sinner dost thou know what thou dost, thou temptest God, saying, "Lord there are such and such threatenings against sin but I do not believe them, Lord I'll venture it, I'll put it to the try-all whether it be so or no.

3. As it aggravates the sin so the punishment; the judgment cannot but be the greater, thou canst expect but little pity from the goodness of God which thou hast slighted, when it warned thee of those judgments which are now upon thee, His mercy to remove them cannot be expected. God by His Ministers warned me in such a Sermon, but I went on and would not reform, and now there is matter for the worm of conscience to gnaw upon: that thou maist say as Job, What I feared is now come upon me, and this is that which aggravates our misery. At this time have not the Ministers of God for these twenty years, especially in these latter seven years made this the subject of their preaching, to warn us of judgments, and now the judgments of God are come upon us, God hath vindicated the word of His servants.

But these words though they may be thus understood, yet I conceive they bear a further signification which is, this: If
have declared among the Tribes what shall be without revolt, with Expos. 2 out any change or alteration; I have formerly repented, and have been intreated, but now I ple repent no more. They continue God's unchangable purpose for the desolating of this people, and being thus understood, the Note from them will be this.

That there is a time when there shall be no help to be delivered from judgment, though they should call, cry, mourn, weep, fast, and intreat, yet the judgment should not be removed.

As 'tis said of Esau, He found no place for repentance. Heb. 12. Heb. 12. 17. There is a great mistake by many in the interpretation of 17. that place, from which text many gather that there may be many tears shed, much sorrow found, and yet no true repentance, but the meaning of the words is this, he found no place for his father Isaac's repentance, though he cried and shed tears for the blessing, yet his father repented not that he had bestowed it upon Jacob: so that people may cry and humble their souls before God, yet shall find in God no place of repentance, nay if that the Saints of God should all join together and pray for such a people they should not prevail; Ezek. 14. 20. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job should pray for them, they should not prevail. Oh sinner take heed this be not thy condition, thou hast godly parents and kindred it may be, and they set themselves to seek God for thee, but God will deny them, their prayers shall not prevail for thee; this may be the case of Nations and Kingdoms, that there may be true repentance found and turning to God, and yet no deliverance from outward affliction. I deny not but that true repentance shall deliver a soul from eternal wrath, from perishing in hell; but this I affirm that there may be true repentance found and turning unto God and yet no deliverance from a temporal affliction. And this I shall make good by two famous texts of Scripture. The first is in Deut. 3. 26. Moses had sinned, and God saith he should not go into the land of Canaan, which was a sore affliction to Moses, upon this Moses he prayed, and 'tis certain Moses had repented him of that sin, yet see what he saith, The Lord was wrath with me, for your sake, and would not hear me, but let it
All his prayers and repentance could not deliver him from that outward affliction, and bring him into Canaan. The second text is in 2 Kings, 23. 25. In the former chapter we find the heart of the King melting when he heard the Law read, and perceived the anger of the Lord against his people was provoked, yet the Lord tells him that he should die in peace. And in the 23. Chapter, the King he sets upon reforming the people, enters into a solemn Covenant with God, causeth the people to joyn with him, pulls down the groves, destroys Idolatry, and although it be said in the 25. verse, that like unto him was there no King before him, yet in the 26. verse God saith, Notwithstanding all this, he will remove Judah out of his sight. So that sometimes God is so set upon his threats, that they shall come to pass, God will make them good whatever comes of it; this I conceive to be the meaning of these words. And so Mr. Calvin readeth them, God may be so resolved against a man's eternal estate that he will never shew such a man or such a people mercy more; as we may see in those which were bid to the Gospel-Supper: therefore we had need to gather our selves together before the decree bring forth, Zeph. 2. 1, 2. Oh let us in this Kingdom take heed; yet through God's mercy we are not left desolate, but have many points of mercy, even in this day of our rebuke, but what God will do one cannot determine, therefore it concerns us to prepare to meet our God, lest the wrath of God meet us, overcome and destroy us till there be no remedy, though through mercy for the present we may say there is remedy, yea rather let us tremble and be awakened, because God sometimes comes against, and is more quick with a people that are not so openly, and notoriously vile as others are, than he doth with the most profane. So much for this ninth verse.
**Chap. 5. the Prophecies of Hosea.**  
**Ver. 10.**

The Princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound; therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

**BUT why is God so wrath with Israel? Have not the Conexio. Princes of Judah provoked Him also?**

Yea, for God here speaks to them principally. It seems the people were not so bad, so sinful as they, for in the next words he saith, That Ephraim is oppressed, and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the commandement.

First, Princes must answer to God for all their doings: Though they are above all men in power, and so are not so liable to give an account to man as others are, yet to God they must, those actions which are least obnoxious to men, are much to God.

The Princes of Judah are like to them that remove the bounds. Obser. 1. Are like. That is, not so much in a similitude, as reality: as 'tis usual in Scripture to put the word, like, for the thing itself. As thus, His glory was as the Son of God. The Princes of Judah were those that removed the bound: by the light of Nature, and the Law of God, it was a wicked thing to remove bounds; you may see it forbidden by the Law of God, Deut. 27. 17.

It was a custom among the Heathens, and the Romans, That if any man removed the bound, the ancient Land-mark, if they were poor, they were adjudged to slavery, to dig in deep pits; if rich men, to be banished and lose a third part of their estates.

The Princes of Judah broke down the bounds in a Fourfold way. Obser. 2.

1. They took away men's estates that were none of their own. God appoints men their bounds and estates, therefore 'tis not in the power of Princes to take them away at their pleasure. It was not in the power of Ahab to take away Naboth's Vinyard, nay, nor to force him to sell it, though a King, he thought it too much to take it by violence; and Jezebel, though a cruel woman
woman yet would not take his Vineyard without some color of Law. Therefore Princes have no right to the Subjects estates, and liberty for to take them away at their pleasures; though such principles of late have been infused into them by some, for which we at this day suffer so heavily. In Is. 1. 23. Their Princes are said, to be rebellious and companions of thieves. Now if all were their own they could not break bounds: We would think that they of all men should not break bounds, for what is it they may not have if they would? I have read a story in Plutarch, concerning Cynneas and Pyrrhus who was mightily set upon war with Italy, Cynneas speaks thus unto him; What shall we get if we overcome the Romans? Saith Pyrrhus, We shall subdue our great enemy, and be made possessors of a brave Country. Cynneas asked him what he would do then? Saith Pyrrhus, Then we will subdue Africa, Carthage, and Sicilia: And what then? Then saith Pyrrhus we will feast, drink and be merry. Cynneas answered, Why may you not do so now without shedding so much blood, putting your self to so much trouble and endangering your person. If Princes would keep within their bounds what hinders but that they may enjoy themselves and their comforts with peace and quiet without the shedding of so much blood.

2. They break all bounds: That is, They break all Laws and Liberties; they will not be bound by Laws, saying thus, Laws were made for subjects, and not for Princes. And thus these Princes broke the bounds. Hence we may see what corruption there is in the hearts of men naturally, and this is furthered by evil Counsellors. I have read of Cambyses who had a desire to marry his Sister, but questioning whether he might do it or no, he calls his judges together to give him their advice, they told him, there was a Law against it; but say they, Ye Princes of Persia may do what you will: They were so far from diswading him from that wicked act, that they gave him encouragement to it. And hath not our time afforded such Counsellors to our Princes?
2. They break the bonds of Religion. Therefore Interpreters conceive that our Prophet Hosea prophesied in Ahaz his time, when he provoked God so by Idolatry, setting up the abomination of desolation. And this is the great breach of bonds, when people must provoke God. God hath set bounds to His Word, for His Worship and Service: Now take heed that you go not beyond those bounds for any pretence of decency or comlineffe, sutable to the state in which we live, and such like. God hath given great liberty in Civil things for men to use, but none in his Worship and waies. Oh what evil have Popish Princes done in this thing, in removing these bounds! and this is the main reason which makes Papists so to labour for the upholding and setting up an arbitrary government, having thereby full liberty to break all bounds in Religion.

Lastly, They brake the bonds of their own Covenants, and regarded them not: These were the corruptions of these Princes, they brake all sorts of bonds, Civil, Spiritual Covenanting bonds, nothing will keep them in.

But hath God left no means to keep these in bounds, Princes as well as Subjects?

To this I answer: Yea certainly. Those who at first gave power for families and persons to keep these, never tollerated the great ones to break them. The Law of Nature never gives power to destroy itself, especially in a Kingdom where there are defensive & offensive means to be used against any means that the greatest in power may raise against the Laws and Liberties of men; for there is no man who is a subject to the Prince, but is also to the State, and the State may deal with his instruments that he employs either defencively, or offencively. Trajan after he was made Emperor put a sword into his Officers hand to defend him while he defended the Laws; but if he did fail in his duty, gave the Officer leave to deal with him as a delinquent. It will be worth our pains and cost if after all our troubles we can but get the Kingdom settled in its true rights and liberties, though our workmen who are making up our breaches through some negligence or mis-
carriage suffer the wild beasts to break in, yet let not us mur-
mur, and repine, but be content, and blest God that we have
means for to help our selves; few yeers since we thought our
breaches to be so wide, that none could help, or deliver us;
now then that God hath raised up for us helpers contrary
to our expectation, blest God for them, and be content, let
us stir up our selves and joy with them for their assistance. If
the Sea should break in upon a Country, would you sit still or
let any rest quiet by you that would not sit to make up the
breach? A Farmer is contented to suffer Cattel, and see them
to run up and down in his ground while his workmen are
making up his hedges, and fences for to keep them out: So
our workmen are making up the hedges, let us be contented
to suffer a while patiently. The truth is those most com-
plain of confusions and disturbances who have been most in-
strumental to make our breaches and distractions: and thus
the Princes of Judah were, like them that break the bound,
and for thus doing the Lord threatens in the following
words, to powr out his wrath upon them like water. They have
past their bounds in sinning, and my wrath shall pass its
bounds upon them; they kept no bounds in sinning, and my
wrath shall keep no bounds in punishing. The Hebrews use
to express anger by a word that signifies, going beyond bounds,
noting thus much, that ordinarily in our anger we are apt to
go beyond bounds and besides the rule. The fence then is,
I will powr my wrath upon them in great abundance, like waters.
The judgments of God in Scripture, are often set out unto us by this similitude of water, as in Isa. 28.17. Nahum 1.8.
look as their anger ran like water, so my wrath shall run
upon them until they are consumed.

That Gods wrath is very hot against wicked Governours,
such as break the bounds of Religion, Laws, and Covenants:
the Lord is much displeased against great ones when wicked,
Numb. 25. 4. the people of Israel committed a great evil in
provoking God by their Idolatry, joyning themselves to
Baal-Peor, and the Lord said, Take the heads of Israel. The
people offended and it was by the encouragement of the Go-
vernors,
Governors, therefore their heads must off, the people sin and the
Governors must suffer because they reproved them not nor re-
strained them, but countenanced them.

Hence we may note, That we had need to pray much for Prin-
ces. Fearful are the examples which historiaans report of,
concerning the judgments of God upon wicked Princes.

Leander in the description of Italy reports of a cruel Tyrant,
who persuaded himself that he must give an account to no
man, none could call him to an account for what he did; at
last God gave him into the hands of the people, who strip'd
him naked, bound him upon a planck, and drew him through
the streets in the sight of all the people, then made a great fire
by him, and heated tongs red hot in the fire; when they had
done thus, then proclamation was made in the Market
place, that seeing he had wronged so many, that he was ne-
ever able to make satisfaction for the wrong he had done,
therefore all that had suffered by him should come and have
a pull at his flesh with the red hot tongs.

Another fearful example we have of latter times, concern-
ing Charles the 9th, about the massacre in France, who at that
time pretended great love and kindness to the Protestant par-
ty, invited them to a great marriage feast, and at that time by
his Commission, calls in those bloody miscreants, who cruel-
ly murdered the Protestant party; there he broke bounds:
but see how God met with him, in a most grievous disease,
through the violence of which there spurted out blood from
him in several parts of his body, so that he wallowed in his
blood before he died. God powred out His wrath upon
them in blood who in their life time thirsted after blood.

Secondly, The bounds of Religion and Laws, as they keep in ob-
bedience, so they keep out judgments. Pure Religion and good
Laws as they are bounds to keep us in duty, so they keep judg-
ments and wrath from us. And we ought to look upon Laws
in both these notions, not only to keep us in order and duty,
but also to keep out wrath; if we break our bounds, we must
look that wrath should break in upon us; therefore we had
need to do as men that live near the Sea, when the Sea breaks
Ggg
in upon them, they presently leave all their other businesses, and go about that. Our bounds are broken, and who is the occasion of it, the Lord knows, and wrath is broken in upon us at our breaches, therefore let us now as one man set about the making up of our breaches.

Thirdly, God punisheth according to men's sins. They break the bounds, God breaks in with wrath upon them; are they resolute in sinning? God will be as resolute in his judgments upon them; see that text Jer. 44. 25. You have sworn and vowed to your superstitious, and I have sworn to bring judgment upon you, and it shall come to pass. Therefore when judgments are upon us, if we would have them removed, we should diligently observe what sins we are guilty of, which answereth to the judgment which is upon us; for many times we may trace the cause of a judgment by the sin that we are guilty of, and if we ever look to have troubles removed, we must first remove sin the cause of them.

Ver. 11.

Ephraim is oppressed, and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the commandment.

V R A T H in the former verse was threatened against the Princes of Judah, who removed the bound: And here the Lord returns again to Ephraim, in this 11th verse; and the 12th verse to Judah and Ephraim both together, they being both a provocation to God, are plagued both together.

The word Oppressed, in the original is, Nafank, translated by Hierom, Calumnia; Ephraim suffered and was oppressed by false accusations and slanderings, (for there is an opposition in men's names and estates) which the Seventy usually translate by Sycophantia; and then we may render it thus, Ephraim by Sycophants doth suffer a great deal of wrong. When there are false reports raised against men, they suffer wrong by it: false reports are as a false Medium, which represents things in another manner than they are: As put a staff into the water, and it shews to be crooked, but take it out and 'tis not so. So the actions of men in the reports of others may seem crooked
ked, when in themselves are strait and good. And thus was Ephraim, broken in judgment; though his cause was good, yet 'twas made bad, if he were wronged he could have no re- lief for himself. So that good causes by bad men are many times perverted: but the Saints may support themselves with Pauls comfort, who passed not much for mans judgment. In this signification the Seventy Translators do often take the word; but in this place they express it by another word, thus, *Ephraim hath over-powered his adversaries, and so hath tread down judgment: they interpret it actively. But the words are well rendered in your books in the passive participle, and so they are to be read, Ephraim is broken in judgment.

Concussus judicio concussio is a Law word, signifying such a kind of breaking and oppression as threateneth the utter ruine and undoing of a man by Law; As many rich men threaten poor men when they do them any wrong, 'Ile be even with you, I'll ow you a good turn: Or as Magistrates that are corrupt and wicked, when they cannot bring poor men to say or do what they would have them, they will threaten to undo them, or if ever it lie in their power they wil ow them a good turn; of which carriage Samuel clears himself 1 Sam. 12. 3. Whom have I defrauded? or whom have I* oppressed? (the word is the same here) That is, used my power to threatn men to yeeld up their liberties, their rights, their enjoyments by any power which was in my hands. This was the sin of the great Princes here of the ten Tribes.

* Broken in judgment] That is, Not in Gods judgment upon Expos, them, but in the judgment of their own cause, they were cru-ched in their estates, liberties and laws, and that not only by their own Magistrates and Governors, but also by the Assyrian; by their own Magistrates they were broken and oppressed, good men were discountenanced, just causes betrayed, the whole Court was corrupted, and the Laws of the Land which should have held up the bounds, were broken; they were so broken as a thing which is broken, but not quite spo- led with the fall, some shreds of it may be made use of; so the generality of them were so broken that there was little right
to be had for any wrong that was done; and as they were thus oppressed in the Prophet Hoshea his time, so also in the Prophet Amos his time, who prophesied at the same time that our Prophet did, Amos 2. 7. They pait after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor: What's that? Thus, they did not only seek to bring poor men under them, but even utterly to destroy them, they sought to ruin them, and that by perverting of judgment. So in Amos, 5. 11. their oppression grew to such a height that they took the poors wheat from them, that if the poor had but gleaned a little wheat in the fields, as they brought it home they robbed them of it, or if they carried it to the mill they took it from them; this was the oppression which was at this time among the ten Tribes, from their own Governors. But they were also oppressed by the Assyrian, they calumniated and reproached them, saying, Where is now your God, in whom you so much trusted? Thus much for the opening those words.

Expos. The reason follows, Because he willingly followed after the Commandement.

Quest. But some may say, What is this such a thing? is there so much in this to provoke God?

The Command. Yea, this was a great sin; for the opening whereof, take notice of these three things.

1. Whose. First, Whose Commandement was it they followed? it was the Commandement of Jeroboam and his Princes, men which had authority and power in their hands, and this provoked God so highly against them, because they followed the commandements of men who had authority over them: this is very strange that this charge should be against Ephraim for this, no question but they pleaded thus, What, am I wiser than my Governors? must not I do as they bid me?

2. What. Secondly, What commandement was it that they followed? it was to worship the Calves at Dan and Bethel, he worshiped God but it was in a false way, and this was the cause which provoked God so against him.

3. How soon. Thirdly, He willingly followed the commandement, as soon as ever he was commanded he yeilded without any deliberation
beration, or consultation with himself; whereas he should have stood it out and have bid the worst, rather suffered the loss of all, than yielded to their commands: as the three children, rather suffer the fiery furnace, than fall down to the Image, and thus they should have done; as there were some which did, though the generality of them followed after the commandement, yet there were some found among Ephraim who would go to Jerusalem to worship, the place of God's appointment: in 1 Chron. 11. 16. those which set their hearts to seek God they would go up to Jerusalem and not follow Jeroboam to Dan and Bethel; though the most went with Jeroboam, yet there was a handful that knew God would be worshiped in his own way and in his own place; the generality of the people liked well enough of the Commandement, because it was will-worship which pleaseth mans nature best, and then it was most for their ease, and this was Jeroboams plea, I love my peoples ease, I would not be so harsh to them, therefore come, we will worship the true God still, 'tis but the circumstance of place and that's no such great matter: Vulg. Now they willingly followed after the commandement, and thereby encouraged Jeroboam in his wicked design, they willingly walked after the Command? the old Latin expresseth it thus, they willingly followed after dregs; and the Hebrew word is very nigh the same, they walked after filthy dregs, and if this were the meaning of it, it notes two things.

First, That Jeroboam was willing to have the people enjoy their lusts, so he might but enjoy his ends; he was willing to give the people their full swing and liberty in their lusts, and upon this the baser sort of the people clave to him; Jeroboam reasons thus, well I must rend the Kingdom from David, but how shall I accomplish it? I must have the people to assist me in it, but how shall I gain them? I will let them have their pleasures in sin, they shall have their lusts without contradiction, and then the most will follow me, I shall be sure of the rude multitude the profane in the Kingdom.

Secondly, Post sordes, that is, after their Idols: the Calves which
which he had set up, and the filth which is in them, for the Scripture lets out the filthiness of Idolatry, by the basest things in the world, to dogs vomet, the excrements of men.

Thus much of the words in that sense: But they are more full as read in your books and more agreeable to the Original, the Notes from them are many.

Obser. 1. First, That 'tis a great judgment for a people to be under oppression: 'Tis a very sad affliction for a nation, family, or person to be under oppression, and broken in judgment, when good men, and good causes are cruft and flighted, and wicked men and bad causes prevail and prosper, when a man's innocency shall be no help to him. Solomon faith this to be a great evil, in Eccles. 3. 16. wickedness was got into the place of judgment: God hath promised to deliver his people from this judgment, In righteousness shall thou be established, then shalt be far from oppression, Isa. 54. 14. But these times are not yet come, all the world (for the most part) at this day is under oppression, 'tis sad to have our estates and our liberties to be broken for conscience, Cconscience-oppression is the worst oppression; and this was our condition not long since, nay and is the condition of many of our dear brethren in many places of this Kingdom, it was not long since that he which departed from iniquity made himself a prey; was it not come to that pass that the meanest, yea the basest persons in a City or Country had power enough in their hands to undo the best Ministers in a Kingdom? Oh how was the Kingdom oppressed, Parliaments broken, the edg of the Law turned against the godly party, witness the banishing of men, Ministers were oppressed in their estates, in their liberties, but especially in their consciences, if they would not be like the fidlers boy, be ready to dance after every pipe, in so much that when the Lord gave us a little reviving, we were even as men in a dream: when we were under it we were ready to say, O we shall never be delivered, how is it possible that we should be rescued from the oppressors? how was heaven field with our cries and earth with our moans! thus it was; and worse now it is in many places of the Kingdom with many of our brethren: but let them
them and us be comforted in this, it was thus with Israel, when God delivered them out of captivity; but for our adversaries that text may be verified of them, Isa. 30. 12. They trust Isa. 30. 12 in oppression; what is their language but this? we will get a opened, great Army and muster up strong forces, and then we will be master of the field, and bring the Rebels under, so that they trust in oppression, and make cruelty their arm of power, take away that and their cause falls to the ground: But Gods people are commanded to the contrary in Psal. 62. 10. trust not in oppression and for those that do oppress, they shall be like those in Isa. 30. 13. Whose breaking and misery shall come in an infant, and you that have friends in oppression lend them these Scriptures to comfort them Psal. 12. 5, 6. For the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy, I will arise faith the Lord and set him at liberty from him that puffeth at him.

But you will say, 'tis true, God will arise, but not yet, Obj. these are good words, but we may suffer extremally in the mean while.

But mark what the Lord saith in the 6. and 7. verses, The words of the Lord are pure words; and this word among the rest, that God will arise, and set his people in safety from this generation to the end; and if any of your friends be in danger of oppression lend them that Scripture in Isa. 51. 12, 13. Where is the fury of the oppressor? nay God will so work out things in His own time, that we shall be able to say, where is now the fury of the oppressor? Now if God hath made us to know the smart of this sore and heavy burden he looks that we should have very tender carriages and loving dispositions towards our brethren especially towards their consciences; mark the charge of God concerning this, Exod. 23. 9. You shall not oppress a stranger; why so? Oh faith God, for ye know the heart of a stranger; perhaps there are some who walk close with God have tender consciences, which cannot yeild to what may be imposed upon them by authority, Oh take you heed of oppressing these, God expects that you should use them gently and kindly.

A Second Note is this, That Idolaters are great oppressors. Obi. 2,

When
When was it that Ephraim was oppressed? When he walked after the commandement of Jeroboam. Changes in Religion brings people to oppression. Therefore the Scripture sets out Antichrist by Egypt, because the people of God were there most grievously oppressed. The Woman in the Revelations is said to sit upon the waters, and the Beast a top of her oppressing. That story is famous of a Bishop who would oppress the people; one standing up and told him he could not do it by law: He answered him, that if there were any Law against him he would carry it on his sleeves. Likewise that oppression of the Walleys was very great, who desired that they might but enjoy their liberty to worship God in woods and groves, but it would not be granted them. And was not this our condition some few years since? when the Saints durst not appear for God in publick, but only in private rooms and chambers.

Ob. 3. Thirdly, God hath a righteous hand in the delivery of men into the hands of unrighteous oppressors: For they followed after the commandement faith God. It may be your enemies into whose hands I have delivered you, may deal unjustly and oppress you out of measure; yet am I just in the thing.

We are often times ready to complain of instruments which oppress us; and never look at the hand of God that smites us by them: we should look within our selves, and find the cause there which provokes God, what sins we are guilty of, and make our peace with God: And so likewise in the Kingdom, this is the way to be delivered from our oppressors. I remember a story out of Cedrenus concerning Phocas that murdered his Master the Emperor Mamicus with his wife and children, usurped the Empire, and opened a floudgate to all impiety; there was an honest poor man at that time who was wonderful importunate at the Throne of grace, to know a reason why that wicked man prospered so in his design: he was answered again by a voice, That there could not be a worse man found, and that the sins of Christians, and the City of Constantinople did require it. Sins unrepented of, gives strength to an enemies side.

A special
A special cause of oppression is, People's following of false worship. We never read of Israel's great oppressions, but when they followed after the command; and that is very observable, after they once began to follow the commands of Jeroboam, the ten tribes never had any good kings after; Judah indeed sometimes had good kings, because they kept something of God amongst them, the Temple and some part of His worship among them. If we submit to wicked men in our consciences, no wonder if they are quickly usurpers over our estates.

The giving too much to men God many times punisheth, by making them the greatest instruments of our trouble and misery: If you will make Governors gods, 'tis just with God to make them devils to you. We should labor truly to inform our selves in that obedience which we owe to Governors, yeild them that but no more; if people will give that to men which is God's due, it's just with God to make them the greatest plagues to us.

Here we may see the ill nature of wicked men. Jeroboam and his Princes are very fair and square and give good words to the people, and all to gain their own ends, and when they had their own ends, then they broke them in judgment, and oppressed them exceedingly, the more they are yeilded to, the more they oppress; 'tis a sign of a base spirit for men thus to abuse poor people. The wicked boasteth himself of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous whom the Lord abhors, Psal. 10. 3.

It is an old way of Satan to get false worship backed with the commands of authority. Satans chief design is to get his worship into the throne and for the effecting of this, he labors to corrupt the pure worship of God, and presseth his own upon the people, backt with the command of authority; the Devil knows that there is no way so prevalent as this to take with the people, that if authority commands it, that overpowers all reason brought to the contrary; and this is the asperson which is laid upon the godly at this very day, that they rebel against authority, this hath been the Devils old plot which in all ages he hath used to get advantages against the Saints;
Saints; this was Hamans argument, that it was not for the Kings honor to suffer the Jews to live in his provinces. San-
ballet and Tobiah would not suffer the people of God to build the Temple, why? because they were factious people, diso-
bedient to authority. So Paul himself was accused of sedition:
and the false Prophets tell the King, that Amos was such a tur-
bulent fellow that the Land would not bear his words he uttered.

Obl. 8. That mens authority commanding us to do duty in a wrong man-
ner is not sufficient for our warrant: No evil may be committed upon: pretence of the commands of authority. Therefore
the Papists blind obedience is too great a burden and bondage
for man, as man to bear; then much more as Christians: 'tis
not enough for children or servants to obey their parents or
masters in things which are evil, because they command it;
the wrath of God may break out upon us, for obeying Princes
and Governors in things which are evil. If God command
any thing we must look more at the quis, than at the quid, but
in the commands of men we must look at the quid, what 'tis
that is commanded, more than the quis, who commands:
the commands of men may be such that the best obedience is
to disobey: the Pope writing to Bernard requiring a thing
of him which was unlawful, Bernard writes back again this
answer, I as a child do not obey, and I obey in disobeying. Gods
authority is that which we must look at in all our actions.
Authority at the first was set up for the good of Common-
wealths, and not for their hurt, therefore it was no wonder
that so many in former times did deny obedience to the un-
lawful commands of Magistrates when the edge of justice was
turned against them: but now since authority is good, joy-
ning for God, punishing sin and wickedness, who obeys more
than those who formerly were accounted disobedient to au-
thority: therefore 'tis a false reproach which is cast upon the
professors of the Gospel, that they are disobedient to Gover-
nors and contemn authority: who are they which venture
molt in this cause, in their estates, liberties, and lives? is it
not the people of God? nay is not this used as an argument
to godly Souldiers to be content in the want of their pay, because they are the owners of this war? 'tis for Religion and liberty they stand for, 'tis conscience puts them on to shew themselves active for God and venture largely for his sake, though they verily believe they shall never see a return of their cost: let but Law and authority go on Gods side, and then they will obey willingly.

It is true, Authority against God must not be obeyed; but Object suppose the command be in indifferent things?

I answer, That absolute indifferent things are not in the reach of the Magistrate, he is to command that which in his conscience and according to Law he conceives to be for the good of the Common-wealth.

But in this case who must be judge?

'Tis true, the Magistrate is to be Judge, whether the thing be indifferent or no, and accordingly are we to yield obedience if it do not apparently appear to the contrary.

But may not a man judge of his own actions? 'Tis true, he may; but with a twofold peril, that if it be right and sincere to put it to the venture, and if it prove to be light and false then to be liable to the Magistrates censure; now if the Magistrate should command any thing which you in conscience think is not right according to the rule, you must disobey them, observing but these cautions.

1. With much suspicion and self-jealousie, thinking that they may understand better than we.

2. Pray and beg earnestly of God with much humility that he would discover the truth to you, and not presently to disobey them, but upon serious deliberation.

3. Account it your affliction and trouble that you cannot agree with them, and make it not matter of joy to you.

4. If in some things you cannot obey them, do it as secretly as you can, make not a publick business of it, to prevent scandal, but not of that which should be thy trouble and affliction.

5. You must be very modest in your not yielding to them, not
not proud and self-conceited, thinking your selves before them, or better than they.

6. You must have a high and reverend esteem and respect to them, for their place's sake, although they require that from you, you cannot yield unto.

7. You must be careful to be so much the more obedient in other things; if in some things you cannot yield to them, in other things that you can you should be the more obedient, that so your Masters and Governors may see that it is not stoutness, but conscience which you plead; and this will mightily convince Masters and Governors.

8. You must be so much the more conscientious in your walking with God, in all things: if in some things you plead conscience, and be remiss in other things, your Governors may justly say, that 'tis out of humor and fancy, not out of conscience.

9. If after all this, the Magistrate shall in a legal way inflict punishment upon you, you are to submit to it and patiently to bear it, or else avoid the place.

Thus, observing these Cautions, you may with a good conscience disobey Magistrates or Governors, in things which your conscience tells you are not according to truth. And thus much of the Eighth Note.

**Ob. 9.** The more willing any men are in sin, the greater is the sin.

The more of the will there is in anything, if it be evil, the worse it is; if it be good, the better it is. Many men make this for their excuse, in things done which are evil: It was against their wills: but this doth not excuse, for rather than they would suffer &c. they chose this, now where the will goes along with any thing, if evil, it is very evil indeed.

1. Now the will may be said to be in sin, when a man doth those things which produce sin, or sin follow upon it, or omits that which would keep him from sin; a drunkard perhaps doth not will to swear, strike, and abuse men, yet being not himself, doing of such things, his will may be said to be those sins, because he did not shun those things which occasioned them.

2. The
2. The will may be said to be in a sin, when a man shall in two difficult things, in which he must either sin or suffer, rather choose to sin than to suffer. This people here were commanded by Jeroboam to worship at Dan and Bethel; but God commanded them to worship at Jerusalem; now for them to disobey God’s command, and rather choose to obey Jeroboam’s command than suffer Jeroboam’s punishment, was a sin of willingness in them: when a man omits a duty commanded, for some hardships in it, he sins willingly in that omission of his.

The approbation and furthering Governors in that which is evil, by a willing obedience, doth bring much guilt upon people.

This people should not presently have yielded to the King’s command, but petitioned against, yea suffered punishment rather than yielded, then they had done something; but no sooner was the command out but they as willingly yielded. Governors they command that which perhaps is not good, and they do not know it; but if they see their people stand out against it, they then will begin to bethink themselves, there is much evil in this obedience; for by this you mightily irrate them against those that cannot obey them, by reason of the tenderness of their consciences. I have read a story in a French History of Lewis the 11th. who being about to confirm unlawful Edicts, many of the Nobility came to him in their scarlet Gowns to petition him not to do it, and if he would proceed, that he would take their lives away, for they told him they had rather die than live to see the confirmation of such unlawful Commands; whereupon the King seeing their coming in such an unusual manner, holds his hand, and stays the prosecution of them. Oh! how happy are Princes and People in such Nobility! Had Ephraim done thus, they had done well in it, and might have had comfort from it.

That commands for false worship do easily prevail with people: Obs. 10. Witness in this Kingdom: when King Edward would have reformed the Mass, what Rebellion was there in Cornwall? But when Queen Mary set it up, how did people please themselves.

Obs. 11.
Chap. 5.  An Exposition of Ver. II

felves in such abominations. So in our daies, what was it that a Bishop commanded but he was obeyed presently?

Ob. 12. What a shame is it, that we should not willingly obey the commands of God, when Devils and wicked men have some that will obey them willingly?

How do you think to follow after God, and put off all thoughts of God till you come to lie upon your death beds?

Our hangings off from God doth mightily hinder our comforts.

Object. But you will say, Were we but assured that they were the commands of God, we would obey them.

Answ. But if we would examin, we should find that it is oft times our own unwillingness to obey the commands of God, rather than any scruple we make of it. There are many things, in which the Scriptures are dark and not so clear; yet if things can be proved by reason and consequences from Scripture, we are to obey; otherwise how can we be said to obey with the obedience of faith, which we are commanded: Now how can we be said to obey with the obedience of faith if we must have reasons for every thing?

Quest. But how shall we know Gods mind in matter of worship?

Answ. In this case we are to compare things together and weigh them seriously, and so get out the result and mind of God and follow that, although for the present there want demonstrative reason to make it out clear. And thus much for the words so understood.

Expos. 2. Now from the other reading of the words after the vulgar Latin [Post Sordes] we may observe:

Ob. 1. That it is the way of bad Princes to give liberty to mens lusts.

Now surely that way which hath so much of sin in it, cannot be the safe way for men to walk in.

Ob. 2. That Idolatry is filthy stuff.

Therefore you that are so pleased with them, and take such delight in superstitious vanities, much good may you do with them; for our parts that truly fear God, we desire the pure Ordinances of Jesus Christ.
Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth; and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

God made a great difference between Judah and Israel: but they joined in the same ways of sin, and God coupled them in the same way of wrath. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

Why Ephraim and Judah coupled.

Therefore] Why? Wherefore? It hath reference unto the words we spake of the last day [they willingly followed the commandement] Because they followed the unlawful commands of Jeroboam and his Princes, Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth: That for Ephraim.

And it is like the same cause might be for the rottenness God would be unto Judah. Had they resisted the unlawful commands of those that were above them in power: They thought there might have been some disturbance in the State. Oh it is better for us to obey, to be quiet, that we may be at peace; but in the mean time while they, to free themselves from some disturbance and to enjoy their own quiet, would obey unlawful commands, the secret curse of God was upon their estates: Therefore (faith the Lord) will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. A secret curse there was upon that peace so procured.

In the opening of these words, and presenting the mind of God unto you in them, there are these Five or Six things to be done.

1. The reading of the words.
2. The scope of the words, what it is that God aimeth at in them.
3. The reason of the difference of the expression, A moth to Ephraim, and rottenness to Judah.
4. When this was, what time this referreth to, when was God a moth to Israel and rottenness unto Judah?
5. How and in what respects God may be said to be a moth and rottenness to a people.
6. The:
6. The several observations to be drawn from it.
All this is necessary for the opening of this twelfth verse.

For the first then, The reading of the words. The Seventy read the words a little different from this reading of ours in the English, παραξινέως. Conturbatio as stimulus, I will be a trouble unto Ephraim and a prick unto Judah. I will trouble, prick, goad them, I will vex them. The blessed God who is a reit unto His people; He is a trouble, a prick, and goad to vex His enemies, to vex the ungodly. The old Latin, and so Hierom readeth it thus, Ego tainingiam tines Ephraim, I will be as a moth unto Ephraim: he readeth the first as we do in our books : but the second, Quasi & putredo domin. Munsi, Leo Juda, Druflus, render it: quasi teredimis. Teredo is a worm that eateth out the heart of the strongest wood. Minuissimus vermiculus, faith Luther upon the place; And Plini faith it is the worm that breeds in Ships at Sea, and eateth out the heart of the strongest Oaken plancks at Sea: but yet often translated rottenness, because the worm causeth that wood to be rotten. Prov. 12. 4. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband faith the text, but she that makes ashamed, is rottenness to his bones: There is the same word, a woman whose behavior is such in company as makes ashamed, is rottenness to a mans bones, be they never so strong. That for the reading.

2. Scope. For the scope of these words, what it is that God aimeth at, which is, That judgment should come.


That wrath that I intend to let out upon Ephraim and Judah shall,

Secretly. First, be very secret, as the moth doth eat the garment secretly, so my wrath shall be, there shall be no noise of it for a while.

Gradually. And it shall be gradually too, that's the second, I will go on by degrees; a moth and rottenness doth not consume the garment or the wood all at once, but one degree after another. And
And then thirdly, Insensibly: They shall not so much as insensibly perceive it, they shall not see for a long time how My wrath is out against them, and yet it shall consume them. That's

But what is the reason of the difference of the expression, that's the third? If God intended only to shew his secret gradual, insensible judgment, then one expression might have been enough; a moth, or rottenness, either of them. But the reason of the different expression is this, Israel was to be destroyed sooner than Judah: Judah should hold out a time longer than Israel should though both of them were to be destroyed at length. As strong wood, heart of Oak, it holds out longer though there should be a worm in it, than a garment doth when a moth is in it; so Judah held out above two hundred yeers after this threat, after this rottenness began in them, longer than Israel did; for the time that this moth was in Israel (of which we shall speak presently) unto Israel's captivity, it was but some two or three and forty yeers; but it was one hundred and threescore yeers from the time of God's being a rottenness unto Judah.

But Fourthly, When was this time? To what time doth this refer? when was God a moth unto Ephraim and rottenness to Judah? For that, and to shew the story of it, it would require some time. I only refer you to the Scriptures that have the stories of both these, when the moth began, and when the rottenness began. In the 1 King. chap. 15. from verse 8. and so on, to the end of the 17. chapter of the second book of the Kings, there you may find, the time when God was a moth unto Ephraim: And for Judah, in 2. King. chapter 16. there you may find how God was rottenness unto Judah, and it was from Abuz his time to the time of their being carried away captive into Babylon, which was about an hundred and sixty yeers. And Josephus in his book (besides the books Josephus of the Scripture) in Lib. 9. chap. 12. and Lib. 15. towards the latter end, and Lib. 18. chap. 10. He likewise setteth forth the condition both of Ephraim and of Judah, when the Lord was a moth unto the one and rottenness to the other.

But
5. What it is for God to be a moth and rottenness to a people: But that which will be more useful unto us, will be, to enquire the meaning, What it is for God to be a moth and rottenness to a people: For indeed there is the same thing signified in both these expressions, only (as I told you) the first signifies a quicker dispatch of Israel, and the second, a more slow dispatch of Judah, but in the effect the same is signified. Now God is a moth and rottenness unto a people many waies. As,

First, He is a moth in the very spirits of people. There is a secret way of God's wrath upon a people in their spirits which is not perceived in the world. As thus: When the spirits of men in a Nation grow weak and cowardly. The weakness and cowardlines of mens spirits shews a judgment of God upon them that is a as moth to them: And so it was in Israel, as you may find it in that 2 King. 15 and so on, There their Governors did what they list, one kild another, and another kild him, and the people laid down quietly and dared not to appear in the least way to find fault with any thing done. And then a base sloth offpirit that feifeth upon the hearts of people, a dlnness, a fordidness of spirit, minding low things, not regarding any worthy and honorable achievement; when men are thus then God is as a moth and rottenness to them. When there is raising of jealousies one against another in their spirits, envy ing one another, and divisions in the spirits one of another, then God is as a moth and rottenness; as we know a moth in a garment doth make the thread that it doth not hang firm together, and rottenness makes the wood that one part doth not unite together so firmly as it did; but yet in a secret way; so though open wars indeed devour in a publick way, but secret jealousies in the hearts of people, that one dare not trust another, and secret divisions that there are in their hearts, this is like to a moth and rottenness. As a moth in a garment and rottenness in wood, so secret jealousies and secret divisions in the spirits of men in a Kingdom consume and destroy them. And then base compliance for their own ends. And lastly, falseness of spirit in the trust committed to them. When you see this prevail in the spirits of men, especially
especially of those that are put in publick trust; then is God a
moth and rottenness unto that people. And that is the first,
A moth and rottenness in the spirits of men.

Secondly, *A moth and rottenness in mens counsels.* As first, 2. in
counsels, 1. blindness, that they shall not be able to see the plots of their
enemies, they shall not know their own advantages, nor how
to improve what they have: They shall not hit upon the
right means to cure themselves. There shall be a perplexity
in their counsels, a contradiction in their counsels, one coun-
felling one way and another counsel another way. They
shall ensnare themselves in their counsels: There shall be
much folly in their counsels. And they shall be blasted in
their counsels: Now God is a moth and rottenness to a peo-
ple: All this while God doth not appear in an outward ho-
tile and terrible way, but there is a secret curse of God upon
their counsels and so he is a moth and rottenness to them.

Thirdly, *God is a moth and rottenness to a people in their estates,* 3. in e-
in their tradings; there shall be a decay of trading amongst
them, and they shall grow poorer and poorer no man knows
how. There shall be a secret curse upon their tradings and
estates that no man can give a cause of.

Fourthly, *God is a moth and rottenness in the cheif instruments*
that they make use of for their good: taking away cheif ones secret-
ly when no body takes notice of them, one dropeth away af-
ter another; as in rottenness of wood one little piece drop-
peth down after another, some dust of it drops down and no
body takes notice of it; so in a State and Kingdom, cheif in-
struments shall be taken away and no body takes notice of it,
sometimes one and then another and then another after him,
so they shall moulder away by degrees: And those that are
remaining shall be blasted in their esteems amongst the peo-
ple: Those that God gives ability to do them good and
might be very useful and serviceable unto them, yet though
they live amongst them they shall be so blasted by reports one
way or other, that they shall not be able to do them much
good. And when you see this prevailing in a Kingdom, then
God is a moth and rottenness to them.
Fifthly, God is a moth and rottenness to a people in their Enterprises: when in their Actions and Enterprises there is division amongst them; not only division in their spirits but in their actions, one goes one way and another another way, they scarce can agree in any thing, and so all their enterprises are brought unto nothing.

Sixthly, God is a moth and rottenness in their warlike power and strength. There shall be a great charge upon the people and much shall be gathered together, but no man shall know how it is spent; it shall moulder away so that every one shall complain of the charge and of what goeth from him, but nobody almost can see to what it comes to.

Seventhly and lastly, God is a moth and rottenness unto them in their Religion, in corrupting that. (I mean by suffering of it) A secret curse of God upon them that their Religion should be corrupted, that their wine should be mixt with water, their silver with dross; that when they think to have their Religion to be more pure there shall be such mixtures of such opinions and contradictions one of another, that there shall be a secret moth and rottenness there, a secret curse of God even upon their Religion. These Seven wares God may be said to be a moth and rottenness unto a people.

Now from all these, there are these Observations that we should take special notice of as nearly concerning us.

Obser. 1. The first is this: God may be in a way of wrath against a Kingdom, and in the mean time be very patient and long-suffering toward that Kingdom. And so against a particular man or woman. These two may stand together.

Therefore no people must think themselves secure because that God appeareth not in the height of his displeasure. Neither let any man or woman think themselves safe because God is patient towards them. As in the greatest afflictions that are upon the Saints there are glimpses of God's goodness; so in the greatest prosperity of the wicked, when God is most patient towards them, there are some footsteps of his wrath. No child of God is ever in such a dark night but he hath some beams of God's goodness; and no wicked man is ever in such a height
a height of prosperity, but he hath some workings of God's wrath against him.

Secondly, God many times letteth out his wrath against a people in little things. And so against a particular person.

I will be a moth and rottenness; They are both little things. What is a moth? And that which is translated rottenness, it is one of the least worms that is, the least worm that eateth into the heart of the wood and so bringeth rottenness into it. God's wrath (I say) may be let out in minims. As there may be much poison in little drops, so there may be much wrath in little things. You know the wrath of God was much let out upon the Egyptians in Lice and Flies; and so it may be let out against thee in very small and contemptible things: Things thou little thinkest of, things that thou passest by and dost not mind, there may be much of the wrath of God let out in these.

Thirdly, When God letteth out his wrath in small things and cometh not in a terrible way against people, then his wrath is contemptible to carnal hearts.

That is the reason of this expression, I will be a moth and rottenness. Those that were carnal in Israel and Judah they little thought of so much evil as was against them at this time, but they flighted and contemned all that the Prophet could threaten, for it was but a moth and rottenness, as that little worm, and what is that? It hath been so amongst us heretofore. With what contempt did many men hear the threatenings of God's Ministers against England? And why? Apply. Because there was not some vitious dreadful judgment upon the Nation: though in the mean time there was much of the wrath of God and fruits of his displeasure amongst us. Men are seldom sensible of little things. As men little mind and regard mercies in small things, so they little regard God's wrath in small things. As it is an argument of a gracious heart to bless God for his mercies in small things, so likewise it is an argument of a gracious heart to take notice of God's displeasure in small things. If God do but hold up his finger, presently to take notice and to be sensible of it,
is an argument of a gracious heart. As it is an argument that
that flesh is ful of life that is sensible of the least touch; so a
heart that that is full of grace when it is sensible of the least
fruit of Gods displeasure. But when men and women are in
such a disposition, that except God strikes them in some ter-
rible manner they are not sensible of his displeasure, this is
a sign that they have brawny and hard hearts of their
own.

Obs. 4. Fourthly, Though carnal hearts do slight and contemn Gods
displeasure in little things, yet this displeasure and wrath of God in
little things, will eat them out at last. It will bring them down,
it will destroy them if it be neglected. You know in Exod. 8.
25. that judgment of the flies brought down the spirit of
Pharaoh more than all the other judgments before; he laid be-
fore that he would let the people go, but he never had them go
till then. God is able to bring down the stoutest, the prou-
dest spirit upon the face of the earth by little things. He can
eat out the heart of the strongest wood by this little worm,
and so by any little judgment of his, he can bring down the
stoutest and proudest spirit in the world.

Obs. 5. Fifthly, God is slow in punishing. He punisheth by degrees
at first: yea his punishing is as a moth, and as a little worm
in the wood, it is a long time before they do any hurt: This
is to shew that Gods wrath it is at first but slow. And by this
we are taught to do even as God Himself doth, to be slow to
wrath; in our waies of wrath and displeasure against our bre-
thren to be slow as God is; not presently to fly in the faces
of our servants or of our children when they displease us:
God doth not deal so with us, He flies not presently upon
us; God is a long time before He bring any sensible evil
upon us. The Romans used to have the Rod and the Axe
carried before their Magistrates, to shew that they began by
lower afflictions at first, they did not come to the extremity
at first but went on gradually in their way of punishing.

Obs. 6. Sixtly, God hath secret judgments to bring upon a people, upon
particularly persons; waies of judgment secretly that they little think
of. In 2 King. 3. 17. Thus saith the Lord, you shall not see the
wind, neither shall you see rain, yet the valleys shall be filled with water: There shall be a filling with water though you see neither wind nor rain; you shall not know whence it cometh yet the valleys shall be filled with water. So, many times there is the judgment of God against a people, against a family, against a particular person, and no body can tell from whence it comes. As God hath many secret blessings for his people, so He hath secret curses against the ungodly. Let us take heed of secret sins, for God hath secret wrath to avenge Use, be secret sins. Many of you that find the hand of God out aware of against you and you do not know how; do you examine your secret sins whether there be not many secret sins in you against the Lord. It was so at this time when God came to be a moth against Ephraim, in 2 King. 17. 9. speaking of that very time that this prophesie doth relate unto, wherein God was a moth unto Ephraim, the text faith there, that the children of Israel did secretly that which was not right in the eyes of the Lord: Therefore just was God in this, to be a moth, to have His displeasure to come secretly. Take you heed of secret sins, lest God consume you by secret judgments.

Seventhly, Our corruption within us breedeth our trouble; and our undoing. Whence cometh the moth but from the very cloth it self that it eateth out? it is bred there: and this worm it is bred in the wood that it doth consume. A moth shall eat them; it seems to be a proverbial speech amongst the Hebrews, when they would express the perishing of any by their own counsels and their own ways; as the Latins have proverbial speeches suitable; Fabrum constringi competidibus quae ipse cuderat. The workman he is fettered with those fetters he makes himself; And so that proverb that we have, to nourish a Snake in a mans own bosom, is as much as a moth shall eat them; that is, what evil cometh to us it is bred within us: that wrath that doth consume us it is that which is bred out of the corruption that is in us. So they say of the black bird, that of the dung that comes from it the lime is made that your fowlers make use of to make their lime-twigs withal; so from our own sins comes our own misery. From the unclean-
ness of a Nation or a particular soul cometh the evil of it; Therefore if we should reade the foregoing words (they willingly followed the commandement) according to the old Latin, they followed post forser, after the filth of Jeroboam, then the elegancy of the expression would be more: It was those filthy waies of Jeroboam that caused these moths to be bred. From our uncleanneness cometh our consumption? as from the uncleanness of the body many evils are bred, so from the uncleanness of the spirit. Therefore we should be willing to take pains in the work of repentance, yea though it be somewhat troublesome to the flesh, yet better wear out our selves by washing, better wear our clothes a little by the washing of them than to let them rot in the dirt of them: it is true, washing of clothes wears them a little, but if you let them alone in their dirt, that will rot them worse: so the work of repentance may put you to pain and wear you a little, but if you let your hearts alone in the filth of sin, that filth of sin will breed your misery. Take heed of letting any sin alone in your hearts, it will breed a worm (for so this word rottenness signifies a worm) it will breed a worm, the worm of conscience, that may prove the worm that never dieth.

Obs. 8. Eightly, Gods wrath though secret yet many times eateth out mens spirits and makes them unuseful. Therefore it is compared to a moth and to rottenness, to a worm in the wood: As the moth eateth out the strength of the garment and makes it unuseful for any thing; and as the worm eateth out the strength of the wood and makes that unuseful; so the secret wrath of God many times eateth out mens spirits and makes them very unuseful in the places where they are set. How many have had excellent parts when they were young and were very useful: yet the uncleanneness of their spirits hath bred such a worm that hath eat out the excellency of their parts, and before they have died they have been as a moth-eaten garment and rotten wood: indeed there hath been the same bulk as before, yet if you come to make use of them there is as much difference from what they were wont to be, as a moth-eaten garment
garment from itself, and as rotten wood that hath the heart of it eaten out by the worm, differeth from itself, so are the hearts of many men different from what they were wont.

In the ninth place, *Though (a sad consideration for those Obs. 9, who are preserved a while longer than others) others go before them yet they shall follow not long after.* This Note is drawn from the diversity of the expression, *a moth to Ephraim, and rottenness to Judah.* God indeed will deal more quick with Ephraim and consume them in His wrath, but Judah shall follow not long after. *A sad consideration for any people to think, though others go before us and are consumed before us, yet it will not belong before we shall follow.* It is true *Germany and other Countries have gone before us; we cannot prophesie as here the Prophet did, but yet except God comes to prevent by an extraordinary hand we may follow not many yeers after, and who knows how soon? And particularly, It may be such a friend of thine is gone, the hand of God is upon him and hath consumed him and eaten out his very heart, and he is perished as filth and dung from the face of the earth; and thou art yet alive; and is there not rottenness in thee? Is there not the secret wrath of God eating out thy heart? He is gone a little before but thou art like to follow within a little while after. What great matter is it though thy companion be struck dead and gone to Hell and thou left alive when thou shalt follow not long after? It is in this case as it is with travellers that travel together, perhaps one rideth before another & so comes to his Inn a quarter of an hour sooner than the rest of his company, but before he is lighted off his horse, or gone up into his chamber, the other are come in also: So perhaps Gods hand strikes one dead and sends him to Hell, yet within a while the rest will follow after. Therefore consider when Gods hand is upon any to strike them dead, Oh I may follow not long after. *A moth to Ephraim and rottenness to Judah.*

*What a poor creature is man, yea a Kingdom, when as a Obs. 10, moth and a little worm may consume them! God in express*
saying Himself thus to be a moth and rottenness, He speaks with a kind of contempt against the pride of Ephraim and Judah: they were haughty and proud, but faith God, a worm shall consume them. Job. 4. 19. it is said of man, That his foundation is in the dust, and he is crushed before the moth: It is a strange expression, I know not any such in Scripture to shew the weakness and the vanity of man, that he is crushed before the moth; Indeed to be crushed before a Lion is not so much: but that he should be crushed before a moth, that a moth should be able to crush a man, this shews the weakness that is in man: Wherein is he to be desired? Oh man is but vain, yea vanity itself, when he can be crushed before a moth: And so what are the great Kingdoms of the world? Let them be never so proud and haughty, yet they are but as a moth, and a worm may consume them.

Obs. 11. We see how low God condescendeth that He may express His meaning unto the children of men. It is a very strange expression, for the high and glorious and dreadful God, whom the Angels themselves adore, yet for this God to say of Himself, that He will be a moth, and for this infinite and blessed Deity to say of Himself, that He will be rottenness. Dare any creature have brought God so low in expression, if we had it not in the Word of God? If any man should be so bold to say God will be rottenness, were it not a strange speech? or to say that God will be a moth. Yet this high and glorious God condescendeth thus low only that He might the better express Himself to us, that we may come to understand his meaning. Surely we should be willing to appear very low, to do any service for God, seeing God is pleased to present Himself so low to express his mind unto us.

Obs. 12. And then lastly, A moth to Ephraim and rottenness to Judah; Ephraim and Judah both together shall have a secret curse upon them: From the connection of both these, the Note is, That it is a sad thing that divers countries neer together, professing the same Religion, and living in the midst of a common enemy should have Gods hand against them both at the same time. These ten Tribes and Judah together with Benjamin were the only
only people that God had, that profess the true God, and they lived in the midst of their common enemy, in the midst of Heathens; now this is the dreadful threatening, that the hand of God should be out against them both together. This is that we have a special occasion to take notice of at this day. The truth is, many waies of God's wrath have been against us in England, not only as a moth and rottenness, but more visibly, it hath been so long together a moth and rottenness that we have seen the moth and rottenness, but blessed be God that he hath been gracious to our brethren neer unto us. I mean our brethren of Scotland, that the same judgments that have been upon us have not been upon them at the same time: that though God's hand be out against us, yet that the same hand of God was not out against them at the same time. For so we may compare England and Scotland unto Ephraim and Judah, brethren living neer together and living in the midst of common enemies. Had the Lord at the same time been the like moth and rottenness there as he was here, what had become of us? That is thus, Had there been the same divisions in Scotland, that there were, that there are here in England, what had become of us at this day? Oh! it is a mercy of God that we must take notice of and bless his Name for, that though God were a moth unto us in this particular, in our divisions, diffentions, jealousies one against another, whereby we were weakened and were unlike to help ourselves, but to be made a prey to the common enemy; though at this time there were nothing more endeavored than to make the like divisions in Scotland, yet that the Lord hath delivered them from that judgment, that the Lord hath not been that moth and rottenness unto them that there should be the same divisions there that there hath been here; How had the common enemy rejoiced and boasted then that he had had his heart desire! This was God's mercy unto us whereas it was threatened against Israel and Judah that his wrath should be against them both together. And thus much for this 12. verse. Of God's being a moth unto one, and rottenness unto the other. It follows.

K k k 2

Ver. 12.
Ver. 13.

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound; then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb &c.

When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound.] The word translated Sickness, is from a word that signifies Doluit Agrotavit &c. that signifies grief and sickness. And the word translated Wound, from a word that signifies Colligavit, he hath bound up, either because of the corruption of the body that is gathered together, or because of the binding up of it with cloathes.

Now Judah saw his sickness, and Ephraim saw his wound: that is, God at length made them to see what a crazy condition their State was in, their Civil-State and Church-State too; in what a very crazie condition it was, and how wounded it was, and how like to perish, ready to die. And especially of this first, this sickness of Judah: we have a notable story (for it is referred to these times) in Isa. 7., and so on; There you may find the sickness of Judah, and how Judah saw it: When Rezin King of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah came against Judah, the heart of the King, and the heart of his people were moved, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind; as we use to say, they did shake like an Aspen leaf, they were so troubled. Here Judah say his sickness, the dangerous condition wherein he was. And how Ephraim saw his wound, that we shall see further presently when we shall see what help they sought to get against it.

Wrath was out against Ephraim and Judah sometime, and had almost consumed them before they would take notice of it. Hence observe, That by occasion of the pride and stoutness of man's heart, he will not easily be brought to see and acknowledge the hand of God. Isa. 26. 11. Lord, when thine hand is lifted up, they will not see: They wil not own the hand of God against them, they think it would be a shame to them, they rather would bear the world in hand that all is well with them: So it was for
for a long time with Ephraim, and Judah, but at length they saw their sickness and their wound.

Secondly, God will force men to see and to be sensible of His hand out against them: He will make them to see their sickness and their wound. Mic. 6.13. I will make thee sick in smiting thee faith God; I will smite thee, and I will make thee sensible of My stroke: so in that forenamed place Esa. 26. 11. Lord when thy hand is lifted up they will not see; But they shall see and be ashamed faith God; I will make them to know and to be sensible of My stroke, the sickness shall so grow upon them, the anguish of the wound shall be so great, that they shall be sensible.

Thirdly, They see their sickness and their wound, but here is nothing of their sin. This is usual with carnal hearts in their afflictions, to look at nothing but their wound and their sickness; they regard nothing but to get that healed; seldom you shall hear them cry out of their sin. Thus it was with Israel and Judah. And this is the way of carnal hearts.

Then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb:

Men use not to seek for help till they see and be made sensible of their misery. And this is true spiritually; till the soul cometh to be made sensible of its sickness, and till God wounds it, it seldom, yea never sends out for help, but when God cometh to wound the conscience, then it sends out for help. And many times it is with soul affliction as it is here in outward affliction, they seek out for help, but for help in a false way. They went to the Assyrian and sent to King Jareb.

You will say, When did they do so?

For the shewing the meaning of this we must refer to the story of the Kings, for though you have this Prophesie of Hosea in your books placed in a great distance from the book of the Kings, yet this Prophet and so others did prophesie in the time of the Kings, and therefore the history of the Kings will much help to understand the meaning of the Prophesie. First then for Ephraims beginning to send to the Assyrian and to King Jareb, you have it in the 2 Kings 15. 19. There you shall read that Menahem who was King of the ten Tribes, gave Pul that was King of Assyria a thousand talents of silver, that
that his hand might be with him, to confirm the Kingdom in his hand. Mark, that his hand might be with him to confirm the Kingdom. It seems this King that was the King of Israel, he saw his Kingdom to be in a crazy condition, he saw his sickness and his wound, therefore he sends to the King of Assyria whose name was Pul, and gave him a thousand talents of silver that he might confirm the Kingdom in his hand, and in the 20. verse, you shall find that the Subject was fain to pay for it, he exacted the money (faith the text) of all the mighty men of wealth in Israel. Oh what things do Subjects suffer many times for the satisfying the humors of those that are above them: And in 2 King. 17. 4. you shall find that Hoshea another King of Israel, he sent messengers to So King of Egypt to help him. And for that which is named here, Jareb, I find most to understand it to be but the very fame. Some say that Jareb was a principal City in Assyria: And others say that it was a special name of the Kings of Assyria: But others (and that very likely to be true) they take the word apppellatively, according to the signification of the word and do not make it the proper name of any man, but a word of appellation, according to the signification of it; For Jareb signifies Defender, the defender or avenger: Therefore when as Gideon's father spake to the people concerning his sons casting down the Altar of Baal and cutting down the Grove that was by it, faith he, Will you plead for Baal, will you save him? if he be a god let him plead for himself: and thereupon they called Gideon's name Jerub-baal, the same word that is here. So that Jareb signifies a defender or an avenger. So that they sent to the King of Assyria as to one that should be a defender or an avenger of them: They do not seek unto God, but they sent to King Jareb faith he, to their defender; as many times in scorn we call men by the name of that they would undertake to be; So because they trusted in the King of Assyria as their defender or avenger, therefore God in a kind of contempt calls him Jareb, they sent to their defender, but they little thought of me. That for Ephraim.

And then for Judah, though he be not particularly na-
med, because Ephraim was the most forward and the first that sent for help, yet no question Judah he reproved it as well as Judah. Ephraim; for in the 2 King. 16. 7. Ahaz that was then King of Judah sent to Tiglath-Pileser King of Assyria to come up and save him out of the hand of Rezin and Pekah, Kings of Syria and Israel that did rise up against him; And in 2 Chron. 28. 16. you shall find Judah again sending for external helps, unto the Kings of Assyria. The words being thus opened, the Notes are these.

First, It is the way of carnal hearts to shift out to the creature for Obser;
help in time of straites.

They saw their sickness, they saw their wound, what did they then? They went to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb. They look to no higher causes of their trouble than second causes, therefore they seek to no higher means for their help but second causes. They look upon their troubles as such as befalls other men as well as them, and so look not up unto God. They are led by sense, and the second causes are before them and near to them, and God is above them and beyond them, and his ways are often contrary to sense; they know little of God, and have less interest in God; therefore it is that they little mind God in their straites, but send out for help unto the creature.

We see the way of carnal hearts at this very day. What Appli;
helps do they send for but creature helps? Therefore (my brethren) let us not fear them much; Let us not fear our adversaries much, for their strength is in the arm of flesh: & we know they take no other course but to strengthen themselves in the creature; they know no other help; they little mind God in all their waies; Let them have what they will, yet pray they cannot, they have little heart to go unto God; they curse and swear, yea and tell us, that it was never worse with them than when they prayed most: Therefore all their help is on this side Heaven, therefore not much to be feared; They have that carnallity of heart in them as was here in Ephraim and Judah, when they were a people to be destroyed, then they were given over by God to seek out for help only in the creature.
creature, to goe to the Assyrian and to send to King Jareb.

Ufe. 3. Admonition to those in spiritual distresse.

As it is in outward, fo it is sometimes in spiritual straights. When God strikes the souls of men with sicknesses, & wounds their consciences, what course do they take? They seek not to the Lord that smote them, but they seek out to the creature for help, they go to their companions, to their trading, to their shops, to their pleasures &c. and seek to have ease to their souls that way. This is the way of carnal hearts, both for soul and body to seek out unto the creature for help when they are smitten.

Obfer. But secondly, There is much guilt contracted by resting upon creature-helpe. It is that which encreaseth mens sins and provokes Gods wrath very much, when they neglect him and seek to shift for themselves in the creature. Thus it was with Israel and Judah; they contracted much guilt unto themselves that way. And we find that God is much provoked with such as do so. In 2 Chron. 25. 7, 8. when Amaziah King of Judah in a time of danger, hired an hundred thousand men out of Israel, which were Idolaters; the Lord would not have Amaziah to make use of them, but bids him send them away; Let not the Army of Israel go with thee (faith God) for the Lord is not with Israel: Yea but what shall we do (faith the King) for the hundred talents which I have given to the Army of Israel? Be content faith the Prophet, rather to lose the hundred talents than to make use of such wicked men as they that have forsaken the true worship of God.

Question whether we are to make use of wicked mens help.

Pet. Mar. It is a great question that many make, whether it be lawful in any cases to make use of wicked men, especially in publick affairs of Kingsoms? to send for their help in time of publick danger, to think to strengthen our selves by ungodly men? Peter Martyr, in his Comment upon the book of Judges, Chap. 4, ver. 17. handleth this question, how far leagues may be made with Idolaters and wicked men? And there he gives two reasons why Idolaters should never be sent for to help us in any of our straights. The first is, for then wilt infect faith he, there will be by this means danger of mixture of Idolatry.
dolatry, for they joyning with you, they will come secretly
to cause their Idolatrous wails to have an influence into you.
But secondly, he gives especially this reason, if you send for
their help faith he, how can you joyn together in prayer to
God to bless you? and when you have gotten victory how
can you joyn together in praying God? And indeed this is as
great an argument not to make use of the help of wicked men
in publick affairs of a Kingdom as possibly can be, for how
can they joyn together in prayer? And truly they are unfit
to joyn together in fighting that cannot joyn together in
prayer and in praising of God. And yet this is very natural
to most men, yea good men are sometimes guilty of this, to
seek out too much unto wicked men for help in times of
straits. That was the blame that was laid upon Asa, though
otherwise a godly King, in the 1 King. 15. 19. that he sent
to Benbadad the King of Syria to help him; And in 2. Chron.
16. 7. Heman the Seer told him that he ought not to have
done it, and that he had done foolishly in doing it, for faith
he, why will you do it? you need not send for such help, for
the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole
earth to shew himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart
is perfect towards Him. So that it was an argument that
in this thing Asa’s heart was not perfect with God, because
he sought for help from wicked men so much as he did, and
did not relye upon the Lord. And it is observable of
this King, though a good man, and it seems, a Souldier, yet
he was very angry with the Seer, the text saith, verse 10. that
Asa was wrath with the Seer and put him in a prison house, for he
was in a rage with him because of this thing: what! shall a
Prophet contradict him in his warlike affairs? I must have
Souldiers, old Souldiers about me; let men talk what they
will of good men and that God will be with those that can
pray, I must have those that can fight, those that are Soldiers,
I would it were not so at this day, that if a man did but speak
Applies against evil Officers in an Army and wicked men that are a
bout them, that their hearts did not rise in a kind of indigna-
tion, and let be said what will be yet such and such they will
have
have about them. *Isa. 30. 1, 2. Wo to the rebellious children*

faith the Lord, *that take counsel, but not of Me, and that cover*

with a covering, but not of My Spirit: Wherefore do they this?

*That they may add sin to sin.* This is a strange charge, wo to the

rebellious children, that take counsel, they go on in their own

ways and take counsel, but not of Me, and they cover things

over with vain pretences, but not by My Spirit, there is none

of My Spirit in it; yea and all is, that they may add sin to sin:

And what is all this? It followeth presently, *They walk to go*

down into Egypt to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,

and have not asked of My mouth faith God. They think to

strengthen themselves by Pharaoh and never ask counsel of Me.

This is rebellion, this is to follow their own counsels, this is to

cover over things but not by Gods Spirit, this is to add sin unto

sin, to seek for help from wicked and ungodly men.

*Revelation upon this text hath a large tract about this very*

case or question, of being in league with idolaters, and wicked

men; And thus far at least he confirmeth it and faith, That

for whom Kingdoms to call in the help of ungodly men against

those that are of the same Religion, upon any pretence whatsoever,

he concludes that to be unlawful and sinful, though possibly in some cases he thinks it may be allowed: but it

will ask a great deal of time to handle fully every case in this

and to give all the Cautions that possibly may be given in it:

But certainly this is an argument, that men and their cause

have little to do with God when they seek for such helps as

they do and trust so much in them as they do, when they send

for Papists, for Irish Rebels, for Atheists, if there be any in the

Country, what care they who they have so be it they may

drive on their own designs and deliver themselves from the

hand of God that is out against them. They cannot but see

and take notice that the hand of God is against them, and

riggle and keep a stir they do, and send for all the help, that

possibly they can get. And on the other side, this is an argu-

ment of the faithfulness of others, who are a party low and

ready to be trodden down, yet have been so far from seeking

help.
help from, or protection of wicked men, that though they have been sent unto and have had fair offers of enjoying what they desire, yet they have resolved to venture the loss of all in a good Cause, whether they get any thing by it or no, whether they have what they would have, Liberties, or not Liberties, yet they are content to venture their estates, their lives, and all in that Cause, and not to provide for themselves by the help of such as they see to be evil, and whose ways and designs they see are not with God.

And if to seek unto wicked men for help and protection be so sinful; what is it then for men in times of straightest to seek to the Devil for help? Surely that must be much more sinful; to use those ways that are in themselves directly evil, as lying, swearing, cheating, and cozening &c. In times of straights for you to think to help your self by those ways, it is as much as if you should say, I see God doth not help me, I will try what the Devil will do. Certainly by iniquity shall no man be established. Prov. 12. 3. Art thou in a strait under any affliction? never think of seeking out to unlawful means to help thy self, for thou canst get no good that way; and that will appear more in the words that follow.

Yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

The Assyrian could not help, Jareb could do no good; yea indeed they were so far from helping of Israel and Judah, that they made the wound greater; for Israel was afterward carried away captive by the Assyrian to whom he sent for help: and for Judah we read in 2 Chron. 28. 20. that when Ahaz sent for help to Tilgath-Pileser King of Assyria, he came unto him indeed, but he distressed him and strengthened him not. From whence we may observe.

First, that creature comforts avail little in the day of God's wrath. Obs. 1. God's wrath was out against Ephraim and Judah, and they would fain seek to help themselves in some creature way, but it would do them no good. Creatures are little helpful in the day of God's wrath, they are all as a broken reed that rather...
ther runneth into a man's hand than any way releeveth him. So the Scripture faith of riches, that they avail not in the day of wrath. All the creatures will then say to you, if God help you not how can we help you? They are but as a tree in the time of a storm; you may run under the tree, and perhaps a few droppings may be kept from you for a while, but if the storm be great and continue, what good can the leaves of a tree do you to keep you from it? The creature may refresh you a little, but if God's wrath continue what good can the creature do?

But the word which the Seventy translate [he could not heal you] μὴ ἰάσειν σε. Non sedabit dolorem peærum, he shall not so much as ease or mitigate your grief, or give you a little refreshment. It's true, sometimes by seeking to creature comforts a man may think he hath some refreshing, but the truth is, it endeth in trouble and sorrow. A man in this case that seeks for help to the creature when God hath struck him, is as a Deer that is shot with an Arrow, the Deer runs up and down from one bush to another to seek for ease, but the blood falls all along, and perhaps by and by his bowels run out; what ease can bushes do to a poor Deer when the arrow sticks in his body? God many times strikes his arrows into the sides of people, and they run up and down to the creature, to this bush and to the other bush for help, but little or none can they have form any.

I confess sometimes for a little while (as I say) there is a little ease. I find it so in the case of Abaz, when he was in straits, his heart did melt (as you heard before: ) Now that story in Is. 7. hath reference to the 2 Kings, 16. aforenamed: When Rezin and Pekah came against him, you shall find that Abaz had a little help for the present by Tiglath-Pileser King of Assyria that he sent for, but afterwards (as we shall shew you when we come to another point) it did him little good, for God's hand was out against Judah so much the more dreadfully.

Obs. 2. And as the creature hath but little help in it in the time of straits; So of all things that men rest on for help, wicked men are most
most like to prove helpless. They leave you in your straits as the Scribes and Pharisees did Judas: When Judas was brought into straits by his sin, and in the anguish of his spirit came and said, I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood. What is that to us say they, look thou to it. There was all the comfort he could have from them. They were forward to draw him into the sin, but when he had done it, then Look you to it. Such comfort you are like to have from your wicked companions in times of straits: They will draw you into that which is evil, and afterward when God shall strike you and they come to visit you, and you lie crying out of those waies they have drawn you into; Oh! miserable Comforters will they be. You can have noe helpe from wicked men in times of straits.

Yea, We are not to rest upon the best men of all in time of straits. The best God hath given us experience at this day, that every man is vanity; so the Scripture saith, Verely every man is vanity: Cease from Man for wherein he to be esteemed? Had we no other rest but upon man what should become of us? Therefore neither unto the Assyrian, nor nor unto any living are we to send for help, so as to look higher upon them than as on an arm of flesh. God pronounceth a curse upon him that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, and faith, he shall be like the heath in the desert and shall not see. when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, Jer. 17. 5, 6.

But why is it that the Assyrian can do Israel no good? It follows:

VER. 14.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon to the house of Judah.

That which is here translated in your books, a Lyon, the Seventy translate it by the Panther, which is the most swift & fierce creature one of them in the world. Gods wrath for strength is compared to a Lyon, and for swiftness to a
Panther. To a Lyon, because though he is most strong and terrible, yet Historians say, that if you fall down and submit unto him he will shew mercy. God is a Lyon, and strong and fierce in his wrath, yet merciful to those that submit unto Him.

The word here translated Lyon, it is not that ordinary word that is for a Lyon, but Shacal, that signifies a fierce Lyon: And so you have it in Job, 4. 10. the roaring of the Lyon, and the voice of the fierce Lyon, Shacal. So that God threateneth here to be a fierce Lyon. This creature is very fierce, and therefore Gesner in his Historie of living creatures saith, That nature hath so ordered it that because the Lyon is so fierce of himself, that allwaies he hath a kind of a quartan feaver or ague upon him to mittigate or refresh his fiercenes. And it were well with many if it were so with them. Many that are fierce and of Lyon-like spirits, for their lusts, and for the satisfying of their own humors, but are sheepish enough for the cause of God.

But mark, God was before a moth and a little worm, but now He is become a Lyon. I will be a moth unto Ephraim, and a little worm unto Judah (for so you may translate it) And now I will be a Lyon to Ephraim, and a young Lyon to Judah. Why a Lyon? that is, He will appear in the fierceness of his wrath against Ephraim.

The different expression of the text, but what is the reason of the difference of these expressions? As he said before, He would be a moth to Ephraim and rottenness to Judah; so here he saith, He will be a Lyon to Ephraim, and a young Lyon unto Judah. Here is a different expression, and the reason is the same here that was there: As there it was to shew that God though He intended the destruction of Ephraim and of Judah both, yet Ephraim sooner, and Judah later; so here, though God would be terrible in His wrath to Judah, yet He would be more terrible in His wrath to the ten Tribes: For we find, that though Judah was carried into captivity, yet that captivity lasted but for seventy years, and Judah returned again; but Israel, he was torn in pieces so as he was never made up after. They were both sin-

ners,
ners, but Judah retained somewhat of God's true worship; therefore God would spare them a little: Though wicked men will spare the Saints so much the less because of their godliness, and will take so much the more advantage of their frailties because they are professors, yet God will pitie them.

The observations from hence are these:

First, When God's lesser afflications work not, there God will be Obser. i. most terrible. You heard of the moth and little worm before; they are lesser afflications, and it seems the moth and little worm did not work their hearts to repentance, to bring them unto God, therefore God doth turn to be a fierce Lyon and a Lyons whelp unto Ephraim and Judah. God's wrath is as Elijabs cloud that at first appeareth but as a handbreadth, but within a while after the whol Heavens were overspread with it: It is as the thunder, that when you hear it first it is simile of a little roaring noise a far off, but fly a while and it will be a dreadful crack. It is as the fire that at first burneth a little within upon a few boards, but when it prevai leth it bursteth out in a most terrible flame. As in that known place Levit. 26. 18. If you will not yet for all this faith the Lord, hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins; and again, seven times more, and seven times more. God will go on in His wrath from a little unto a great deal of wrath; From being as a moth and as a little worm, to be like a Lyon. Such degrees there are in God's wrath. You had need look to it when the hand of God is stretched out but a little against you, though it be but as a moth and as a worm yet if you look not to it, there may be such a gradation of God's wrath upon you; For as great a difference as is between a moth and a fierce Lyon, such a difference may be between wrath now and that which is to come. Thus the Lord is many times unto mens spirits: Many men have gripes and nips of conscience, Admonit. and God causeth secretly that worm of conscience to begin to thole that are a little touched in spirit, wing upon them, and there is some kind of trouble, but notwithstanding they go on in their sins; and at length God cometh upon them as a Lyon, tearing their spirits. Did you never see a sinner lying upon his death bed in the torment of
his soul, God's wrath like the paws of a Lyon preying upon the very caul of his heart, when he lies roaring out he is damned, he is damned! and now he sees, yea feels the heat of the wrath of God against him. Thus God comes as a Lyon to prey upon those that will not regard the gnawings of the worm: When the worm was but little and small, they flighted it, and that caused God to bring the greater judgment. So it is with families; God cometh upon families sometimes in a little sickness, in a child or in a servant, and that is not regarded; afterwards God cometh with plague of pestilence or some other dreadful judgment.

So in Kingdoms, the Lord cometh first with little judgments, and then with greater. As in Ireland, for many yeers together, there the Lord was as a moth and rottenness, but of late how like a Lyon hath he there appeared? How hath He torn and rent that Kingdom in a most dreadful manner?

Yea the truth is the Lord had been to England as a moth and rottenness; And this very text I make no question but some of you have heard many yeers ago applied unto England, when as those Ministers that preached upon this text did little think that ever there should be such a hand of God against many parts of England as now there is at this day. In many parts of this Kingdom the Lord is at this day as a Lyon. We all hear the roaring of the Lyon, and who can but tremble! Oh it is time for us all to fall down to the ground before the Lord. It is true God hath not yet come to this Citye as a Lyon to tear and rend it as other places in the Countrie; but yet we have heard the roaring of the Lyon abroad, and God calleth us to fall down before Him that He may not be so to us, that He may not come and tear us likewise. Certainly, the Lord will have glory of His creature; God hath sworn by Himself and the word hath proceeded out of His mouth in righteousness, that every knee must bow to Him, and every tongue confess His Name: Every creature must submit unto Him, and if leffer judgments will not do it, God will lay every sinner upon His back, He will come as a Lyon to tear him in pieces.
Secondly, Mark what is between these two, being a moth and a Lyon; between these two it is said, Ephraim saw his sickness and his wound, and he went to the Assyrian and sent to King Jareb, and now faith God, I will be a Lyon unto Ephraim. Hence Note,

That seeking out shifting waies for our selves in times of affliction, provoketh God very much and makes our affliction to be very great. The Lord looks upon this with indignation; what, when I appear in My displeasure, do they seek to shift me off by sending to the Assyrian and to King Jareb? upon this the indignation of God riseth high, and He becometh a fierce Lyon to them. Josephus reports in the fictionst that were in Jerusalem, Antiochus being called in by one party who proved the ruin of both. This is the honor God excepts, that in our affliction we should not flye from, but humble our selves before Him; if we do not, His anger, His jealouie ariseth to a feaful height, He wil pursue in the fiercenesse of His wrath. The way is not to flie from God, but to fall down before Him, to lie at His feet. If a Lyon should come roaring upon us, the way is not to run away shreeking, but to fall down before him. There is no man can abide the slighting of his anger; if a parent or a master should be slighted by the child or the servant, this makes him more angry: so when men make light of the anger of God and think that there is power enough in any creature to pacifie Him, this causeth the wrath of God burn more fiercely against them: you have as notable a example as any in the book of God; in Is. 7. 17, if you compare the story there with the 2 King. 17, you shall find that Abaz in the time of his distress fought unto the King of Assyria, and though God offered him a sign by the Prophet that he Himself would deliver him, yet he sends for help unto others: But mark, upon this the Lord threateneth that he would bring upon him and upon his people daies the like whereof had not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, such daies God would bring upon them, more dreadful than ever yet came upon Judah, and that because at this time when they were in straights they sought for help from the Assyri-
an. And as it provoketh God in a dreadful manner against those that seek unto others for help in outward dangers; so if a man shall seek for help in the straitness of his soul: Doth God wound thy spirit, doth he make it sick, and dost thou seek for unlawful means to help thy self? dost thou go to thy company, to musick, to good cheer to help thee? Oh this provokes God against thee! This is just as if a man in a fever should drink a draught of cold water from the conduit; it's true for a while he may have a little ease; but O what a scalding fit doth this bring him into afterwards! so those that in trouble of conscience seek for carnal helps, it will bring them to a dreadful fit afterwards. It follows.

I, even I will tear.] The main thing wherein God expresseth the dreadfulness of His wrath here in this place, is the tearing of them as a Lyon, we may take in pieces that which we intend to mend and to make use of: but when we tear a thing we intend to make no further use of it. God expresseth great severity of his wrath in this expression, Psal. 50. 22. Consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces. Now this tearing here, refers to the letting in the Assyrian upon Israel, and the Babylonian upon Judah. And the main observation from it, and which is indeed seasonable for these times of ours, is,

**Observation.**

When God in his wrath causeth war in a Kingdom, then God teareth.

I will send the sword amongst you, I will send the Assyrian against you and then I will tear you. The judgment of war it is a tearing judgment. God's wrath never appeareth more dreadful than in letting out the wrath and rage of provoked enemies upon a people. The teeth and claws of this Lyon is no other than spears and swords and poleaxes, the mouth of this Lyon is no other than the roaring Cannon, from whose mouth proceedeth fire and smoke and sudden death: Here you may see thousands stout and strong ones struck down to the ground in a moment; Here one mans arm is torn from his shoulders, there another mans leg is rent from his body; here one lies wallowing in his own blood giving up the ghost,
ghost, there another weltring in his gore all mangled and wounded. Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and with garments rolled in blood, death reigneth in the field and is sure to have the day which side so ever falleth; And when report of what is done in the field cometh home, as in 1 Sam. 4.17. when there was a great slaughter among the people, one brings Phineas his wife news that her Husband and her Brother-in-law was dead: So when news comes home to the poor fatherless children and widows, your husband is dead, and your father is dead, Oh what tearing of hair, wringing of hands, rending of clothes, uplifting the voice and crying until the noise thereof reach up to heaven. My brethren, war is a tearing judgment, it is Malum complexum, a compound of sorrow. The cup that is now in the hand of God, Ps. 57.8. is full of mixture, full of bloody ingredients, of fire, famine, opened, pestilences, murders, rapes, cruelties, and all miseries; the Lord teareth now indeed: Oh how is the husband rent from his wife, haled to prison by cruel and bloody soldiery! How are mens estates and whatsoever is comfortable unto them rent and torn from them in tumultuous outrages! Their pleadings and cryings are rejected with scorn and contempt, and the bodies of their wives and children and their own too, abused in the rage and malice of the insulting adversary. And of all wars, Civil wars are most dreadful; there God Civil teareth most indeed; there the brother contends with the war most brother, and the father goes about to tear out the bowels of his son. Thus the Lord hath been a Lyon in many parts of the Kingdom. Alas our brethren abroad they cannot say as they in Jer. 4.5. Arise, Let us go into the fenced Cities, they stand a far off, & are afraid to come out of the Land of their captivity because of the oppressing sword. Yea here is tearing indeed in this heavy judgment that is upon us, never was Gods Name so torn as now it is by bloody Oathes and hideous and unheard of blasphemies; And what do our adversaries desire but to tear the Saints and to trample them under their feet?

My brethren, time it is for us all to rend our hearts, even
to tear and rend our very hearts within us, because the Lord is come out against us as a tearing Lyon, rending and tearing this way and that way. The Jews were wont when they heard the Name of God blasphemed to rend their garments presently. We hear of the dreadful blasphemies of our adversaries, rending and tearing of the Name of God, Oh how should we rend our hearts rather than our garments! It is dreadful to hear of the rending of mens estates and bodies, but much more dreadful should it be to us to hear of the rending of the Name of God. It's time then for sorrow to be in our hearts, and not ordinary sorrow neither, but rending of our hearts now; and now we should even be ready to tear the heart out of our bowels to see that we have been no more affected hitherto than we have. And the rather because we have spared for the present & our estates and bodies are yet whole. Our sins have had an influence into the miseries of our brethren; our sins have been those claws and teeth that have torn our brethren. Thus the Lord is raised from a moth and worm even to a tearing Lyon.

Obs. 2. And note, Though the Assyrians and cursed Babylonians did this, yet faith God, I will be as a Lyon to tear them.

Hence another observation, That God hath a righteous hand in the worst actions of men.

We cry out of men that they are thus and thus, Oh never such vile and wicked men. But you must look upon God, He hath a hand in all. The most horrid wickedness that ever was done in the world, the betraying of Christ and the crucifying of the Lord of life, the Scripture faith, it was done by the fore-determined counsel of God. Therefore let those that have been sensible of the rending of their estates, and have had their husbands and their children torn from them by wicked men, let them not only cry out of such vile and ungodly men, but let them know that the Lord hath had a hand in it. Though men be wicked, yet the Lord is righteous, let them justify God in all: This is Gods glory, that He can have a hand in the most hideous wickedness in the world and yet remain righteous notwithstanding: Therefore
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fore He saith here, I, even I will do it. He doth not only own it, but He would have people to take special notice that He hath ahind in all. Oh the use that we might make of this to our selves, if in all those dreadful judgments that are upon us, if in all those tearing judgments that some of our brethren have felt; we could but take notice that the hand of God hath done it. I, even I have done it, here is the Emphasis in this; I, even I.

And in this one verse here is I, four times together; Let the thing be never so hideous unto you, yet know that I am the great orderer and disposer of all, and I have some great thing to bring to pass in all this that is come upon you. And certainly though the misery be great that some parts of the Kingdom endure, yet because Gods hand is so much in it, therefore we must know that God hath some great thing to bring to passe by this that He hath begun to doe amongst us.

What the wicked Assyrians and cursed Babylonians did, that God is said here to do. Hence observe, That

God hath a righteous hand in the worst actions.

As in the sin of Judas, the most horrible that ever was Acts 2:23. God doth not only permit, but order all, and so far as an evil of punishment works in it: and so far as any natural action is in the sin; as in opening the mouth the natural act of speaking; drawing the sword (the natural act towards fighting) &c. This is Gods glory, and yet to be free from the evil of sin. Many knots there are about this, that men exercise their wits to untie; but cum vereit Elis (as the Hebrews use to say when they are gravel'd, when Eliat cometh we shall understand, there is a time when all difficulty shall be easie to reconcile) let us look to Gods hand, not cry out on such and such wicked men. You whose estates have been torn from you, and it may be many of your dearest friends, consider that it is God that is the Lyon tearing.

From the duplication of the words, we may observe this Note, That the hand of God is more immediate in some judgments than in others, and the more immediate the more remarkable, there shall not only come judgments upon you, but I will bring them,
them, they shall be such, that you shall see, that I am in them. In some judgments upon men, God makes so much use of the creature, that sinners can see little of God's hand in them, but in some others, they can easily see the hand of God in them; Belshazzar trembled at the hand-writing, and his thoughts were troubled within him, why so? the hand struck him not at all, only he saw it to be the hand of God, the hand of the Deity was in it, Dan. 5. 5, 6. and this made him to tremble.


Gen. 6. 17. Behold, I, even I do bring a flood: And that wrath which is out against us at this time, especially our adversaries, is the hand of God in a special manner, God may well say to us, I, even I will tear ye O England, O how hath God manifested Himself to us in these latter years since the wars began. As we ought to take notice of God's tearing and rending Kingdoms, so also in families, and particular persons, God would have us take notice, that it's He; as a godly heart takes notice of God's hand in mercies, and then they are most sweet; so on the contrary, he takes notice of God's hand in every judgment to be humbled under it: I will establish my Covenant with you: Gen. 9. 11. and Is. 43. 19, 25. I, even I am he which blasteth out thine iniquities: Mercies are then most sweet when we see them come from God's immediate hand, in a special providence. God's hand remarkable in judgments must be taken notice of. For,

Reaf. I.

1. Hereby the heart comes to be humbled, when it considers that 'tis God which appeareth against him, not devils nor men, but God, that God upon whom I live and enjoy every mercy that I have; this it was that troubled Christ, more than all the wrong which the Scribes and Pharisees did to him, when he considered that it was His God, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? When the Saints see God's hand against them in any thing, this trombles them and humbles them more than any thing else.

2. It is a special means to quiet the heart with patience, Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb and spake not, because thou Lord didst it. See it in Ely, It is the Lord, let him do what he will with me: and in Christ himself, shall not I drink of the cup which my father
father shall give me? Is God my God, and doth this come from my Father? I will take it, I am sure it will do me no harm but much good.

3. By this means the soul is put upon the enquirie, why this affliction is upon it, what the cause of this trouble may be; when we see nothing but man the instrument of an affliction, we look not so much at it, it never puts us upon soul-search and trial of ourselves, but when God is seen in a cross, the soul begins to consider, what have I done? what's the matter oh my soul? Thus did the Church: Mica. 6. 9. Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it: These are letters written upon God's rods which the man of wisedome can reade.

4. It causeth the soul to receive content and satisfaction in nothing but God alone, and in peace with him, to get him our friend; when we look upon judgments only in the second cause, we are apt to think that second means will make up the breach again, which sin hath made; as they in Isa. 9. 9, 10. The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; for all this his anger is not turned away: why so? in the 13. verse we have the reason, For the people turned not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts: They would not see the hand of God, nor give glory to him, for if they did, they would say as this people, in the next chapter, Come, let us return unto the Lord, for he hath wounded us, and He will heal us. Thus much for the doubling the expression. It follows.

I, even I will tear you and go away.

The Lyons when they tear their prey, they are not afraid of what they have done, but walk majestically before the dead Expos. carkiefe as it were bidding defiance to all other creatures, they run not away as the Fox doth, but walk as it were in state, for so the words in the original carry: I, even I will tear. As if God did challenge all the creatures in Heaven or Earth for to grapple with him, I will tear them. It implies how God will deal
deal with Judah, He will not be afraid of them, what He
doeth it shall be in an open way, He will not come against
them in secret but in a publick way.

The judgment at this time upon our enemies is not in a se-
cret, but an open way, the Lord doth not deal subtilly and
by craft with them, as they do with his people; and though
the Lord deal as a Lyon with them, tearing and rending them,
yet they will not see him, neither are they able to resist him,
nor can any rescue them out of his hands: Let the means be
never so weak in God's hand, yet when he is in a way of wrath
there shall be no delivery out of his hands; Isa. 26. 6. The
feet shall tread it down: tread down what? the lofty City: by
what feet? even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.
Jer. 37. 10. The Lord tells them, that though they had smitten the
whol Army of the Caldeans, and there remained but wounded
men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his
tent and burn their City with fire. When God intends ruin
and desolation to a people, 'tis impossible for any to deliver
them out of his hands.

Further we may note, That when God comes against a peo-
ple, He takes them to do, when they are the strongest, and
greatest in power, and most confident in an arm of flesh, that
none at that time may deliver out of His hands. Isa. 24. 21.
And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the Lord shall punish the
host of the high ones, which are on high: When he is in his grea-
test pride, gets the greatest victories, conquers and obtains the
greatest Cities of refuge, and Towns of harbor. And 'tis very
observable, that since our enemies got their greatest advanta-
ges they have lost the most, God then puld them down when
they were most proud, God will go on in his work though
men are never so proud and strong, therefore 'tis our wisdom
to give our selves into God's hands, yea though into his af-
flitting hand, although no power can rescue out of his hand,
yet there is a way to change the operation of his hands by
humbling our selves, falling down before him, willingly sub-
mitting to him, and this way now God hath his will upon
us in the most acceptable way that can be: God had rather
have
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have men voluntarily give him his glory, than to compel him to force it from them.
I now come to the last.

Ver. 15.

I will go.

G O D repeats it again, which notes, 1. The glory of the Expos. work, that he is not ashamed of what he hath done, (God's people ought for to be like God in this, let their actions be warrantable, such as they may with comfort own and stand to, yea suffer for, if it so come to pass, not like the proverb to set a Town on fire, and run away from it, leaving others to quench it.) 2. It notes the Irrefistibility of God's work, as if he should say, let any try whether they can oppose me.
3. And chiefly it implies, I will bring them into captivity and there I'll leave them.

Whence note, That 'tis a heavy judgment for God to tear and obliterate a people, and then to leave them: God faith if they return not, I will rend and tear them, make them very miserable and in that condition will I leave them, I'll be a stranger to them, and will not own them. Ezek. 22. 20. I will gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there. God in another place promiseth to be with His people in the fire and in the water; but there is a time that God's people may so provoke God, that he will bring them into the fire and there leave them: when the Philistines fell upon Saul, it was a sad time to him, because God had left him: Oh how terrible was it when God left Christ upon the Cross but for a little while! This we all deserve, and this is the portion of the damned in Hell: While the Judge is present upon the Bench the Malefactor hath hope; but when the Judge goes off the Bench, then they cry and take on: Therefore the Church prays, Lord, leave us not; Thou art our hope in the day of evil. Jer. 17. 17. God is said to be the strength of his people in Psal. 37. and Psal. 39. Now if their strength be gone, they must needs be weak. Christ rebukes his Disciples for fearing when
when they were in the Ship, and he was with them: but when God leaves a people, Oh what cause of fear is there then! The Church implies so much, _Jer. 14. 9._ thou art in the midst of us, leave us not, we are in a sad condition already, yet oh Lord do not thou leave us.

Now if we would not have God to leave us, let us take heed we do not leave God, would you have God be for you in adversity, then be you for God in prosperity, nor forsake him when he is afflicted, which is when his people and cause suffer. Many will be for the Saints and own the Cause of God when all things goes well, and their side prospers, but in trouble when they are in disgrace or sorrow, then they forsake them, as if they knew no such people; know that in thus doing thou leavest God, and God may justly leave thee in thy affliction: But now, 'tis Gods promise to his people, _That he will not leave them, Psal. 31. 7, 8. Psal. 34. 17, 18._ God may bring thee into their power and jurisdiction that are evil, but wait thou on the Lord and he shall deliver thee. We use to say when we are in any trouble, to our dear friend, What will you also leave me? will you now own me, and say by me? As Christ himself said to his Disciples, _Will you also leave me, and go away?_ but God will never leave his people in this manner. The Shepherd may suffer his dog to hunt the sheep, to bark at them, to fetch them together, but never suffers him to worry and kill them: so God may suffer the wicked to hunt the Saints, and perhaps to fasten upon them sometimes, but then God will call them off again, for his promise is not to leave them, as he doth the wicked in their afflictions; as _Heb. 13. 5._ _I will never leave thee nor forsake thee:_ in which words we have in the Greek five negatives to affirm the truth of this conclusion: that God will never forsake his people, _I will not, not leave you, yea_ but the people of God might say, but Lord we seem to the eye of the world to be forsaken, no faith the Lord, _I will not, not, not leave you:_ there is two negatives to leaving, and three to forsaking; from whence we may see how strongly God hath engaged himself for his peoples security.

_How to keep God with us._

_Simile_

_Heb. 13. 5_

_five negatives._

\(\mu\nu\eta\ \nu\\ \\eta\varepsilon\ \nu\varepsilon\ \eta\nu\\eta\ \nu\varepsilon\ \eta\nu\ e\ \gamma\eta\ \eta\nu\eta.\)_

\(\gamma\eta\ \eta\nu\eta\ \eta\nu\eta\ \eta\nu\eta\ \eta\nu\eta.\)
And return unto my place.

These words are something difficult. What is God's place? Is God contained in any place? God is rather the place of the world, than the world his place; but here 'tis meant Heaven, I will return unto my place. That is, I'll go to Heaven again, not that God is there only contained, but that is the place from which he reveals himself most, there the holiness of God shines in most glory. There is but little of God in this world to what there is in Heaven, the glory of all the world is but as a dungeon to that place of God's presence, we are like children born in a dungeon, who think there is no better place because they never saw better: but Heaven is our Fathers place, and Christ who is our elder brother is gone thither before us to provide mansions for us, let us therefore have conversations in Heaven answerable to the holiness of that place: this world is like unto the out-housing, stables, or kennels, belonging to some palace, or stately building, even as these are very inferior to the rooms in the house, so is the pomp and state of this world unto Heaven, God hath given the world unto worldly men for their portion, but the Saints have a better inheritance reserved for them, even in Heaven.

I will return to my place. When was God from His place? Expos, when did He come from thence? Thus: when he did rend and tear them, appearing against them as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon, then it was as if God should come down to rectifie and set in order things which were amiss, and out of their place; as we may see in the case of Sodom, Gen. 18. 21. I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of their sin, the sin of Sodom feteth God from his Throne. So in Isa. 26. 21. Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their cruelty and wickedness, the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no longer cover her plain. God compares himself to a Prince upon his Throne, who goes from his place of State into Countries to quiet mutinies and rebellions among his people. The Note from hence is,

That sin deserts Heaven and Earth. God cannot be quiet in Obs. 1, Heaven for sinners. Just it is with God to trouble sinners on Earth.
Obl. 2. In times of publick judgment God doth in a manner leave his Majesty and Royalty in Heaven, to set things in order here on earth. And surely it will be to their cost when God thus comes, do but view the terribleness of Gods coming down: in Psal 18. 9, 10. Darkness and coals of fire were under his feet: God seems to speak as a father to his children, what must I come to you, will you force me to come among you, if I do, it shall be to your cost.

Revertar
ad habitaculum sanctum
ad habitaculum sanctum
ad habitaculum sanctum
ad habitaculum sanctum
Chald. paraphrased.

I will return unto my place. When I have afflicted them, I will go to Heaven and there will I sit, and my administrations shall be such towards them, as if I regarded them not: as a Prince that goes from the poor subject to his seat of dignity and mindes not the poor prisoner.

The administrations of God sometimes even to His own people may be such as if He regarded them not: they may be so left in the hands of the wicked that they may think God hath forsaken them, and given them over into their hands, and Gods people may conclude so and think that God is gone and hath now hid Himself for ever; as a poor child in misery in one Country, and his father in another, thinks thus, I am in trouble and sorrow, and I have a father, but he is in another Country, and I know not when he will come again: so God may go to His place, and the soul may seek Him but he is now gone, He is in another place, the Saints should be encouraged notwithstanding to look up to God, and know though God be gone, yet there is a way to bring Him down again, Psal. 18. 9. God was shut up in the Heavens, and His people cryed to Him in their distress, then the Lord bowed the Heavens and came down; Let me make haste God, I must go to the help of My people, therefore that I may make speed, let the Heavens bow before me. So in Isa. 64. 1, 2. the Church there cries out, Oh that thou wouldst rend the Heavens and come down, tis true Lord thou art in Heaven and there is thy Majesty and glory, but oh that thou wouldst come down, and help us, Prayer as it will rend the Heavens to get up to God so it will rend the Heavens for God to come down to man, Lord if thou wilt go to thy place, then what will
wil become of thy glory? In the world thou hadst service and honor done unto thee by the creature, thy Sains offered sacrifice to thee; though sometimes God seemeth to answer, I care not for this, I can and will have honor to my self in some other way.

Further we may observe, When wicked men are in perplexity, Obs. 4. then God enjoys himself in his perfection: Ezek. 18. 4. When they are in wrath and sorrow, and God hath not that service fro them in external worship which he hath had; but I care not, I will return unto my place, and enjoy my self in my glory: and in this is the misery of the damned in Hell, we are herein Damned, eternal torments and horror, but what doth God lose by this? He is in his glory and enjoys Himself in perfect rest.

But how long will it be before God return? will be always absent Expos. Himself?

No. Till they acknowledge their sin. From the Connexion of these words with the former, we may observe;

That God sometimes turns his back upon sinners, until they return Obs. 1. unto him and acknowledge their sin. And this is the best way for God to deal with some kind of men, let them but feel a little of the smart of trouble, and then they will consider: as many men who are wilful they will do so and so, their wills shall be their law; now the best way to tame these men is, let them see what will come of it, and the evil which will follow upon their wilfulness will be the best conviction to them. So saies God, My Prophets and my Messengers can do no good upon them, therefore let them alone, According to that 1 King. 8. 47. If they will bethink themselves and repent. And this is a most prudential way, to deal with men who are wilful and stubborn.

Till they acknowledge their sin] Note, That when God comes Obs. 2. to his people, as in his judgment, so in his waies of mercy he leaves his place and majesty, He humbles Himself to behold what is done upon the earth; 'tis a kind of self-denial in God to meddle with man at all: As 'tis a mighty condescension in a Prince to com from his throne to visit and comfort poor men simile in dungeons and prisons: Surely such prisoners need honor such.
such a Prince, for he comes from his throne to visit them: how much more then had we need to honour God for his love towards us?

Expos. But to come more close to the words in the original, they are, *Till they become guilty in their own hearts, and acknowledge themselves to be so.* It signifies, to offend, to be guilty, to be desolate, and to sacrifice for sin; all these significations this word Asbam will bear.

*Untill they become guilty.*) Were they not guilty before? Would God have them more guilty? No, but God would have them convinced of their sin, to be guilty of it, to accuse themselves for it, and clear God in all, and to behave themselves as guilty persons with sorrow and shame; and lastly, to acknowledge themselves as guilty persons before God and men: 'Tis true, as soon as ever the sin is committed the person is bound over, being guilty, but then in special he is said to be guilty when he acknowledges himself to be so.

Quest. But here's a Question: *When was this disposition wrought in them? hath it ever yet been? or is it still to be fulfilled and accomplished?*

Answ. I answer, That it was in part made good at their coming out of Captivity, Hence Daniel (chap. 9. verf. 5.) in the name of the whol Church speaks after this manner, *We have sinned and done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts &c.* What heaps of expressions hath he there to set out their turning? Also Ezra. 9. 13. & 15. it was fulfilled: and in Neh. 9. 16. all these 3. Prophets prophesied after Hosea, though in our Bible placed before him. This text is fulfilled again in Jer. 31. 18. Ephraim was then guilty when he was found bemoaning himself. Again, it was fulfilled when Christ was preached, Acts. 2. 37. *When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts.* And certain it is this Prophecy had an aim at the Jews: Christ. But this Scripture shal principally be fulfilled at the calling of the Jews, then they shall become guilty; Zech. 12. They shall look on him whom they have pierced &c.

Obl. 2. That such is the pride of mens spirits by nature, That so long as they prosper in their sins, they will even contest with God Himself: Malac.
Malac. 3. 7. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Is not this the speech of many proud spirits? being taxed about any crime, they presently answer, Wherein have they done such and such things? Remarkable is that of Saul, 1 Sam. 15. 13. when he told the Prophet he had performed the commandement of the Lord; then Samuel labors to convince him of his sin saying, What, meaneth the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen? yet in the 20. verse he is at it again, I have obeyed the commandement of the Lord. It was otherwise with David when the Prophet came to him, I have sinned against the Lord, 2 Sam. 12. 13. 'tis a good sign of a soul truly humbled when it can joyn issue with the word. Affliction sanctified brings men to see their sins and to acknowledge their guiltiness. God in afflictions marks men out, and then Conscience will prey upon a man, as Simeon and Levi fell upon the men of Shechem, for then they were sore and unable to resist; in time of affliction then thou shalt find conscience hard enough for thee; what pangs of conscience have men in their sickness? saying as he in Prov. 5. 12. How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof? Oh what a deal of guilt is opened and discovered in an affliction? afflictions are to the soul as earthquakes to the ground, which opens the graves and discovers abundance of filth.

It is a sign of a very hard heart not to confess in affliction when God's hand is upon us, Pharaoh would do thus: and 'tis that which God requires, Joshua bids Achan; Give glory to God my son and confess; Confession gives glory to God, and when thou standest out in this thing, thou opposest God in his glory. Latimer reports of a man in his time who was to be executed at Oxford for some villany, being brought to the place of execution, much means was used to him, that he would confess the act, but none could prevail, being turned off, and after a space hanging he was cut down, and when he was cut down, they perceived he was not quite dead, they carrying him to a fire, and by means used came to himself, and then he confessed all of himself to the full. This example may shew us thus much, not alwaies to conclude men are
are not guilty, when they confess nothing, there is that
floutness in the hearts of men, that they will rather venture
damnation, than yeild to men.

Obs. 3. God will have his glory from us; If we do not acknowledg
our guiltiness by lesser judgments, he will continue them, and
ad more to them till we confess and give glory to him: This
is the reason that we are so long under trouble because we will
not confess when we are call'd for to do it; sin in the consci-
ences lies as filthy corrupted matter in a sore, which throbs
belks and akes till it be opened and let out; so in the consci-
ences of men, there is much guilt, and that lies throbing in the
conscience, no ease can be got, God calls for confession, but
it will not be, and no true peace can be enjoyed any other
way; Oh therefore sinner confess, and give glory to God:
How many are there who have lain a long time under anguish
of spirit, till they have taken this course freely and fully to
confess sin committed, lying heavy and burdensome upon the
conscience? Neglect not this duty when you are call'd to it, it
is an Ordinance appointed by God for the easing of troubled
souls, and when you cannot get peace any other way, having
used other means and yet God withholds the light of his
countenance, then are you call'd to confess to others; see
what course David took, and how he sped, Psal. 39. 2, 3, 4.
I was dumb, I held my peace, I roared and was vexed, but I said, I
would confess my sin, and shame my self for them, and then thou for-
gavest the sin of thy servant. Mark here, there was some sin
which lay upon David's conscience, and he could not get peace
in again, what course takes he? I (said he) did but say, I
would confess; and then thou forgavest my sin, thou di'ddest
then seal a pardon to me. Oh take this course, and thou shalt
have the like success. God comes to thee in a sicknes, and
faith, sinner, Guilty, or not guilty? give God then the glory
of an humble confession. 'Tis true, to confess offences against
men to men, there may be danger in it, making us liable to
trouble: but confession of offences against God never causes
trouble.

Expos. And seek my face,] that is, my Favour, my Sou, and my Ordi-
nances,
nances; for in the general, God's face is nothing else, but God's manifestation of himself, in his Love in his Son, in his Ordinances: and 'tis a most blessed thing thus to behold God's face, Revel. 22. 4. this is that which David so earnestly praid for, Lord lift up the light if thy countenance upon me: one sight of God is better than all the world. To see God any way is sweet, but to see him in Christ this is most excellent: In the world we have nothing of God but his very footsteps, but in Christ there is the chief manifestation of the wisdom, mercy, and love of God to poor lost man; and in the Ordinances there God chiefly lets out himself in an especial manner. These are the Three things which shew unto us the meaning of those words. [And seek my face.] The Notes from them are these.

'Tis not enough to acknowledg our sins, but we must seek God's face. The heart in the work of humiliation must be active: that soul which is truly humbled before God, must be lively and active after God, else our humiliation is worth nothing in the sight of God: When the heart is fullen, lumpish, and sinking in its humiliation God looks not at it, Ezek. 33. 10.

we reade of some who are said to pine away in their sin. Many men when God begins to affliet them with their sins, and put them into some trouble of spirit, they pine away in their iniquity: it is a very ill sign when humiliation makes men dull, fullen, and unserviceable, hindering them from dutie, when men lie down under their trouble discontented and melancholly; therefore here's the tryall of our trouble of conscience whether it be right or no; if from melancholly it duls the heart puts it out of all spirit and activity, disabling it wholly from service; but if true, it enlivens the heart, and puts activity into the spirits though naturally dull, and lumpish, it puts the soul in waies of activity for God, when they have to do with God; this is a very good sign that such trouble for sin is right and good. The melting of Lead consumes the Lead, but the melting of Silver doth but refine and purifie it: so the trouble of a carnal heart melts and consumes it, but a gracious spirit will abide the fire, and comes out purifed and bettered; therefore repentance is...
set out by a word of activity, Isa. 55.1, 2. Come, buy wine and milk. Matt. 11.29. Come unto me: The frame of a true repenting heart is in an active coming posture, fitted for any service.

Obl. 2. When God leaves his people, he leaves something behind him, which causeth the heart to make after him: The soul hath her eyes upon God, looking after him.

Therefore much are they to be reproved, who are so full of their sad conclusions, and desperate speeches, from such as these the Lord is gone, and he will never return again, I am undone and lost for ever, there is no hope, to Hell I must go: but a gracious heart in the darkest night of sorrow and trouble can see some glimpses of light and comfort, laying as that good man, Ezra. 9.2. Yet there is hope in Israel concerning this thing, and as the Church in Isa. 42.24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord? be against whom we have sinned? What then? yet O Israel fear not.

Let us lay up this for sad times to support our spirits with all, we know not what sad and black days we may see, yet know that we cannot be in a sadder condition than Ephraim was in here, to have God to be to us as a moth and as a Lyon to tear and devour us: many make their conditions worse by their desperate conclusions. Austin faith, that David prayed earnestly that he might not be cast out from that face which he had offended: Is God angry with us or the Kingdom? let us not run away from him, but earnestly seek him.

Obl. 3. True repentance is not so much to seek our own ease, as God's face; the face of God is more in the heart and thoughts of a true penitent, than its own ease. 2 Chron. 7.14. If my people humble themselves and seek my face, then will I hear in Heaven. We may seek our own good, but we must go beyond it, 'tis God and not our selves only which we must seek after in our seekings after God: This hath been the practice of the Saints, Psal. 65. 1. Oh God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and barren land: not for water in a dry land, but for thy face. So Isa. 26.8. In the way of thy judg- ments, O Lord, have we waited for thee. We seek God in our days.
daies of humiliation and that earnestly; but what are our
ends? Is it that we may have our peace, our ease, our estates,
and our lives? Indeed we may desire and seek for these, but is
it the face of God we seek more than these? If it be, we have
hopes of speeding in our requests.

But what is God's face? *Ut ampleficentur verbum & cultos in
verba propositos, hoc proprium est facies Dei, quae revelat, & nobis
conficendum offerit: It is the word, and God's worship pro-
pounded in the word &c. faith Calvin, as upon this place, so
on that, Seek ye my face. Whence observe,

Gods Ordinances and Worship are his face. The soule never
comes to know God or have communion with Him, so as in
these; in other things darkly, in these with open face. The
creatures are but his footsteps; these His countenance, where-
by we know him better than by the other.

Again, observe, Repenting hearts are very solicitous about God's
Ordinances, and the right way of his worship. As soon as they
begin to know God and themselves, they begin to disrelish
those ways of worship, that went down with them well e-
nough before.

In times of publick calamity, the main thing we should
seek after, is, The Worship of God, His Name and His Ordinances.
Though our sufferings are great, yet we should pray, Lord,
take a care of thy great Name, Ordinances, and Worship,
which are dearer unto us than any thing in the world, there-
fore O Lord, whether we have peace or no, liberties or no,
estates or not, take care of these and it sufficeth; Let England
enjoy but thy Name, thy Ordinances, and the government of
thy Son, and we have enough; Lord, thou knowest our peace,
our lives, and estates are dear unto us, and we desire them all,
but thy Gospel, thy Presence, & the manifestation of thy Face
above all, and seeking of peace is all in order to this. Oh that
this frame of spirit were found in us! then how soon would
the Lord return and heal all our breaches, destroy our ene-
mies, and settle us in a sure peace? See 1 King. 8. 44. If they in
their afflictions look towards the Temple. So Psal. 78. 7. All my
fresh springs, they are in thee. It follows,

O o o 2
In their affliction they will seek me early.

Hezekiah sends to the Prophet, Isa. 37. 3. and tells him that it was a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy, as it is with us at this day; therefore faith he, Lift up thy prayer for the remnant which is left: and faith my text, In their afflictions they will seek me early. We have many rumors of peoples gathering together, and each discovering their poor spirits being dejected and cast down with every rumour of fear, my text faith, Come, let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal, he hath smitten and he will bind up, therefore let our conversations be as becometh our text; providence at this time hath cast us upon a very seasonable word the Lord make it as suitable, The words are the beginning of the sixth chapter in the Septuagint translation, & Hierom begins the sixth chapter with these words, and join (come let us return) with them: the words are a prophesie of what the Lord will work in his people Judah, God faith that he will return unto his place, till they acknowledge their sin; and here they say, Come let us return unto the Lord: this was Gods aim in tearing them, and he had his end in it, now from the Conexion of these two, Gods wounding, and their returning unto him again, observe.

Obf. 1. That what good God aims at in his administrations to his Elect he will have it. In my tearing them I aim at their good, and I will accomplish it; and those means which God useth to effect this God will see that it shall perform it: God useth many means, his Word, his Works, and his Encouragements, and all these are of very great force and power to effect this, yet in the ungodly it doth not, but to the Elect it shall; God leaves not to Reprobates them to the means, but he will see the means to effect that good upon them which they want. When God sends the Gospel to any place, there are two sorts of people, Reprobates and Elect; now God doth to them all that is fit for him to do, now if they do not, or will not receive it, he goes his way and leaves the Reprobates to themselves, but to the Elect he follows.
follows them on with the means and accompliseth the good he aims at: some express it thus, A man hath his servant and his child sick of the stone, he provides a remedy for both: brings the Chirurgion to his servant, tells him that he is willing to be at the cost, but the servant refuseth, rather chusing to endure the misery and pain: the master seeing his refusal goes away, and comes to his child, the child refuseth likewise, but now here the father goes not away, but commands his child to be bound, and will see the Chirurgion to perform his office: so God offers the means to all, the Reprobates refuse it, God lets them alone, the Saints they refuse it also, but God will not take it so from them but sets the means home upon them by his almighty power.

But touching the words themselves, They will seek me early; the Hebrew hath but one word to express all these, and it is this, Jesachbruneni, as if he should say, they shall morning me, they shall come in the morning of their time and seek me. For the further opening these words.

What time doth this seeking of God refer itself unto? When did the Jews thus seek God?

1. This refers itself unto these three times: as first, when the seventy yeers were at an end, & this was fulfilled in Dan. 9 Ezr. 9. and Nebem. 9. than they sought God early, when their sorrows and oppressions were greater than in Egypt as Jeremiah in the Lamentations expresseth it.

2. Under their captivity & oppression by the Romans, which was when Christ came into the world, at that time when three thousand were converted at one Sermon which Peter preached to them, Act. 2. And multitudes came in daily. Act. 21. 20.

3. At the calling of the Jews, who are now in a most sad and deplorable condition, and at their calling shall this be principally fulfilled.

How did they seek God in any of these times early? for in Daniels time, he faith, All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayers before the Lord, chap. 9. ver. 13. they never prayed to God in all the time of their captivity with any seriousness.
riousness till the end of it came: Then for the second time how did they seek God early when Christ came, when the Scripture tells us, John. 7. 11. That he came unto his own, but his own received him not; they crucified him, and were very bitter enemies to him, even to the death. And for the third time, at the calling of the Jews, how did they seek him early? for it's two thousand three hundred years since this prophesie was spoken, and yet they have not sought God, how then is this fulfilled, that they sought God early?

Answ. 1. For resolution, Interpreters answer that this is to be understood not in respect of the time, but as they came to be illuminated, to have their eyes open, to see any thing of the truth, in the morning of their day of grace; as in Cyrus his time, and upon a sudden in Peter's Sermon, and hereafter, the coming of the Son of man shall be as the lightning: this time seems to be called the day-star arising in their hearts, 2 Pet. 1. The calling of the Jews shall be suddenly, therefore in the 2. of the Revelation 28. they are promised to have the morning star to arise, that is, some beginnings of a day of grace, those which overcome shall partake of the good of that day, and then shall be the time in which the people shall seek God early.

Seek me early.] that is, seek me diligently, Prov. 7. 15. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee: I came forth to seek thee early in the morning, the word is the same with this in the text, and thus this was fulfilled in the time of their captivity, Nebem. 4. 17, 18, 19, 20, they built the walls diligently, or inflamedly, having their weapons in one hand, and their tools in the other: so the spouse she sought Christ diligently; and in the Apostles time Acts. 2. they cry out, Men and brethren what shall we do? They were wonderfull solicitous in their seekings of Christ, and when the Jews are called 'tis prophesied of them, that they shall be as doves flying to the windows, Isa. 60. 8. Hence observe.

Osb. 1. In the sorest and greatest affictions which befall the people of God, God intends their good in them. I will return unto my place, that they may seek me early: in all this that is come upon them
them, I intend them no hurt, but every way much good, Isa. 27. 9. By this the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged, and this is all the fruit, the taking away of their sin, Isa. 16. 14. compared Isa. 26. 14. with the 9. and there we may see God's different dealing in afflictions the wicked and the godly, in the 14. verse we have God's dealing with the wicked, They are dead, they shall not live; they are diseased, they shall not rise. The wicked they are dead, and being dead, shall never rise: but in the 19. verse, when he speaks of the Saints he faith, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they rise. God's word shews a great deal of difference between the anger of God, and the anger of men; men when they are angry seek the destruction sometimes of those with whom they are angry; but God loves them in his anger; the spring of God's anger to his people is love: the outward administrations of God both to the wicked and the godly may be one and the same, yet the root from whence they come much different, they may be love and kindness to the one, but wrath and hatred to the other.

We may note, the little honor which God hath in the world: Obf. 2. God here speaks of his own people, they seek him, but it is but seldom, except when in afflictions, and if the service be but small which they perform, what is it he hath from other men? If men make use of you for their necessities, and in their extremities only, you take it unkindly, and think they serve themselves more than respect you.

Oh how ill may God take it then from us, when he seldom or never heareth from us but in our extremities.

Times of afflictions are times of seeking of God: this is the Apostle's advice, Is any afflicted? let him pray, James 5. 13. and Isa. 26. 16. They poured out a prayer unto thee when they chastening was upon them, and in their affliction they visited thee: they poured out a prayer to thee, it was not dropping, now and then, but it was violent, and it was a pouring, and it was continual, a prayer (not prayers) in the singular number, noting that they made their prayers, but as one continued aë, the word prayer in this text signifies enchantment, as in the speaking of three.
three or four words there is much efficacy being an enchantment: so here, their prayers, were very powerful to prevail with God.

Real.
In the time of affliction the soul sees that it hath to deal with God; the false medium of things are then taken away; they see sin as sin, the false glosses wherewith sin was wont to be set out withal, are then removed. Luter faith, that many of Paul's Epistles could not be understood but by the cross.

Luther.
Paul's Epistles.
Men in prosperity can dispute against the Truth, and grow wanton with it, but let God but lay his hand upon them, how easily will they yield? Afflictions awaken the conscience so that the Truths of God come with more power, Job, 33.16. and Job, 36.10. He openeth their ears to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity: He commandeth them in another way to return from iniquity then. Did not God command them before? but not with that power and efficacy, the voice of prayer is very pleasing to God when fervent.

Job, 36.10.

Obi. 4.
When the Lord is pleased to work grace in the heart, that heart is taken off from all creature helps; they dare not go with Ephraim to King Jareb. (How are they then to be blamed who seek to the Devil for help in distress?) they dare not go to Councillors or to Armies for relief, but to God; it is too much to rest upon men, much more upon the Devil: Do any of you go to Inchanters or Wizards to find God? you may seek him but shall not find him.

Obl. 5.
We are not to be discouraged in our seeking of God, though our afflictions drive us to it. This people sought God, but their afflictions did drive them to it, yet God accepted them.

Use.
Sit not down despairing in your afflictions, saying, God will never be gracious, our seeking Him is to no purpose: It is true, God may justly say to us, as Jeptha said to the people, Do you now come to me in your distress? So God may say, do you now come to me in your sorrows and miseries, and cast me off in your prosperity? I confess it is very dangerous venturing the putting off our seeking of God till then, but if then God be pleased to work upon your hearts, be not discouraged but seek him still. So Joel faith, That in his affliction he sought the Lord.
Lord: But did the Lord answer him? Yea, his requests were granted.

Note, That every seeking of God is not sufficient; it must be early seeking of Him.

Now men are said to seek God early.

When?

1. It is, in the morning of their years; when young ones shall make this text true in the letter of it, it is wonderful plea-sing to God: It may be God laid his hand upon thee in thy youth, and then God revealed the knowledge of Himself to thee, thy misery by sin, thy remedy in his Son, so that the Churches prayer, was thine, Psal. 90. 14. O satisfy us early with thy mercie: How many sins are by this prevented? Your father, or master (if godly) would give a world (if they had it) that they had begun sooner to serve the Lord, and to seek him early; therefore bless God who hath put it into your hearts to seek him: John was the young Disciple, and he in his youth began to know Christ; and of all the Disciples none had that respect shewed them as John had: for it is said that he lay in Christ's bosom, and Christ loved him.

2. As this is acceptable in the morning of our years, so in the morning of God's revealing Himself; as soon as ever God begins to discover Himself, we should then seek Him early, when the soul faith as Paul said, Acts. 26. 19. I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, neither consulted I with flesh and blood. Hath God set up a light in your consciences? and hath it discovered to you your misery? and have you hearkened unto the voice of your consciences? What have you done since? Is sin reformed? Are you changed in the inner-man? Is Christ formed in you, and exalted upon his throne in your hearts? Is your will subjected to the will of God, and your whole man delivered up to the government of God? This were happy if it were so: But contrariwise, Is sin let in, and liked of as well as ever after these stirrings and convictions of conscience? Then are you far from the number of those who are early seekers of God.
3. When we seek Him with diligence, and with fervency, not in a formal way. When God's hand is out against us, He then looks that we should seek Him with intentiveness of spirit; See how the Church seeks God with diligence, Isa 26.9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night season: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek the early. When was this? In a grievous night of affliction, when they were in great troubles, then to seek God early, with their spirits within them, this is most emphatical. So, Acts 12.5. prayer was made by the Church for Peter, without ceasing, it was continued prayer, prayer stretched out; even so ought our prayers to be, lifted up with fervency: true prayer is active and working; the fervent prayer of the righteous prevails much with God Jam. 5. 16. Lively working prayers are prevailing prayers.

But what is it to seek God diligently?

When we seek God with all other things under our feet, when all other things are sought in order to this. The soul is carried after the seeking of God with a panting and longing desire, as the Hart after the water brooks.

To seek God early is, to seek him with our whole heart; The heart is not divided in the work, every part is employed; as Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 20. 23. feared and set himself to seek the Lord, he gave his whole self to the duty.

When the soul bears down all difficulties in seeking of God, when nothing shall keep him off his wook: as Jacob wrestled with God, and would not be put off without the blessing, Gen. 32. 24. So the woman of Canaan, how earnestly did she seek to Christ for her daughter? and would not be put off by difficulties, Matt. 15. 22, 23, 24, 25.

When no means is neglected to be used, whereby that may be had which we seek for; The soul tries this means, and the other duty, and follows God in all his waies that it may find him; as the poor woman which followed Christ from place to place to touch the hem of his garment, Christ could not be hid from her.

Resolutions for to die seeking of God, is earnest seeking of God: the pursuit of it's our constant practice living, and our resolutions dying: as
as Jacob, the nearer the dawning of the day approached, the more earnest was he. How contrary are the practices of too many, who at the first seek God early and earnestly too, yet after a while leave off and grow cold: Oh that it were not thus with us at this day; the Lord hath brought us low at this time, yea how sad is our condition at this time! 'Tis England.

true, there is a spirit of seeking abroad in the Land, but now God calls for a quickning of this, we should now put an edg upon our seeking of God; Be fervent in spirit serving the Lord, in the original 'tis, boyling in spirit; let us so seek him now, that hereafter we may praise him; Psal. 22. 26. they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your hearts shall live for ever. How sweet are those mercies which are won by prayer, and worn with praises? Therefore now stir up the gift that is within you: you that never prayed before, pray now; and you that have prayed before, quicken up your diligence, and double your care: How much better it is to seek God than men? to cry to God for mercy, than to cursed men? God might have made your condition to have bin the condition of your brethren; How many are this day running for their lives, and begging of their lives at the hands of barbarous, merciless, blood-sucking monsters! and you are yet in peace seeking your God, for your selves and them.

But it may be asked, Why should we seek God? Can we do anything to move God? Will God be ever the sooner intreated by us.

I answer, No, that is not the meaning of the words, that we can alter or change God's mind; but such exhortations as these, are to make us fit and to prepare us for mercy, to boil and raise our spirits to a suitable frame and disposition for mercies expected and looked for. And thus we leave this rich Mine of the fifth Chapter, which hath been so fruitful in affording many choice truths; and come to the sixt Chapter, a rich Mine also of heavenly and most seasonable Directions, no less useful than the former.
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CHAP. VI.

VERSE, I.

Come, and let us return unto the LORD, for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.

In this Chapter we have these things considerable. First, The work of Israel's true repentance, from the first verse to the third verse. Secondly, A sad complaint of the overly repentance of many in Israel, in the fourth verse. Then there is a further upbraiding of Israel for their unkind dealing with God. The first part sets out God's peoples resolution to return to Him who had smitten them, their confidence in His mercy, and their blessing themselves in their happy condition. Now...
now they were returned to him. To come to the first verse.

Come, and let us return &c.

These words are an excitation of the mind (not the body) to return to God; as also they shew the mighty spirit which came upon this people at this time, what a turn there was in them, as if they had said, Well, our Princes have deceived us, and our Prophets have deluded us and led us aside, we have been false in our worship, wrong in our practices, for which God hath been displeased with us; but now, Come, and let us return, we are resolved to fall down and humble our selves; He hath smitten us, and he will bind us up. The Seventy Translators and also Hierom take these words from Chyrurgions which use to put deep and long tents into great sores, who intends not to skin, but thoroughly to heal it, by eating out the corrupt flesh and filthy matter: so that these words note Israel’s dangerous disease, and their great corruptions, and that in their afflictions; but God would not let them die of this disease, or perish under his hand in the curing, but he would heal them and that thoroughly. A woman whose breasts are sore must be throughly tented before it be healed, and he bids the Chyrurgion cure her well and thoroughly though it be long and painful: so faith God, this people are very sorely wounded, but I will take them in hand and heal them, but their cure will be very long and tedious, sore and painful. Now faith this people, seeing it is thus, Come, let us return, it matters not though our healing cost us dear and it be painful, it is enough that God will heal us; Let our disease be never so grievous, Come and let us return. A man that hath a mortal wound about him, what pain will not he be willing to endure in healing so he may be sure of cure? This people conceived themselves so wounded that if God had not taken them to cure they must have perished, but in that God had undertaken the cure, they were confident they should be healed.

When
When God's time of mercy is come to a people He puts a mighty spirit upon them to seek to Him. God's time was come for Israel's deliverance, and now God put an active stirring spirit into them, therefore they say, Come, let us return; before their spirits were dull and lumpish like unto men in a Lethargy, but now they have a spirit quickened for God, like unto those in Isa. 2. 3. And many people shall say, Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. The like prophesie we have Isa. 60. 1. and 44. 3. 5. they shall come off very willingly & cheerfully and subscribe themselves by the name of Jacob: As a Ship which is filled with a full & strong wind, in the sails goes against all oppositions of wind and storms: there is such a spirit put into them, as the Apostle prays to be in the Colossians, chap. 4. ver. 12. that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God? Now is reformation like to go on to some purpose. At the time of Antichrist's destruction God hath promised to put such a spirit into the hearts of the people that all his tyranny shall not be able to stand before them: God will blow upon the spirits of men, and they shall be very powerful.

Now considering God's power, let not us despair, concerning the great Works adoining in our times. Let men be never so base and perfidious, yet when God's time is come He will speak the word for deliverance: What a miserable totish condition was the world in a little before Luther's time? But when he came, what a spirit was raised in the people? And what a spirit hath there been raised amongst us and that on a sudden? To consider what bondages we were in, and greater like to fall into, and that we were not made for slavery, to be slaves and vassals subjected to the wills of some Twenty or Thirty men: And what a spirit did God raise in our brethren of Scotland, when he was about to do them good and to break the neck of the yoke of their tyranny? Oh then what a cursed thing is it for any to quench, keep under, or relish such a spirit as this when it arises in people?

A joynt turning to God is very honorable to God. Come and let us return. It is much honor to God when but one soul is turned.
ned to him, but when many are converted there is much glory, a multitude of praises then are offered up to God; as in
Revel. 5. 11. And the number of them which stood about the thrones was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. And to Revel. 19. 6. The multitudes of voices saying, The Lord God reigneth; Alleluia to the highest.

Obs. 3. Times of mercy are joying times. Oh, it is very sad when men will go every one their own way; but when men joyn together in an unanimous way, saying, Come and let us set about the Lords work with one shoulder, every one encouraging each other, then there is hope the times of mercy are nigh that people: But this is our misery, the divisions and the rendings
that are among us, being dis-joynted each from other, Oh the wantones of mens spirits now among us! for which God is much displeased, and certainly is one great stop in the way of mercy, that notwithstanding God hath us in the fire and threatens even our consuming, yet that we should not joyn and unite together.

Obs. 4. True penitent hearts seek to get others to joyn with them. Oh how glad are they to see any coming on to seek the Lord with them, and how careful are they to give encouragement example, they perswade them with all gentleness, saying, Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, we have found the Lord very gracious to us. Oh come, he is good still, yea and good to you, if you wil come into him: if the husband have found God good to him, he will perswade the wife, the child the servant to come to Christ. Thus much of their resolution to return: the reason follows;

For he hath smitten us, and he will heal us.

Hence observe:

Obs. 1. That in times of the greatest sufferings a true penitent heart retains good thoughts of God. God hath torn, wounded, and smitten us, what then? run away from God? think hardly of him? No, think well of him and bless his Name, even when you receive the hardest measure from God. This the people of God
God in former times have practised, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Ezra, 9. Daniel, in all their miseries how careful were they to acquit and clear God to be just in all that was come upon them? yea, the Church in the time of her desolation retains Christ as a King and calls him so, so that they have as high esteems of God now in their low condition as in their prosperous estate; and as they dare not entertain hard conceits of God, so neither of his Cause, nor his People, they are not sorry that they have been so far engaged for them. Many people are like bad servants, who while they have every thing fitting that becomes them, can give their masters family a good report, but let them be croft of their minds and go away in a discontent, Oh how vily do they speak of it; and as sturdy beggers, while they find relieve and succor, they can give good words, and they are their masters and beft friends, but let them be sent away empty, and then what name is bad enough for them? so when things goes well with the cause of God and his people they will be on God's side: Oh take heed of being sorry that ever you were engaged so far as you are, or thinking to draw back, that it had been better you had not been so forward as you have been, this is a base and vile spirit, see but how low the Church was in affliction, and yet with what a gallant spirit she carried it out, Psal. 44. 12, 13, 15, and 17. verses, in these times how is this text fulfilled in the 15. verse, how do they complain that men do blaspheme, deride, and scorn them, and in the 17. verse, All this is come upon us, What then? Is not God good, and his Cause good that we maintain? No, God forbid such a thought should enter into us: Although all this evil be come upon us, yet have we not dealt falsly with thee in thy Covenant: Oh let us lay up this truth, and it would be a mighty comfort and stay to us in these times, and it would be a very good rise to prayer; for, mark in the 23. verse, Awake, why sleepest thou? Oh Lord, arise and help us: Those can pray to purpose who in their forent afflictions can manifest the most fear of God, and exercise the most love towards God and his waies notwithstanding.
Obs. 2. *A repenting heart is not a discouraged heart.* It is such a heart as sinks not down in discouragements, saying (as some do) we are a lost people, and undone, there is no hope, we had been better never to have ventured so far as we have, but give over what we have done; it dares not draw conclusions from what hath been, to what is, and what will be, this is too much presumption for any man; *David in the Cave can trust in God, and hide himself under God's wing,* Psal. 57. 1. So long as there is a God in Heaven this soul will expect help from him, a true penitent will expect mercy notwithstanding God's severity and justice; the severity of justice in God cannot keep him from waiting for, and expecting of what God hath promised; if the soul can but get over this difficulty, the deep gulf of God's justice, it will easily get over all other dreadfulness of men's displeasure: a repenting heart is a purged heart and therefore not a discouraged but a supported heart, those which are unclean of soul and filthy spirits are always jealous of God and his dealings towards them: Oh let it appear that we are not of discouraged and sinking spirits by the cleanness of our lives and the purity of our communications: carnal hearts are not discouraged when they have carnal helps to underprop them, and shall we be afraid of any difficulty, who have God for our help? Remarkable is that place, 1 Sam. 4. 9. concerning the speech which was made to the Philistines upon the coming of the Ark into the camp of Israel, what a fear were they put into? yet how do they encourage themselves? Let us fight valiently for our wives and children and estates, that we and our little ones be not slaves to the Hebrews. So say I, let us be courageous in these times and fight for our Liberties, Laws, and Religion: Did we but spend that strength in returning unto God which we do in discouragements, Oh how soon would help come for us were we but thus resolved! Now though we must not be discouraged, when helps and means fail, but yet humbled we must be for our sins which cause these breaches, see how the Prophet Habakkuk manages this disposition, c. 3. v. 16, 17. we should improve our humiliation as they did, Judges, 20. who
who though in a good cause, a cause which God approved of Judg. 20:
yet lost forty thousand men at two battles in the prosecution of it: what do they now? leave it off, and run away? No, but put on courage and resolution, failed and prayed, and humbled themselves before the God of their fathers, and then they prospered. Oh let us be humbled that we may not be discouraged.

And as we must not be discouraged, so must we not falsely encourage ourselves; as they said, The bricks are fallen down, but we can build with heaven stone: so say not, this Army is lost, but we can raise another quickly. Let us only encourage ourselves in the Lord our God, let us take heed of the goodness of our cause thereby too much to rest upon it, 1 Sam. 4:3. the people said, Let us fetch home the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, that when it cometh, it may save us: they thought the bare having of that among them, would deliver them. Know that it is not the goodness of our cause that can bear us up, and carry us through difficulties, if we do not turn to the Lord.

Now that your spirits may not sink under these troubles, let me give you a few props to lean upon.

If we have been faithful in our work, we may have this testimony, that what is our place to do as creatures, is performed by us, God's part is only remaining to be done; and know, though there were much weaknesses in our performances, yet we have to deal with a God who loves sincerity in infirmities.

If we suffer, God suffers more, this should mightily encourage us in sufferings when God is contented to be our partner.

Know, that God sees further than we, and knows what is best for us, when the wars first began we promised ourselves a present end of them, and we thought it would be best; but God saw it was not; had we had peace at the first we should not have known what to have done with it; it would even have undone us by that time.

Consider, things are no more difficult now than they were at the first unto God; God knows as well how to deli-
5. God usually works by contrary means, bringing light out of darkness; saving Israel in the red Sea when in the greatest danger of drowning.

6. Know, that God will be seen in the Mount; God hath his time, his set time to appear for his people, and before that time come, he will not shew himself; the soul is very prone in misery, to run into a double extremity, either of presumption, or despairing by unbelief; presumption, that puts the evil day far off, and unbelief, that puts the good day far off; therefore take heed of both these.

Object. But could we have the encouragement of this people, could we say that we have returned it were something?

Answ. Now for this, know, that if the consideration of God's healing mercy is more prevailing with us to turn than any misery whatsoever, if we are willing and desirous to turn, the other may be made good, that God is willing to heal and bind us up; Can we but make out the first part, of our turning, I dare affirm the second, of God's healing; though perhaps it may be very painful, the Lord hath put a deep tent into us to eat out our putrid flesh, therefore we ought more earnestly to desire a through and sound healing, than an easy and sudden cure.

Obf. 3. When God intends good to a people, he gives them an intimation of his love to them. How did this people know that God would heal them and that He would bind them up? Thus they argued it out, from God's goodness, from his Name, and from his Covenant; Oh would God but put into our thoughts to consider the mercy of God to us in the Covenant.

Quest. But I fear this would be presumption in me (may some say.)

Answ. I answer, No, if thy believing and resting upon the promise, sanctifies the heart and not make it secure, if thy laying hold upon the promise doth more break the heart, and make it humble and submissive, it is a right supporting the heart upon the promise and not presumption.

Obf. 4. The apprehension of what mercy is to come, will readily cause the heart
beart to turn to him. Many say God will not be gracious, mercy is past, there is no hope, therefore we will give over waiting. No, but we will seek him still, and wait longer for mercy to come.

Lastly, This people being turned to God, do not make the hopes of their healing a fruit of their returning, but a fruit of God's mercy. Many poor souls think that they must not believe till they are so far humbled, and so much broken: This is an error; we should exercise our faith more upon God's healing, than our returning, and this will cause us to be humbled: humiliation will soon follow after this. Good works are a good nurse to faith, but if we make works the mother of faith that faith is not right, it's a bastard faith.

**Ver. 2.**
After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

God's Works are Comments upon his Word; and it hath been so frequently in the opening of this Prophecy: as Christ said of that Scripture, Luke, 4. 21. This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, so may I say of this Scripture at this time, how hath God literally fulfilled it? The last Exercise you heard of God's wounding and of his healing; How hath he healed us in a gracious manner? and how are these words fulfilled in the literal sense? After two days he will revive us. But two days after our humiliation he revived us, and the third day we lived in his sight, and if we follow on to know the Lord we shall know more of his counsel, and though the darkness of the night be not yet over, yet the morning is prepared.

But may we have such ground to think so as this people, when any that God will revive us, and that we shall live in his sight. If we can prove our turning unto God, and our returning from sin, the other may be made good; that he will revive us in our sorrows.

The scope of these two verses is to express a further confidence in God, that he will revive us. 
dence of repenting believing Israel in God's goodness: before he smote them, and now he would revive them: but before this reviving comes perhaps we may be as dead men, yea lie a day (that is a certain time) as dead men, forlorn of God, quite out of his mind, yea, we may lie the second day also, that is a second time wherein we expected help, yet then also the enemy may triumph over us, yet shall we live in his sight, that is, all shall see, that the eye of God was on us for good: he will revive us, and God shall be in our sight as we shall be in his, glorious things is he about to make known to us, though it be night now, yet know his mercy is a coming, even as the morning followeth the dark night; this is the sum of these words.

Yet for the further opening of them, know that interpreters differ, they keep a great ill to know what's meant by, two days, some think it spoken of the Jewish captivity, others of the second coming of Christ, the Messias therefore: Luther seems to condemn their inceties, saying, he thinks them not worthy to find out the meaning of a text, who stand so curiously upon such inceties.

The meaning therefore of the words are, after two days, that is, although God do not come presently, after two days, yet he will come, mercy though it stay long yet it will come; two days in Scripture signifies a little and a short time; as Numb. 9. 22. whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud stayed upon the Tabernacle: two days, that is, when we shall be in any great extremity of pain or misery. Mercer quotes R. Abrah. Ezra siiium, who saies, that wounds and gashes in a man's body pain and smart more at two days end than at the first; so God may let us lie in the smart of pain and sorrow two days, but in the third day mercy shall follow.

Interpreters generally conceive these words to have refe-

Chrift's resurrection unto the two days that Christ lay in the grave; and Luther faith that this is the Scripture which Paul speaks of in 1 Cor. 15. 4. That Christ rose the third day according to the Scripture; what Scripture? why this, the third day we shall live in.
his sight; though the text Notes the confidence which repenting Israel had in God's mercy towards them, yet hath it reference also unto Christ, as if they should say, our ills and miseries may be great and we may lie in them a while, so did Christ, but he was raised the third day and so shall we. Mr. Calvin faith that God gave a famous and memorable example of Israel's mercy after their captivity by Christ's rising from the grave, and this may well be meant of Christ as that Scripture shews, Hosea, 11. 1. When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt: Who would have thought that this had meant Christ, but that the Scripture applies it unto Christ, in Mat. 2.15. And he departed into Egypt, until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled &c. How darkly was Christ shadowed out in the old Testament? as by Jonas in the Whales belly three days: Oh what cause have we to bless God who lives in the times of the Gospel where Christ is manifested so clearly? what dark and mystical intimations had they of Christ in those days, this was one of the clearest, and that of Jonas in the Whales belly.

When at any time God would comfort his people in distress, what doth he do? he reveals a prophesie of the Messias to come: as in Is. 7. 14. and in Is. 9. 6. and when was this? when the rod of the oppressor was broken in Zacca. 9. 9. and so here, God having smitten, wounded & torn them, he comes and heals them, promising life and reviving to them.

But here now, Luther makes an objection. If these words had reference unto Christ, they should run thus, He should live in his sight, not we; and he answers it himself, that it notes the efficacy of his resurrection, not only for himself but for many others.

We shall live in his sight; that is comfortably, mortis habet vices, quae trahitur vita geniti. before his face, that is, His favor shall be towards us for mercy; as the turning the face away shews anger, so the turning of God's face towards us signifies favor:

2. We shall see his face with comfort and rejoice in the sight of it.
3. We shall eye his face in acts of obedience and he will eye our duties with acceptance.

4. It notes security in his presence: As when we are in the presence of a King his very presence is our security, and safety, so we shall live in his sight, that is, we shall be safe in his presence. The Notes from hence are,

Obf. 1.

That God's own people may not only be smitten and wounded by God, but may lie for dead in their own eyes, and in the eyes of all about them for a time: see it in the case of Heman, Psal. 88. 8. & 14. verses, Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? verse 10. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead praise thee? Ezek. 37. 3. We read there of drier bones which should be made to live, and Revel. 11. the witnesses shall be slain and lie dead in the streets, the beast shall overcome them, the generality of those that stand for Christ shall be slain by the beast, and overcome by his power.

The reason of this may be, because God can work about his glory by contrary means. This is a great affliction, yet not so great as sin is, when God fetches out his glory from the affections of his people, it costs him not so much nor so dear, as when he fetcheth it out of sin, now if God's glory be so dear to him, that he will suffer sin to be in the world, thereby to fetch his glory out of it, why should we be unwilling that God should suffer affections to be upon us seeing by them he fetcheth out glory to himself? Exod. 15. 7. In the greatness of thine excellency hast thou overthrown them which rose up against thee; how should God manifest his glorious power in raising them up? were they never brought very low? In Heaven God will manifest his glory so to us, that we shall not need such dark shadows to have it set out and opened unto us as here it is.

Use. Care to be well grounded in a cause that may suffer.
his cause stands, and is maintained, and which may uphold us in the maintenance of it; for know that God may put thee to the tryal, and if thou art not throughly grounded thou wilt apostatize.

God leaves his people in that dead condition for a time; the first day they may look for help, and it may not come; and the second day he may let them lie when help is look'd for, and this may be after their seeking of God: This people they said, Come, let us return unto the Lord, yet what do they say? after two days he will revive us; it must be some time first: God is a great God, and his creature must wait, there is much grace exercised in an afflicted condition, when the soul quietly submits to God and patiently waits upon his pleasure, let his dealing be never so hard towards them; God sometimes answers his people's prayers presently when they seek him, so that it may not only be said, in the evening, but in the morning hast thou heard me; not only this day, but the next also: see that place in 1 King. 18. 38, and 44. Elijah prays, and the Lord heard him presently, but he prays again, and then the Lord defers: in the 38. verse he prays for fire to come down to consume the sacrifice, and it did so; but in the 44. verse of the same chapter he prays again for rain, and see in what a postur he prays in and obtained his petition with much difficulty, sent his servant Seven times, and at the seventh time it was but a little cloud; at first God heard him presently, but he prays again, and then mercy comes difficulty, yet God was not angry with Elijah. So Daniel, he prays and was heard presently; but the people they pray, and pray earnestly, yet they were not answered.

Oh therefore let us take heed of impatience and frowardnes of spirit in trouble, and of being weary of duty, and growing careless in holy services, because an answer comes not presently, this shows the rottenness of our spirits as much as any thing, and 'tis as evident a sign of an hypocrite as any we have in Scripture. If 2. 8. they fasted and prayed so long that they thought themselves mightily wronged because they were not heard; therefore are they so bold to ask God a reason why

be patient in prayer.
he was so far behind-hand with them when they had done so much service for him? Oh boldnesse of spirit!

**Obs. 3.**  That the time of God's reviving his people, is neither long in God's nor the Saints account; 'Tis but two daies, the third day we shall live. Isa. 31. 5. As birds flying, so will the Lord be swift to help Jerusalem; He hath promised not to contend for ever: and

1 Pet. 1. 6. Though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness, through many tribulations: in the Original 'tis, If now, if need be, so that there is great need of afflictions before God sends them. So 2 Cor. 4. 17. afflictions they are for a moment a very little time: Faith, that lifts up the soul upon two hills, where it feeth Heaven on the one, and the vally of Achor in the middle, and it so works in the soul that it causeth it to be patient in suffering the greatest tryals, it is a sign of a distempered spirit, to complain of the length of an affliction, a gracious heart desires more the sanctifying it than taking it away; we might have been swallowed up in the gulf of eternal misery. Hag. 2. 6. yet a little while and I will shake Heaven &c. But it was between five and six hundred yeares before this shaking came, viz. at the coming of Christ; our impatience make affliction seem long.

**Obs. 4.** In the saddest condition, faith makes present and real Gods reviving mercies. When their help is gone, in the mount of mans extremity will God be seen. We should reason thus, because Gods people are in great extremity, then 'tis a sign that God will arise and help them, and not despair and give over our hopes; as before the morning light is the thickest darkness, so let us never be discouraged at the encrease of afflictions, for they shew the time then hastens for deliverance; and this faith makes present to the soul, it shews the soul life in death, favor in frowns, love in strokes, faith seeth a great difference between the strokes of God upon the Saints and upon the wicked: that place is famous for this, Isa. 26. 14. compared with the 19. They are dead, they shall not live, they are diseased, they shall not rise. When God strikes wicked men their wounds forerun death here, and eternal death hereafter, when he smites them in their cause, in their names, or estates, 'tis
to undo them: But now mark in the 19. verse, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Some think that these words note the glorious condition of the Church in regard of their safety, that though men and means fail, yet faith can see deliverance in the womb of an infinite wisdom, power and faithfulness, Faith revives other graces when seeming dead and puts life into them, much more doth it into our dead conditions; 'tis reported of the *Cristal, that it hath such a vertue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. This is true of faith, it makes evil things present, far off, and good things far off, present, and herein consists the exercise of faith in a great measure, Psal. 91. 7. A thousand shall fall on thy left hand, and ten thousand on thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee: this is a very strange speech, that a man may be in a place where a thousand shall fall by him, and ten thousand on the side of him, and yet he not touched by the disease. By faith the soul enjoys this security. Psal. 60. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness. I will rejoice, I will divide Sechem and met out the valley of Succoth: the thing was not yet done, yet they rejoiced in it as present; faith it enables a dead and a barren womb to bring forth a child, it raiseth up a dead son out of the ashes, Abraham bids his servants to stay at the bottom of the hill, and expect his coming, Oh strong was his faith in this thing.

How unbecoming are our spirits and how is our faith manifested to be weak and poor, when a mercy promised is within sight ready to be fulfilled and made good, yet how impatient are we and froward when it comes not so soon as we desire? when we are full of such determinings against ourselves or the Cause of God, saying, alas all is now gone, we are left desperate, God hath forsaken his Cause, Oh let us take heed of pleasing ourselves with this kind of carnal arguing and objecting, for they are such as mightily provoke God and dishonor him, and hinder much good which else we might enjoy.

But were I worthy, I could think something, then I might have. Obje. some hopes.
An Exposition of

Chap. 6.

In this case do thou exercise faith upon Christ even in thine unworthyness, and though thou maist die and not see the harvest, nor reap the fruit of thy prayers, yet know the generations to come shall, and this may comfort thee. That speech of Jacob is remarkable to this purpose; when he lay a dying, faith he, Behold I die; but God shall do much more for you. The cause may be trodden down for a while, and God may hide himself, but know, that he will keep his Covenant with thee, he never yet broke Covenant; so long as Christ is thine and thou art his, God's faithfulness in keeping Covenant is also thine; what if those that stand for Christ and his Cause be sometimes beaten, must they therefore give over? No, but venture still, and it our sins hinder not, though we may lie dead to day, and to morrow, yet the third day we may live in his sight.

Obl. 5. Mercies after two days death, are reviving mercies.

After two days I will revive you. Promises in times of afflictions are sweet indeed: Oh then, how much more deliverance? Such mercies are resurrection mercies which God sends after killing afflictions. And such mercies hath the Lord given us at this very day; the Lord hath revived us when almost dead, therefore would we give God the glory of such mercies, and render unto him due and reasonable praise for such reasonable mercies, let us observe these rules.

First, Look back to your base unbelieving hearts formerly, and chide them, upbraid them with this now, Oh vile heart of mine, did not I begin to say, Alas I am undone, all is now lost, my hopes are now abortive? was not I sorry that ever I was so engaged as I am? were it to do again I would be better advised? did not I think new tears which had never manifested themselves for God in his Cause in a far better estate than I, and with my self in their condition? how hath the Lord been dishonored by me? what secret pining and grudging thoughts have I had even against God Himself, because of the various dispensations of providence? Say now oh base vile unbelieving heart, how hath the Lord confuted thee, and made thee to see thy shame and ignorance in believing hence rather than faith? Second-
Secondly, Hath God bestowed reviving mercies upon you? then be willing to give God the glory of them, and resign them up to him, upon this ground, because we have forfited them by our unbelieving: an unbelieving heart forfits all mercies before he hath them: 'tis true God gives many precious mercies to sad, dumplish, froward, discontented spirits, but you cannot have that comfort in your mercies which others have because they are forfited, and though God through his bounty lets you enjoy them, yet you are in fear continually left God should take his forfigure. Oh believe your mercies in the promise through the difficulties.

Thirdly, Remember the Covenants which you made unto God in the times of your trouble, and keep them. 'Tis a provoking sin to break Covenant with God, God complains of it against Israel, Ps. 78. 38. They flattered him with their lips in making Covenants to him in their trouble, but they were not steadfast in their Covenants. Oh how usual is it with men in any misery to Covenant largely with God, and presently to forget what they have done! this is a sign of a false heart, therefore take heed of it. Lay more wait upon your Covenants which you make, if ever you mean to give God real praise for any mercy.

Fourthly, Consider how much better it is to give God the glory of a mercy willingly, than force him to extort it from you in a way of wrath; God is better pleased with active praise, than passive for his mercies; consider, glory he will have for his mercies, Oh put not God to that trouble to force his own glory so due to him, from you, if you give not God the glory of a mercy in possession, he in wrath will take it from you: and had not God given us this reviving mercy, it might have been our case to have been forced to give God his glory in a passive way.

Fiftly, Whatever God calls for now, from you, be willing to give it up to him freely; whatever we would have been willing to have given for such a mercy in our misery, had God indented with us for it, let us be ready and willing to give it to him now the mercy is come; had we known our
danger and the miseries which would have flowed in upon us had not mercy prevented, if God should have said thus, What would you do? what would you suffer? what would you part withal for me? and you shall be delivered out of this danger and possession the contrary mercy? Then seeing God hath given us such a mercy without this inditing, make this an argument to come off freely in giving God that which he now calls for; you have been (perhaps) in bodily fears and danger of death by some sickness, now if God should have called for your estates, would not you have given them to him? Do that now which you would then have done.

Lastly, Lay up against unbelief for time to come. Hath God remembered us in our low estate? let us lay with David, We will trust in him so long as we live, we will never determine to as formerly we have, either against ourselves or the cause of God, we will never entertain hard thoughts of God more, but we are resolved to do what belongs to us as creatures, and leave the success of the business to God; apply this any way and it will be very useful: hath God helped us in any soul-trouble? revived thee in the depths of sorrow when God hid himself from thee? lay up the passages of God towards thee in this case against all the risings of unbelief whatsoever, resolve upon this; that thy soul shall rely upon him for help whatsoever becomes of thee, this is to give God the glory of reviving mercies. Psal. 18. 1, 2. thus doth David appropriate God to himself and gathers strength from this to support him, David at this time was in a great strait by Saul's persecution of him, that he gave all for lost, I shall one day perish by the hands of Saul; but he soon recals himself again, It was in my baft, he said in his haft the Prophets of God (God and Nathan) they are liars, they tell me that I shall be King, that I shall sway the Sceptre in Israel, but 'tis nothing so, I am like to be kil'd and betrayed every moment, such enemies wait to catch me, and is it ever likely that I should sit upon the Throne and be King? So, men in their haft are ready to think that God will forsake them, and leave his cause upon every frown and hard word which he speaks; but David found
found a reviving mercy presently upon it in the 1. and 2.
verses of the 18. Psalm, where he praised God for that mercy,
which formerly he would not believè; before in this 2. verse
he sets out God in way of praise by eight titles, and all his 8. Relations
propriety in them for strengthening of his faith. 1. My rock,
2. my fortress, 3. my deliverer, 4. my God, 5. my strength in whom
I will trust, 6. my buckler, 7. the born of my salvation, 8. my high
Tower; from all these titles of God as his, he strengthens himself. In all the Scripture I know not such a short text
so full for the strengthening of faith as this is: and it is the
special work of faith to make God to be ours in all these re-
lations. Oh how beautiful would our praises for reviving
mercies now could we but exercise our faith thus upon all
these titles of God as ours.

The real sight of deliverance from evil and the apprehension of Obl. 6:
certain mercy a coming, is a strong argument to put the soul on to turn
to God. This people did make this use of mercy coming to
them, What will God after two days deliver and revive us?
Come then, and let us return unto him, let us not any lon-
ger stand out but come in, that he may revive us and raise us
up. When the soul sees mercy coming it beholds God out-
bidding all other temptations, and overpowering all diffi-
culties; when men by sense can behold mercy coming they
will then think it best to turn to God, happy are those who
by faith can see mercy coming a great way off and thereby
are stirred up to turn to God, when God lets such thoughts as
these into the soul and settles them upon the spirit; I am now
in a very good condition, well and in health for the present,
but where may I be within two days? I enjoy peace and have
every thing that heart can desire, both for necessity and de-
light, but within a short time where may I and these be?
These are dreadful thoughts to consider of: But on the other
side, to believers these words are very comfortable and full
of sweetness, I am in great extremity of misery, but after two
days they will blow over, then oh where shall I be? in heav-
en, in joy and blessedness for evermore, at rest with my Savi-
or; dreadful are the meditations from these words to all the
wicked,
wicked, but very sweet and comfortable to the Saints of God, as any text I know. This consideration made Paul overlook all his afflictions, 2 Cor. 4. 17. he thus considered, 'tis true, I am under great afflictions, but they are but light, and 'tis but for a moment, and what shall I have then? An eternal weight of glory. Therefore Christians should not be always poring upon their afflictions, but look up to mercy, behold that which may comfort them as well as what may discourage them; consider, that within two days God will raise us up again, and this will mightily raise our spirits and quiet the tumults in our hearts; as we should be sensible of God's hand to be humbled for our sins the cause of it, yet should we take care that we do not destroy ourselves by our fears.

**Ob. 7.** The apprehension of the death and resurrection of Christ is a special means to help faith in the times of the greatest afflictions: Many things may help faith in this case, but the consideration of Christ's resurrection is the chief: when the soul shall exercise faith thus; I am thus and thus afflicted and in misery, so was Christ and much more, although he were the Son of God, the first begotten of the Father, and so blessed for ever, he was delivered up into his enemies' hands, scorned, persecuted, and contemned, nay, he was crucified and put to a shameful death: but my condition for the present is not thus, but if it should be so it is no more than Christ's was; in this his great misery all his friends forsook him, which aggravates their misery which are in straits, in so much that those two Disciples which went to Emmaus said, We had thought that God would have delivered Israel by this man: What a low condition did God bring Christ unto? and yet this was the greatest work that ever was done, and such a work as brings God the most glory of any work in the world; was the Church ever in a lower condition than Christ himself was? yet Christ was raised and delivered out of them all, yea this was a special end why Christ was brought into such a low estate, to be a comfort and a pattern for his Churches, that may come into the same condition which he was in; and seeing this is held forth unto us in a clearer way, than it was to the Jews under the
the Law, we should make more use of it than they did? was Christ so low that the wrath of God was upon him for satisfaction even to death? this surely was a very low condition; and now, is there any hope that ever he should be raised from this? yea now was Gods time to shew his power, and to declare him to be his Son, God bespeaks his people in all their straits thus, Did my power raise my Son in such a low estate? it is able also to raise you, as the Apostle argues in the 1 Cor. 15. If Christ be not risen, the dead are not raised &c. so from thence I also infer, That the Church must rise because Christ is risen; if the Church does not rise, Christ is not risen; and if so, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is to no purpose; therefore raise up your faddened spirits upon this ground; well, Christ is risen, and I also shall rise with him. It was wont to be the salutation of the Christians in ancient time, Christ is risen: the antient form of salutation among christians. Christ is risen; that power which raised the head will in his time raise the body and make it glorious with himself.

And we shall live in his sight.

As Israel was repenting so it was believing Israel also; and as their believing furthered their repentance, so their repentance furthered their faith; they were confident that they all should live in his sight.

When God grants mercies to his people, he would have them of lively spirits, to be quick and vigorous and of active spirits. And this is the scope of the holy Ghost in this text, however the Saints may seem as dead men when wicked men prevail over them, yet when God gives rest and life they shall be lively and full of spirit. God loves not to see his people of a sad fullen pensive disposition, when that they have matter of the greatest joy in the world.

When God is reconciled to a people, his face is then towards his people, he looks then upon them and loves them, Apoc. 22. 4. And they shall see his face. God doth not deal with us as David did with his son; 2 Sam. 14. 24. And the King said, Let him
him not see my face any more. But if God be once reconciled all the frowns in his face are turned into smiles; he is all lovely towards them.

Use 1. Now how incongruous a thing is it, that when God smiles we should lower, be heavy and lumpish: And as God smiles when we humble our selves; so should we look cheerfully upon our children and servants, upon their submission having committed a fault.

Obs. 3. God's people account their life to be in God's favour, not so much in what they receive from God, as what they are in God's favour and presence. Hypocrits desires are only for the enjoyment of mercies, & if they obtain their desires they are contented, though they have no presence of God at all in them: but the Saints, if they have precious mercies and no presence of God with them it contents not them; if they have health and not God's presence in it, if they have peace and not their peace with God it satisfies not them: this is their cry, Lord, let us hear thy voice, let me see thy face; for thy voice is pleasant, and thy countenance comely.

Obs. 4. When the Lord deliveth his repenting believing Israel, he setteth mercy upon them, and setteth their hearts in the possession of mercy. He doth not only give them hints, but real possessions of mercy. We are revived and raised, yea but we may die again: No, we shall live in his sight, we shall live before him. Mercies to the Saints are not the fruit of God's patience, for then they would not be settled mercies: But they are such mercies as comes from the Covenant of grace, and so they come to be settled, therefore called, the sure mercies of David, Is. 55:3.

Obs. 5. Faith is such a grace as raises the soul high and will not be contented with small mercies. He will revive us, and He will raise us up; Is that all? No, but we shall live in his sight. It is an argument of a very carnal heart to be contented with low mercies, when a man will be put off with anything: It pleaseth God very well, when his people will not be put off with small mercies: though it's true, we must be thankful for the least mercy, and content with it in opposition to murmuring, yet we must not rest therewithal satisfied, but if thy faith be true, it
it will expect more, and if it hath got a promise from God it will improve it to the utmost extent that the promise will bear, and when it hath one promise fulfilled it will look out for the answering of another; we do not approve of such a craving disposition in a beggar, but God is much delighted with it in his people.

'Gods people rejoice much in this, That God sees them, they Obs. 6. have much comfort from God's eye; whereas 'tis the greatest terror to the Hypocrites that God sees them, that they are continually in God's eye, Job, 24. 17. If one know them they are in the terrors of the shadow of death, if man being a Spectator is so terrible, how much more is God's eye? It's no wonder they would fain hide themselves from his presence, for the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, but his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer; 1 Pet. 3. 12. The Saints account it their privilege that God sees them, and it's a very good sign of sincerity, when the soul is not afraid that God should see him, when the soul can look upon the clear beams of the Sun of righteousness without dazzeling, as the Eagle when she would prove her young ones hold them up in the sight of the Sun and if they can endure the shining and look upon it, then are they of the right kind.

It is the great care of the Saints to walk as in God's sight, and to have their eyes in God's sight, Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord alwayes before me, because he is at my right hand I will not be moved, I will not fear, I have set him before me, this text is spoken chiefly of Christ as a Prophetical expression of him.

And if Christ must be kept from falling, by setting the Lord alwayes before him, much more must we, not that he was in danger of falling as we are, but this is to be understood as that text is, he learned obedience by his sufferings, he looking at God, helped him to obey and to stand in obeying; as the Apostle speaks, What we speak it is as in the sight of 2 Cor. 2 God in Christ, that is, what we say, it is in the power and efficacy of Christ: but how comes this to pass, that they thus preach? why as in the sight of God? We thus preach, his power enables.

The
Ob. 8. The eye of God upon his people is their safety, and security. The forenamed place testifies it, 1 Pet. 3. 12. The eyes of the Lord are the safety and guard of the righteous; as a child thinks it self safe if it be in the parents eye; so the Saints should look upon themselves very secure in the sight of God. A Philosopher could say in danger of Shipwreck in a light starry night, Surely I shall not perish there are so many eyes of providence over me. Could a Philosopher say thus, and may not a Christian say so much more, that he shall not perish seeing Gods providential eye is over him?

Ver. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared, as the morning; and He shall come unto us, as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

This Scripture is very full, and hath much sweetness in it: As an egg is full of meat, so full are these words of marrow and sweetness; and there is little difficulty in them.

We shall know, if we follow on to know.

[If] is not in the original, but it is thus read, And we shall know, and we shall follow on to know. The word signifies to prosecute and persecute, to follow one as eagerly as a man which persecutes another, and persecutes him, as Paul did the Saints, with all intention and affection: when men thus follow on to know, God will reveal Himself more. Luther applies these words to Christ, and the Gospel revealing him, setting mens minds on fire by the truth so clearly discovered, and inflamed with such love to it, that they followed on to know it. But although these words have reference to Christ, yet first they are to be understood of Gods delivering his people out of Captivity: Then they shall know: What shall they know? that they shall live in his sight. When God delivers them, then they shall know.
1. God's faithfulness in his Covenant made to our fathers, What the tis very little that we know of it now, but the time is coming that we shall know it clearly.

2. The works of God's wisdom, all working for his peoples good in their lustre and beauty.

3. The excellency of God's power, how it over-rules all things, and how it is stretched out for the Saints good.

4. The mercy of God acting every way for their best advantage; we are now in great misery, and our troubles increase, and we cannot see how mercy is working for good; but then we shall know.

5. The mind of God we shall then know, that we are in darkness, not only in our troubles, for the outward man, but in our spirits; tis very little that we know of God now at the best, but we shall know him clearly.

6. The vanity of all worldly pomp, and glory, and the folly of all carnal confidence; men are now ready to call the proud happy, and bless the works of iniquity, and run to King Jareb: but then we shall know that God is able to deliver his people out of all traits.

7. That it is not in vain for the people of God to seek him, even then, when all humane helps and hopes fail, then they shall know that there is a power and efficacy in prayer, as tis God's Ordinance, to help them in difficulties.

8. The meaning of many prophesies which are now very dark and obscure, and yet much sweetness in them for the Churches of God; and if this will be worth the knowing, let men that know any thing be Judges.

9. The glorious purposes and decrees of God that he had from all eternity for our good, God hath glorious purposes, although we for the present know them not, but we shall know them, there is such a time that all these things and much more than these shall be revealed to them.

They shall know them, if they follow on to know them. [If] is not in the Original; but put in to fill up the sense; but if we take the words literally, we shall know if we follow on; then the sense runs thus; Doth God reveal himself to his people? and

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and do his people lay hold of the opportunity? they shall know more. And if you take the words without If, thus, You know and follow on to know: the meaning is, That when God begins to show mercy he will go on to show more mercy; so that these words are a motive to turn to God, or an expression of their confidence in God, God was now in the dark, his presence was clouded towards them, and the enemies scoffed and mocked at them, saying where is now your God? The people answer, We shall know our God again, and he will discover himself to our comfort, but to your shame. The Notes are.

Obs. 1. True penitents turn to God, that they might know God. As there must be some knowledge before turning to God, so turning to God that we may know him more; and the desire of knowing him should not be so much to deliver from hell, as to be fitted thereby to do him more and better service: the hypocrite if he have but as much service and knowledge to manage it as to attain his own ends he is satisfied; but a gracious heart dares not do so.

Obs. 2. No man can turn to God, but as God's face is towards him: We cannot turn to God except that God turn first to us, when he giveth quietness who then can cause trouble, Job, 34. 29.

Obs. 3. When God comes to his people in mercy he reveals much of himself unto them: and according to the degrees of his coming unto them are the manifestations of himself unto them, either more or less, he gives them something in this life, an earnest penny at the beginning, and at death the full payment, the perfect enjoyment of all promised good; faith can see a glory in God, even in the darkest times, but in the times of light then it can see abundance of mercy.

Use, Therefore 'tis Christian wisdom to take notice of the mercies we enjoy, else we cannot glorifie God's Name. Oh how much of the faithfulness, power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God in turning the counsels, plots, and devices of the wicked for our good we might have known, had we but diligently observed the mercies we have enjoyed. Those who see not the glory of God now shining brightly in the world, have very little light in themselves, but must needs be very dark,
dark, or wonderful negligent in the observation of the good things they enjoy from God; *Revel. 11. 19.* John who saw the blessed estate of the Church which it should be, he faith the Temple of God, the Ark of the Testament was kept in the holy of holies, and none of the people could see it, yet *John* saw the time when the holy of holies should be opened, therefore 'tis said, that *John* should prophesie again, *Revel. 10. 11.* not that he should arise again and prophesie, but the time is coming that the Revelations shall be so clearly understood as if John had written a new Revelation, according to that in *Isa. 30. 26.* a Scripture parallel to the text, the Lord promiseth when he bindeth the breach of the people & heals the stroke of their wound, *In that day the light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun.* Knowledge shall wonderfully encrease, there shall be very glorious manifestations of God, to his people, and this text in *Isa.* shews plainly that my text hath an eye to that time in which God will exalt his Church and make it glorious in the eyes of all beholders.

*The knowledge of God is a very comfortable thing to the Saints*; they speak here in a triumphing way; *then shall we know if we follow on to know; any thing of God makes gracious hearts to spring with joy and gladness; such a soul looks not so much at the quantity, the multitude of mercies which it enjoys, as how much of those mercies it enjoys: It is the happiness of the Saints in Heaven, to know God, and to have the light of God, and so it is here, *This is eternal life,* To know Thee and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; not only to know him, but to know him as he appears for his Churches deliverance: how many are there now in Heaven blessing God that ever their eyes beheld these days? Nay certainly, should God but let our forefathers out of their graves to see what a turn of things here is, and what an answer of their prayers, they would be as men astonish'd, in a maze: If it be so comfortable to see and know God in this life, what will it be in Heaven, where shall be nothing to darken this light of God? *Those that turn to God shall know God, and the more they turn, the more, they shall know of him; yea, this they may be sure of, what ever*
ever else we here enjoy. Dan. 9. 13. All this evil is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer unto thee, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand thy truth. If we understand thy truth and turn from our iniquities, we shall know more of the truth: the pure in heart shall see God, Mat. 5. 8. Oh the sweet light which purified minds enjoy, to these God reveals his secrets and acquaints them with the mystery of his Covenant, Psal. 25. 14. of which the great Rabbies of the world are ignorant of, these things are mysteries unto them; and this is the reason why they are so ignorant of them. Because they turn not unto God, neither labor to know God.

Obs. 6. Those that truly know something of God, desire to know more of him: As he that is learned in something, covets after more skill; and certainly, none but ignorant people are enemies to learning: those that never knew the worth of it, these are they that cry it down; therefore those which are contented with little, nay and think their little too much sometimes, are of poor, mean, and base spirits, far from following on to know the Lord.

A gracious heart is willing to put forth strong endeavors in the use of means to increase and get more knowledge of God; he will slip no time, neglect no opportunity in which knowledge may be increased; Dan. 9. 13. This was Solomon's prayer, 1 King. 3. 9. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart; in the Hebrew it is, Lord give me a hearing heart. Though God had discovered himself wonderfully, yet he desires that God would discover himself to him more: therefore they are very foolish that think they know enough of God, and are contented with what they know; 'tis a great blessing of God to have a hearing ear, and an understanding heart: no marvail the Saints take so much pains to know the mind of God, therefore what a fond opinion is it, and what a sluggish spirit does it manifest to be satisfied with that knowledge which hath been before in former times? therefore such speeches as these, What, shall we be wiser than our forefathers? we are to bless God for the knowledge of our forefathers, and say as Master Greenham did, I bless God for what our forefathers knew, faith he
he, I bless God also that hath kept back some of his counsels for this
generation to be acquainted with. 'Tis an argument of a poor
spirit to rest satisfied with small measures of knowledge; the
light three or four hundred years ago was small, and in these
diaries our light is poor and small to that which shall be revealed.
It is very little in the matter of worship in the ordering of
his house, therefore had not we need to follow on to know
the Lord? therefore God forbid that there should be any spirits
of contempt at the new lights which God discovers, therefore
let us be humbled for our ignorance & now begin to follow
on to know the Lord; it is true, there no new truth in respect
of the word, but in respect of the manifestation of them to us
they may be said to be new.

It is a blessed thing for a man or woman, to take notice of God's re-
vealing himself to them. Oh how happy a thing had it been for
many of us, if when God first began to stir our hearts we had
followed on to know the Lord! How sad is it for many to
look back to former diaries? what glorious and sweet mani-
festations had they of God's love in former times? but through
worldly cares and sluggishness of spirit have lost all and are
now in the dark, and cannot speak of God in any favourable
way? whereas many who are younger and have kept their
communion with God, know more of God, and are able to
speak more sweetly of the goodness of God than they;
and
you who thus know God in your youth, bless God that He
hath entered you into this light, and make much of it; for as
Christ said to Nathanael, Job. 1. 20. Dost thou believe, when I said
I saw thee under the fig tree? Thou shalt see greater things than these.
So do you bless God for what you do know, and God will re-
veal more.

Those who follow on to know the Lord, may be encouraged that they
shall know more of Him. The diligent hand maketh rich; it
matters not though thy parts are weak, thy abilities mean,
thy failings many, if Christ be thy Teacher it matters not,
thy weaknesses shall not hinder his instructions; Christ teaches
the weak as well as the strong, nay Christ accounts it his
glory to teach such; nay, the Father Himself is not ashamed
to instruct them; nay, Christ gives thanks to his Father that He hath revealed these things to babes and sucklings, Christ is a meek, gentle, lowly teacher, very mild and loving, he will neither upbraid them with their weakness, nor discourage them in their dulness; Christ here speaks to poor, weak, burdened sinners: Who would be discouraged? Did not Christ teach thus mildly? I will not upbraid for thy ignorance: No, to thy soul will he give wisdom liberally, and infuse the principles of saving knowledge into thee: Col. 1:10. Being filled with every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Great are the treasures of knowledge which a diligent Christian may obtain. Psal. 36:10. Draw out thy loving kindness, O Lord, unto them that know thee. Thou hast some glimmering knowledge of God, some spark of Divine light; blest be God for it, go on still, and follow on to know the Lord, and then thou shalt know more. It is a heavy curse upon those women in Timothy, that they are always learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth.

Object. But many a poor soul may here object: That if this be thus, I fear it is my condition, that the means aggravates the sins that I commit, and leaves me inexcusable.

Answ. To answer thee, If thou art not one who follows divers lusts, and makes them thy practice, thou art not the man who art ever learning &c. If thou followest on to know God, God will follow thee on with mercy.

Obs. 10 One meek makes way for another: a lesser prepares for a greater: God beholds all things at once with one view of his providential eye, and 'tis his happiness so to do. But the Saints cannot do this, they must know a little now, & more at another time: And doth not our times make good this text? The Lord will grant one deliverance now, and another revolving the next day, and all to usher in a greater: The Lord first smote us, and within two days he did revive us, and the third day we lived in his sight, and since that deliverance we have followed on to know the Lord, and God hath revealed himself more in his power, wisdom, and faithfulness; the vanity of an arm of flesh, and the outward glory of the creature, and
if it be not our fault we may know more of his workings, if we would follow on to know the Lord. O that we had hearts to follow on the Lord in repenting, believing, and turning to Him, He would follow us on with mercies, and all the good that we can with for one another: God makes wicked men to know more wrath; and the drops of his anger here, are but the beginning of the deluge of miseries which are their portion, they sink, and sink, and their sinking must be to all eternity: Oh the difference which there is between Gods dealing with the Saints, and with the wicked! Though the Saints may be under a cloud for the present, yet they shall know the Lord, the Sun will appear again, the Lord will follow on his work, though we neglect ours, and glorious shall the issue of things be in the conclusion; were it not a glorious thing if a man had lived from the beginning to this day and might live to the end of the world, to see what God did in former times, what God doth now, and what he will do to the end of the world for his poor Churches? The Saints shall live to all eternity to see these glorious things: God did glorious things in the first six thousand years, and surely the next six thousand years shall be most glorious, but in eternity God will do most of all, then the Saints of God those which follow on to know the Lord shall be put into the real possession of all those glorious things which God hath been a doing from all eternity.

I come to the next words.

*His going forth is prepared as the morning.*

Hierom conceived these words to be meant of Christ; he shall come as the morning, being called the Son of righteousness, in loc. the morning-star; and he conceives that it may have reference to the title of the 22. Psal. A Psalm of David, to the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shabar, that is the morning hind, to wit, Christ, who was sent forth as the morning hind, and hunted in his infancy and in his life, as the hind is pursued by the hounds.
If we take the words as they lie before us, they are an expression of Israel's confidence in God after a night of trouble, the word [prepared] signifies also decreed, it is decreed upon as the morning, and the evening, and as the day follows the night by a decree: Children when they see the Sun a going down will many times cry because they think the Sun will never rise again; but if a man should do so, you would think him very simple. Even thus it is with us, 'tis no wonder to see wicked men in their straits crying out, we are undone, this darkness will never be over, yet such is the baseness of our unbelieving hearts who think when the clouds of sorrow begin to arise, and blackness begins to cover the Sun of our prosperity, mercy will never break through, that we are undone, past remedy, and there is no help for us. Light will no more appear. But more particularly, observe.

That the times of the afflictions of God's people are night-times. This is implyed here; we may have a long time of sorrow and misery, a dark tempest may overtake us, yet know, that a morning will come. They are called night-times for three reasons.

Because of the uncomfortableness of those times. Darkness is very terrible. Dreuxelius tells us of a young man, who being very fearful of darkness, God striking him with a dangerous sickness so much that he could not sleep, tumbling up and down in his bed he uttered these words, If this darkness be so terrible, what is eternal darkness? and this proved the means of his conversion. Well therefore may affliction-times be called night-times, times of darkness.

These are times that often take off men from service, from publick and private service. The night is the time in which the brute creatures which in the day time keep close, then come forth for their prey. Therefore the Apostle's exhortation is seasonable. Let us work while it is called to day, before the night comes when no man can work.

Night-times are times of danger. Many of our brethren can speak this truth in these times: When is the time that wicked men prey upon the Saints, and the wild beasts go out and devour
devour, but in the dark? So, when do men meditate upon
terror and create fears to themselves, but in the night of their
afflictions and sorrows?

The time of God's delivering his people is the morning; the Obl. 2.
morning after the sad and dark night. As light is comfort-
table in the morning, after a sad, dark, and stormy night; so
is deliverance after trouble. The morning is very desirable,
as appears Psal. 130. 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord, in the mor-
ning watch. God's mercies after afflictions are very sweet, as Ps. 130. 6
the light approaching in the morning is to the laboring-man
going to his work. When God hath work for men to do, he
expects that they should go forth to it, and shew themselves in it: as the Sun when it riseth begins to shew itself in its bright-
ness and glory, so ought every Christian to shine in the work
and service of God after deliverance. In a sickness, or when
some straight is upon thee thou art hindered in God's service,
and in thy work; well then, when God shows thee, and be-
flows upon thee the morning of a deliverance, go forth and
manifest thy working for God, be not ashamed of his Cause
under the shine of such a mercy.

The Church hath no such affictions upon it, but there comes a
morning after them: the morning will come either to Churches
in special, or persons in particular; and we hope this time
is a coming unto us, therefore let dominion be given unto the
Lord in the morning, yea and let dominion be given to the
righteous in the morning, and this seems to be the meaning
of that place, Rev. 2. 28. To him that overcomes will I give the
morning-star: there may be great contentions, grievous, mis-
eries in this night of afflictions, but be encouraged, To him
that overcomes will I give this morning-star of comfort, and
deliverance.

It is God's presence which makes morning to the Saints, all natu-
ral helps cannot do it; as all the stars cannot make one day
light, some light they may give, but not day light, but
when the Sun arises there is day presently, so God may make
some comfort to a soul by secondary and inferior
means, but 'tis Himself alone by the shining of his face and
Hh
God’s mercies to his people are prepared and decreed mercies. They are set and determined, thy going forth is prepared as the morning, the word I showed you in the Original signifies decreed, Jer. 33. 20. Thus saith the Lord, If you can break my Covenant of the day, and my Covenant of the night, then also may my Covenant with David be broken. Here we have both the text and the note from it, the Covenant of God’s decree with day and night, morning and evening, called a Covenant because it is sure and certain, so also is the Covenant which God hath made to Christ and to his Church, firm and sure, and this is a ground of strong consolation to the Saints to consider, that mercies which they want are set and decreed mercies, therefore with patience wait for them.

The Saints in the night of their affliction can comfort themselves in this, That the morning is a coming. It is night yet, but the morning will come, 'tis approaching; the assurance the morning is coming upholds the Saints’ spirits in the night of their sorrows: the Mariner in tempestuous storms in the dark night, the traveller in his wearisome and dirty journey comforts themselves with this, the morning light is a coming; 'tis far better to be in darkness, and know the morning light is a coming, than to be in the light, and to know or fear that darkness is a coming, and light never to return more.

A little before the Saints deliverance out of their greatest disturbances of miserie and trouble, the darkness of their night is the greatest. As a little before the dawning of the day, the darkness is the thickest, and the most terrible; thus it was in Egypt a little before Israels deliverance, and their return out of captivity, and this should mightily encourage us, not to be disheartened in these times, though our miseries should encrease, for the darker the cloud is and the bigger it grows the neerer it is to its period, therefore wait with patience.

God’s delivering of his Church is gradual, by degrees, not all at once; as the day breaks by degrees, so the Saints shine gradually in their lives, answerable to the light which God hath let
Let into them. We would have deliverance at an instant, light, and perfect noontime presently; but this is not God's way of dealing with his people: a child does not know that it is day till it be very light indeed; but wise discerning men can see day at a little hole (as we use to say,) Oh that we were so wise to discern God's dealings, in the workings of providence towards us. It follows.

His going forth is prepared as the morning. And he shall come Text unto us as the rain.

God glories much in this creature of Rain, in so much that he Rain wonders when men do not fear him who is the giver of rain: They did not say in their hearts, let us fear God who gives rain: there is so much of my glory in this very one creature, that men's hearts must be very hard that will not give God glory for it; Jer. 5. 24. God is stiled the Father of rain, this speech, the mention of it here hath reference to that country in which the Prophet spake; to Canaan, where they had rain, not so frequently as we have, but twice a year especially, viz. at seed time, to soften the ground, and a little before harvest, to plump and fill up the Corn in the ear. The Apostle James seems to allude unto this. Jam. 5. 7. The husbandman waiteth patiently for the fruits of the earth, (so should we for God's time illustrated of delivering his people, God's deliverances to his people shall be as seasonable as the former; and the latter rain) The Notes of observation from these words are.

Look what the rain is to the Corn, so is God's blessing to his people: Obv. r. We have the same dependance upon God for blessing & mercy, that the seed hath upon the rain for growing and encrease, without the rain the Corn will be but as the parched ground in the wilderness, which is the curse and brand upon wicked men, Jer. 17. 5, 6. hence we may see what poor creatures we are, having our dependance upon such a poor creature as the rain is, in its self, and by the dependance which we have on this creature we should learn to consider, what dependance we have upon the infinite God for all the good things which we enjoy. H h h h 2
As the Church is parched and dried up without the rain of God's blessing, so on the other side, all the earth and flowers in the field are refreshed and a beauty there is put on them: by the rain that comes from the Heavens, it makes them to increase. And as the earth is not unthankful for the rain, but sends forth Corn, Grass, and Flowers, so should we always after the receiving of mercies, return unto God in duties; we would think it strange if the earth after all the cost man hath bestowed upon it, and after the sweet and seasonable showers of rain it should be barren and fruitless; Oh man condemn thy self: the word is compared to rain; and how many times hath the sweet showers and droppings of the word lighted upon thee, and yet thou barren, all cost hitherto being lost upon thee?

God's mercies to his people, are both seasonable and suitable: this promised in the text, They should come as the latter, and former rain. The Lord comes to wicked men in a general way of providence; but to the Saints as rain in seed-time and harvest, with much fulness; how should this teach us our duty to wait with patience upon God with the husbandman (Jam. 5. 7.) for the appointed weeks of harvest? So should we till mercies come seasonably; if mercies should always come when we would have them, they would prove judgments to us; that which in its self is a mercy, coming untimely proves an affliction, God sent his people Israel a King, but he proved a heavy judgment to them: if a woman should be delivered upon every pain and throwing she feels, what mishapen birth would she have? It is God's mercy unto you to prolong your birth-still the full time: we cry out, Oh our troubles are great and continue long, we had thought to have seen a period to these times, our wars at an end and peace settled in our Kingdom; Oh know, that if they had ended sooner when we would have them, what a plague would it have been to us? how many that observe God's dealings can say, that if such a mercy had come when they desired it, they had been undone by it, it had ruined them; therefore God's time is the best time: hence we find that the Saints have often blessed.
God when he hath crossed them in their desires, and hath denied them the thing which they so importunately desired: The Lord hath sent us the former rain, at the beginning of the summer in its season to prepare the earth for fruit; but now there are scorching heats in the Kingdom, hearts of displeasure in the Country, in the City, nay almost in every family: Now let us with patience wait, and the latter rain in its season will assuredly come.

Is God so seasonable in his mercies for us? Let us be seasonable and suitable in our duty, let us bring forth fruit unto God in season; as the godly man in the first Psalm is said to do: herein consists the excellency of service, when it is in its place: Therefore it is no other but a temptation of Satan that when men are cold to exercise in their callings, they are then stirred up to prayer, or hearing; but these are not the motions of the Spirit, for they are seasonable; for God never puts the soul upon extrems, the performing of two contrary duties at one and the same time. It is an excellent sign of a gracious heart, to account a season for service, a mercy; and a misery to want an opportunity. Certainly it is a great judgment of God upon a man, to be unserviceable in a season of service. 

Jude, 12. Jude describing those corruptions of the Gospel by life and doctrine, in his time, saith, they were trees withered, twice dead, plucked up by the roots: trees corrupt in the time of autumn, then when their fruit should come in. Even thus it is with many men; at that time when God expects the most fruit from them, show themselves most corrupt and vile. These are such as mightily provoke God: and how many such have we among us at this day, who when God calls them to service, manifest the rotteness which is in their spirits. Many when they are in a poor condition think, Oh had I such a man's estate, what a deal of good would I do with it? had I such parts and abilities as some have, and so much time, and many opportunities given as they have, how would I lay them out for God? Many that are now servants have many good resolutions, Oh what will they do for God, when God calls them to it? O foolish hearts, who when they can do nothing would
would do most, and when they may do most, do nothing at all.

Obst. 4. **God's mercies to his people, are according to the variety of their necessities, the former and the latter rain.** Towards the seed time, they wanted rain, and God sends it them; now let our duty be according to the variety of mercies, God may call us to variety of service; let not us content our selves in that we have don something, in such services we have had our heads, hands, and purses, such and such have been idle, let them now appear; Oh say not so, be not weary of well-doing, God hath employed thee this day in one service, he hath another to do the next; be willing and ready to be set on work, and bless God he will employ thee in service.

Obst. 5. **When God hath begun in mercy with his people, he will go on with them, and will not leave them.** If God should give only the former rain, it would not bring up the seed, the seed would not fructifie and increase without the latter rain: Faith will believe that God will not lose the glory of former mercies, for want of succeeding mercies; Faith believes that God will never begin a work, and there leave it.

Use Now let not us begin in ways of obedience with God, and then leave off and lose all that we have done, let us consider that the vows of God are upon us, and many prayers we have put up, now let us not lose the return of them. How many in the days of their youth followed on to know God, and they found the sweetness of the Word to be as the former and the latter rain unto them? Do not now lose all which you got in your youth, by denying him service in your age, let not slothful age lose the sweetness of those things which in youth through christian diligence we found sweet.

Obst. 6. **God's mercies to his people procure much good; They are not empty shells, there is that good in them to the full, which they promise to have:** these Notes are observable from the words thus understood; but now put all the sense of them together, and then they afford us two or three usefull Observations more.

Obst. 7. **Note, That God's peoples deliverance comes from Heaven. They spring**
spring not out of the earth, if ever God's people are delivered there must be a Divine, Almighty power put forth, else it will never be a deliverance in mercy.

God's people's deliverances cannot be hindered; not by all the powers in Hell or Earth. Why? because they come from above, they are as the light of the Sun, and as the rain that comes upon the earth: who can hinder the Sun from shining the rain from falling? who can interrupt night and day? so who can hinder the rain of mercy from a people prepared for it?

We should make a spiritual use of God's works, in his creatures: We see after the coldest winter there comes a summer, after a drought a spring-tide, they take their turns; let not us in the times of cold and dark afflictions which God may bring us into, conclude, that mercy is quite gone, that God hath shut up his loving kindness in forgetfulness; No, but rest assured that there will be a return of mercy for thee again which shall revive thee.

Ver. 4.

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Luther upon this place, carries on these words as a further expression of mercy to this people Israel, and not in any way of reproof to them; as if the Lord had said to them thus: Oh Israel, my people, I have been very good and gracious to you in the Land of Egypt, and delivered you from that tyranny and oppression which you were under, and I have been with you in the wilderness, and I have brought you into the Land of Canaan, but what are these? all but temporal mercies, I have greater mercies than these to bestow upon you, the Gospel it shall reveal other manner of things to you. He carries it all along as in a way of mercy, but if this be the meaning, then this objection will arise.

What shall we understand by the next words? your good.
goodness is as the morning cloud? how can this be said? Luther to this answers thus: Your goodness, that is, the goodness of God which is yours by Covenant and purchase prepared for you, this mercy of God shall refresh your parched souls, as the morning cloud doth the earth after a long drought; thus he carries it.

But the words, passing away, and their goodness being but as the morning cloud, taking these together, the sense runs another way; viz. to a breaking off from the discourse about the promise of mercy, to a conviction of the generality of Ephraim; and Judahs formality in their greatest pursuit of reformation, they all passed away, as the morning cloud which vaniseth away, and as the early dew that comes to nothing.

Hierom thinks that it is Gods mercies towards them which doth thus pass away; he would not leave them quite without hope, they should have some mercy, but it should not abide nor stay with them. But the genuine sense of the words I conceive to be, the generality of their formality in their pursuit of reformation, therefore, O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? As if the Lord should say, you put me to a stand you even non plus me in this thing, what therefore shall I do unto thee?

Here in the general, we may observe the change of the Prophets voice, in the beginning of the chapter it is all mercy, and their repentance sweetly joyning with the mercy promised them; but now he falls to upbraid them for their hypocrisy, incorrigible nes, and unconstancy in the ways of God; a very good pattern for Ministers who have to deal with varieties of people.

But now, to open the expression of the words more particularly: [What shall I do unto thee?] The manner of the expression is, either in a way of compassion or expostulation; compassion, as if he should say, Oh Ephraim, it is in my heart to do thee good, but nothing will work upon thee; therefore O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? Like that expression in Isa. 5. 4. What could I have done more to my vineyard that I have...
not done? were there any other course further to be taken, any thing else to do I would do it? Now from this sense thus taken of God's compassionating of them we may note.

That God doth not willingly grieve the children of men; he is even obliged to it, at that very time they are grieved by afflictions, at the same time is God troubled for their miseries. Can any tell me, men or Angels, nay I appeal to your selves, can you tell me what I should do more to you than I have done? If you can, I would do it, God expostulates with them, he comes not suddenly upon them, punishment is the last way God takes with his people.

And so it should be with us, to those that are under us, as to children or servants, all means must be tried to prevail with them before correction, exhort, advise, reprove, and pray for them, have you first taken this course? else you can have little comfort in correcting them: this is God's way, though you perhaps see it not; God here meets with an objection which repenting Israel might seem to make, we are such as do believe, to whom the promise doth belong, why might not the Lord bring mercy to us without using such means of smiting, wounding, killing, and parching of us? no faith God, I could not bring about mine own ends but by this way, Oh therefore let us check our selves at such thoughts as these, God brings us low by afflictions, he could do it by mercies, but then his end which he aims at would not be so fully accomplished.

We should not think much to lose our pains in the use of means to others. God he hath taken pains and been at cost with this people, and he hath lost all, God seems to mourn for the los of his charges, I have used this admonition, the other counsel, yet still hypocritical, Oh what shall I do unto thee? but yet Gods does not leave them or grow weary of his pains, he persists still in the means to do them good. In this should the Saints imitate God: if this course will not prevail, use a second; if not this use a third, perhaps that may; and if it does do good it will pay for all the pains. And thus much of the words by way of compassion.
Expos. 2. Now by way of expostulation and so they are to be taken, to humble them, or to convince them of their sin. Hence observe;

Obs. 3. That it's a special means to humble men for sin, to put them to it, to consider what means they have had used to do them good. Would we be seriously affected with sin, and humbled for sin? then go alone and call our souls into examination, whether means have not been used sufficient to do us good? consider what means they have been, judgments, national, domestick, and personal: Mercies, reproofs out of the word, admonitions from friends, terrors and checks of conscience &c. when you have done thus, charge conscience to speak and tell thee the truth, and when it doth tell truth, give it leave to upbraid thee thus: what, so unprofitable, so stout, and stubborn, so froward, and impatient, so unthankful, and so unbelieving for all this? This would be a singular means to shew the soul a view of sin in its colors. But alas most men put off and shun such a course as this is, and the Devil he knows the prevalency and efficacy of such a way as this, and he strives what he can to put the soul off from such a course, and puts men upon such excuses as these, Had I such and such means as others have, I should be more fruitful, I was reprooved, but it was too open, had it been in private and with more love, by such a one and in such a place, it would have done more good. Infinite are the reasonings of a base heart, either to put it off with the want of means, or some defect in the means, and this is Satan's subtilty in the soul; but when the Lord comes truly to humble the soul, that soul will charge it self homely for its sins, in all the circumstances and aggravations of them.

Obs. 4. These words, What shall I do unto thee? notes unto us, that God was as it were in a straight at this time about this people, the observation from them is, That such is the perverseness of men hearts many times that God knows not almost what to do with them: God was here even at a stand, he was fain to consult with himself about them; see in other Scriptures how God expresseth this, Exod. 33. 5. Therefore now put off thy ornaments, that
that I may know what to do with thee: and Deut. 32. 5. They have corrupted their ways; they are a perverse and a crooked generation. The words there signifies the way of wrestlers, who wave up and down, that if the one thinks to have the other here, he is winded the other way: so did this people when God dealt with them this way, they put him off another way. Therefore, Acts 2. 40. we are commanded to save our selves from this unmerciful generation, such a people that none can do good unto; no marvail then Gods Ministers are put to a stand with people many times, who are so crooked and gainsting, like those in Christ's time, who put him to a stand, they were so difficult and crooks, that neither John nor Christ himself could please; when John came they cried out of him, that he was ridged and harsh, and when Christ came he was mild and gentle; and of him they said, he was a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners, John had that which Christ had not, and Christ had that which John had not, and yet neither of them could please these.

But it may be objected, God knew not what to do, how is Object. that? he could have put forth his almighty power and turned their hearts and that presently; how then is it said, God knew not what to do?

To this I answer, that God was not bound to do this, for Answ. God had used all means to prevail with Ephraim and Judah, which the most loving and compassionate friend could have done. Suppose a man were in such a condition that for his cure there were all the Doctors of Physick in the Country where he lived gathered together, and these should consult, advise, and propound things for his recovery, and nothing do it, you would wonder what the matter should be, would not all this aggravate and set forth the danger of the disease and the difficulty of the cure? All this is in God and much more, and it is put forth for the good of souls; I have put forth more power, wisdom, love, and mercy than man can do, now shall this be an aggravation in respect of the creature, and not of the Creator? all means to do you good have been put forth excepting my almighty power, and yet the work is not done.
Obl. 5. The condition of that people is very sad, when no means can do them good; then that fearful judgment may be pronounced upon them, Jer. 6. 30. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them. Ezek. 24. 13. Because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged any more, until I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.

Obl. 6. It is a thing that goes very near the heart of God, to see those that are nigh unto him to be perverse in their ways. What, for Judah to forsake me? It is sad to find crookedness and untowardness in Ephraim, but to meet with them in Judah where my Ordinances are in a special manner, and they so neer unto mee, and I so render of them: 'tis much to behold of what knotty crabbed spirits Gods own people are? A piece of wood may be found yet full of knots and very tough. What goes neerer a man, than to find crookedness in his wife, his children, or friend? 'tis not so much from a stranger, as from one in relation. Even so God takes the unkindness of his people to heart more, than the wickednesses of the ungodly.

Obl. 7. It is not enough to worship God better than others, if we be of perverse spirits. This was the sin of Judah, because they had the Ordinances in a purer way, and worshiped God better than Ephraim, they thought they might continue in this their sin: for Engl. Oh that this were not Englands sin at this day: Let us be humbled for it that we may escape their judgment.

For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

Expos. 1. Your goodness.] That is, your kindness, or your mercy, as the word signifies, in the Original it is [chejed] the same word which we have in the sixt verse, your mercy, I will have mercy, that is, your piety, and godliness in the stricte signification of it, but mercy in the large sense: The Seventy Translators render the words, your mercy, your goodness: but why your goodness? yours, because either of Gods goodness towards them, or their goodness, their holiness which was in them: Gods goodness towards them, which is called ours, sometimes,
somtimes Gods goodness, as in Rom. 11. 31. That through your mercy they might obtain mercy; by that mercy which God bestowed on you, you may encourage the gentiles to come in; 2. Their goodness: which is double, either to their brethren, or their piety & holiness, both these were as the morning cloud, or as the early dew that goeth away. If the first signification of them be taken, then the sense runs thus.

Gods goodness to them was as the morning cloud, that is, They by Expos. 2, their sin had drove away Gods mercy and goodness from them, even as the wind carries the dust before it: God was in the way of mercie to them in appearances, and they by their sins put them all away from them. Bernard faith, that the wind of their unthankfulness did drive away the floods of mercy from them, much more the dews of mercy. Now God forbid that this should be our condition, the clouds of mercy are over us, and the dews of mercy are upon us, now should we by our sins drive these away from us, what a woful case should we be in? Therefore let us not only pray to have the dews of mercy, but also the clouds to shower down rivers of mercy.

Though I do not think this to be the principal scope and sense of the words, yet it may be noted and afford us useful meditation; but the proper meaning of the words seems to signifie their own goodness, which may be taken, 1. more strictly for mercy and compassion towards one another; because in the first verse God calls upon them so earnestly for mercy; notwithstanding all their shews and promises of reformation it was but in hypocrisy, like those in Jer. 34. 15, 16. of whom God faith, That they were turned, and had done right in his sight in proclaiming liberty to their servants, but they had polluted his Name again, by causing those servants formerly set at liberty to return, and bringing them into subjection: so that people which are for a time pitiful and very merciful, afterwards grow cruel and hardhearted.

Let us take heede of such a disposition which is so great an evil; we when together sometimes can joyn in love and unity, pittyng each other, and bearing with each others infirmities.
mites, bearing Christian admonition patiently, but these
good words and fair shows are vanished & come to nothing,
where are those refreshing showers of love & friendship which
you were wont to water each other withal in your Christian
societies? In the room of these there now grows nothing
but the lust of pride, passions, and sad dissentions among us,
which parch and dry up all these good seeds of love and gen-
tleness.

I desire to press this the more, because the Scripture is plea-
sed to make use of this expression of the dew, to set out the
sweetness of a Christian spirit, Psal. 133. 3. Behold, how good
and pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity: How
pleasant is it? It is like the dew of Hermon, and like the dew
that descended upon the mountain of Zion; as that refreshed
the grass, so is this affection of mercy and love in the Saints:
He compares it not to a dew that dried up presently, but to a
dew which descended down; and there the Lord comman-
ded his blessing, even life for evermore. There: Where? Even
in the communion of his Saints: This is spoken particularly
of Church fellowship, Oh then take heed that your mercy and
bounty in relieving your brethren and persecuted Saints, be
not as the dew that passeth away; the Lord hath not made
his mercies, no not his mercy in dewing the earth as a morning
cloud that vanisheth away and comes to nothing; Oh let not
our mercy and love be only in shows and proffers without any
truth and reality; our mercies should come like showers upon
those who have been parched with the burning rage and ma-
lice of the adversary: Now the Lord expects more from us in
this duty than at other times, we must not only pity them and
give them good words, saying, Alas my Brother, and alas
my Sister, and no more, I would I could help you, the Lord
pity you and help you; you must not only do thus, but in ac-
tions and reality you must relieve them with your money,
and provisions. Is it not with too many of us as it was with
those in James, 2. 15. who say to a brother, Depart in peace, be
ye warmed and filled, but give them not wherewith to do it?
what good doth this passing cloud do them? it is but an o-
verture:
Chap. 6. the Prophete of Hosea. Ver. 4. 575

Overture: but perhaps you will say, that you have not been as an overture, a cloud passing away, you have bedewed the Saints in their need, you have given something; but perhaps tis but a poor pittance and that out of your abundance, know that this is not sufficient, it must be a constant dew, and proceed on in degrees of mercy, we should rejoice that God gives us an opportunity to shew our love and mercy, and not think much at it, doing that you do forcedly or repiningly; therefore let not our mercy be as the dew that passeth away. Thus much of the words in this signification of mercy.

Now if we take the words in a large sense, as in Scripture they are often taken, and in this place also, for their goodness and piety; and in this sense there is much of the mind of God in the words, they are so full of marrow and sweetness as can be desired; Now in that God should express godliness and piety by such a word as mercy; Note from thence.

The necessity of this grace of love and brotherly kindness, in regard Ob. 1. godliness itself receives its name from them; though by nature men are passionate and rugged, grace will mollifie them, of covetous men it will change them to liberal and make them free-hearted, for grace is part of the Divine Nature; Nothing is so communicative as God the highest good, and according to the height of any creature is the communicativeness of it: as the Sun being sublime and excellent is most communicative; so a gracious man, hath he parts? they are not for him self but for the Church; hath he an estate? he distributes and communicates of it to the Saints, and according as grace arises in the soul, will communicativeness arise; a true Christian is not close handed.

If grace hath its denomination from hence, Then surely this Ob. 2. grace of mercy is most excellent, because the whole frame of the new man is set out by it, and by this it is expressed. When we use to set out the whole of anything by a part, we do not express it by an inferior part, but in some thing which is eminent in it, as by prayer many times is expressed the whole worship of God, as he that calls upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. Rom. 10. As
An Exposition of

Expos. 1. As the morning cloud: and as the early dew.] In these words God charges this people for three things in which their notorious hypocrisy was expressed. For their vacuity and emptiness, their words were empty sounds, they were clouds without water as Jude expresses it; Jude, 12. tis the high commendation of Christians to be full of God, of Christ, and full of grace and knowledge: of which Ephraim had a shew, but it was but a shew.

For their falseness and deceiving, they had a heart and a heart towards God; they dealt treacherously with God, they were all in shows, but in the bottom nothing but vanity.

3. For their unconffancy and fickleness: As rain in the clouds shews much, but is by the wind presently blown over, the clouds now are all black and lowring, but in a short time are blown over and there is a perfect clear sky; even thus it was in their goodness, though they made glorious shows in their reformation, yet were they all empty, false, and unconstant: Thus it was in the general, in the reformation of the Land, when things were reformed in the Kingdom it was but by halves, and in their particular turnings it was but as the morning cloud, many times there was great appearances of reformation, but they were like the early dew which presently goeth away. The ten Tribes, and Judah did make such beginnings in reformation and setting up the worship of God, that if God were truly worshiped by any people in the world it would be by these, that they would set God up high in their thoughts, high in their practices, and this was very burdensome to the Spirit of God; therefore he faith, What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim? What shall I do unto thee, O Judah?

We find glorious shows of reformation to come to nothing, as appears in these many examples, 2 Kings 2. and the 10. chapters, Jehu made great shows when Joram asked him, Is it peace Jehu? he answered him, What peace so long as the whore-doms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? And in the 10. chapter, what a slaughter doth he make upon the
Priests of Baal? Well what came of this? reade but on in the chapter, verses 29 and 31, it is said, That Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin. What a cloud of hopes was there in Ahab's time, 1 Kings, 18. 39. all the people cryed, The Lord is God, the Lord he is the God, upon the miracle which was wrought by Eljah's prayer, when the fire came down and consumed the sacrifice; but this all vanished in the people, and for Ahab himself the text faith, he did abominably in following of idols so that there was none like unto him, who should himself to work wickedness, 1 Kings, 21. 26. 27. When the Prophet comes to him, after he had killed Nabat and telleth him of his sin, he fells down and humbleth himself, in so much that God himself takes notice of it, and upon it, pronounceth a transmission of his punishment, That he would not bring the evil in his days, but in his sons; God bids the Prophet see how he humbled himself, that not in a show, as if his heart were not touched and affected, he did truly humble himself in his kind; but now, was there no reformation followed upon this? No, none at all, 'Tis very hard to bring great men to reforming: where have we such an example since Theodosius the Emperor, who being a man guilty of rash effusion of blood, coming upon a Sabbath day to the place of publick worship and would have received the Sacrament, Ambrose seeing him a coming goes and meets him at the door, and speaks thus to him; How dare those bloody bands of yours lay holde of the body and blood of Christ, who have been the sheders of so much innocent blood? Which speech did so startle him that he went away and was humbled for his sin, and afterwards came and made his publick confession and then was received in. Whence we may see, that Kings, yea Emperors have been kept back from the Sacrament. But did this humiliation of Ahab come to nothing? If we look but into the 22 chap. we shall find him of a proud hauty spirit, resolved upon his own will, contrary to the will of God, he would go up to Ramoth Gilead, and when Jehoaphat asked him if there were not a Prophet of the Lord more that they might enquire of him, and he said, there is one, but I hate him; and

An Emperor may be kept back from the Sacrament.
this was in the time of his humiliation. And is it not thus with us? many times when judgments are upon us, how penitent are we and then humbled presently? but if the rod be off us we grow proud and stout again presently. So in Judah, what beginnings did that young King Joash make? in the 2 Chron. 24. 6. what care was there taken in repairing the Temple, gave commandement to the Priests and the Levites to gather mony for the building the House of the Lord, and commanded it to be done speedily, he was a very young Prince, but very zealous, in so much that he blamed the high Priest for his want of zeal, and verse 10. tis said the Princes and all the people rejoyned and brought in, and cast into the chest; now what did this produce? surely some glorious effect, mark in the 17. verse, After the death of Jehoja'dah came the Princes of Judah and made obeisance to him (and what then ?) the King hearkened to them; they then began to get him on their side, by complying with him, for the text faith, that he hearkened to them, and then wrath came upon them; tis very likely they said after this manner to him; Consider who you are, a Prince, the head of a people, and you do all that the old man Jehoja'dah commanded; he was a subiect to you, and you be commanded by him, and besides he is now dead and gone, therefore shew your self a man, like a Prince in your Kingdom, stand upon your own legs, be like unto the rest of the Princes about you: Now such words as these might please the King, and be hearkened to, and then they presently forsook the House of the Lord God of their fathers and served groves and Idols, they forsook their Religion; while they kept the truth it preserved them, and they followed the rule, but turning from the rule what outrages do they commit? verse 21, 22. conspire against Zaccari'ah and stoned him, the blood of a Prophets son is now nothing to them, they can down with it, and the King stood and saw him stoned; Oh what a height of sin is this young zealous Prince come unto! How many sad examples have we in these our daies which second this of Joash? how many young ones are there who in their youth give very good hopes but it proves to be
but a morning cloud, their timely beginnings, end in apostacy. Another example we have in Amaziah in the 2 Chron. 25.2. Amaziah in the 6. verse had hired an hundred thousand of Israel Amaziah to go to the war with him, and for their hire he had given them an hundred talents of silver, now after he had hired them, and paid them all their monies, there comes a Prophet of God & tells him, that he must not use a man of them, why faith he what shall I do for my mony the hundred talents which I have paid the Army with? the man of God answered, the Lord is able to give thee much more than these; he had no security for it, but only Gods word for it and that from the mouth of a man; what now? Amaziah obeyed presently and separated the armies of Israel; But what became of this? Ver. 14. after he returned from the slaughter of the Edomites he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down to them; and the 15. verse, God sends him another Prophet, and now see how the spirit of the man is changed; In the former verses the other Prophet coms to him and crosses his design and turns his mind, & he hearkens presently unto him, and obeys the command of God in that thing which was for his present and eminent losse; but this Prophet speaks as mildly, with as much love as possibly could be, and he speaks as much reason to him as a man can desire: Why hast thou relied and sought after the gods of the people which could not deliver their own people out of thy hand? they could not rescue or save their people from thee, and wilt thou serve them? yet in the 16. ver. mark what he saith, Medle not with this matter, Art thou made of the Kings Council? forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten? Doft thou know what a plot and design there is in this thing? The Prophet forbears, but what follows? I know by this, the Lord hath determined to destroy thee, Because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my counsel. The truth is, when we see men unruly, stubborn, and wilful, rejecting counsel, and very unreasonable in their way, especially after some good workings and stirrings, it is a fearful sign God hath a purpose to destroy them; So that wicked King at one time could call the prophet his father, yet how
was he afterward enraged against him? Some may be friends to the Saints at one time, and bitter enemies to them another.

And as the Scripture is full of such examples as these, so Domitian also are Ecclesiastical histories: 'Tis said of Domitian a most cruel persecutor of the Christians, who studied and invented cruel deaths for them, that when he came to the Crown could not endure blood to be shed, no not for sacrifices. 'Tis also reported of Nero, that for five years he was so pitiful and full of mercy, that when they came to have his hand to the sentence of execution of a Malefactor, He would wish that he could not have writ, that so he might not be used in any such thing; and yet where had the Common wealth of Rome, or the Church of God a more desperate enemy or cruel persecutor? Oh that God would grant this may never be our case: What had we at the first in the beginning of the Parliament, how did they show themselves and did great things? stood against Arbitrary government, impeached great ones, executed justice upon a Peer or two? What a mighty spirit was raised in the countries to second and stand by the Parliament! now where's the man that ever thought there would be such a party of Lords and Commons found to join with a company of Papists, Atheists, Malignants, and Irish Rebels, against the Cause of God and the Gospel, and every thing that is truly good? Oh most horrid apostasie! that this morning cloud which in the beginning shined so gloriously should thus vanish and come to nothing! And for others that are not in publick places, though perhaps not so bad as others, yet how cold and flat spirited are they? slack in their moving for publick good, private interest, self, and their own ends ruling in them, more than the prosperity of the publick; nay, so we can gain our own ends though with losse to the publick we care not: Oh what shall God do with us, who are such an untoward people? Change but the name and this Scripture is ours, O England, what shall I do unto thee? Your Spirits for Reformation are down, you care not for a deliverance, but are willing to crouch under your burdens; but let me tell you, should these beginnings
beginnings of reformation end as, and prove to be as the morning cloud and early dew, we should be the most miserable people in the world, losing the greatest opportunity to do our selves good that ever any people had, & procure the greatest curse to our selves, and posterity that ever was upon a people, the generations that are yet unborn may (if we lose this opportunity) curse the time that we lived before them, therefore be encouraged to venture in this work, and do you still own the cause, for God will own it, and never leave it, that so the work may be finished, and we may say with the Saints, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he hath heard us; Ifa. we should consider that it is a mercy the Lord hath made use of such false spirited men in his work to do his people good by, and seeing the Lord is gone so far in the work, let us in-treat him that he would follow it on, and not only bedew us, but even wet us to the root. It is God's promise very remarkable in the 14. chap. of this Prophezie and the 5. verse, I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily: they shall have the dew, and be like the lilly: but the lillie is a poor, weak, fading thing; but faith God, I will moisten the roots of it like Lebanon, my mercy shall be perfected towards them: the Lord grant this promise may be made good to us. And thus much of their reformation in the general, as it concerned the publick State and Church.

Now touching the particular reformation of themselves and their hypocrisy in it: The note from thence is; That for any man to make good beginnings and overtures in the ways of God, and let all fall again, and come to nothing, is a thing very grievous to God, and dangerous to himself. Psal. 78. 36, 37. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they hid unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Covenant: what then? ver. 58, 59. For they provoked him to anger with their Idols; God greatly abhorred Israel, they were as a deceitful bow, hypocritical in all their ways, which the Spirit of God cannot endure, for these reasons.
The Spirit of God is a holy Spirit; but this is a flight sike-
kle, a very vain spirit, no soundness in it.

The Spirit of God is unchangable, and constant in all its
motions; but in this spirit there is nothing but changable-
ess: thus said of God, that there is no shadow of change in
him; and in such a heart as this is there is no shadow of con-
stancy in it;

Such men as these stifle the very conceptions of the Spirit
of God in them; it is accounted murder in a woman to stifle
the conception in her womb, or any waies to hinder it; now
if this be such a vile thing, is it not much more to stifle the
conception and first breathings of the Spirit in the soul? Oh
take heed of such a spirit as this is.

There can be no trust put in such men as these, they are fit
for no employment, neither God nor man can trust them, or
use them in any service, they are up and down sikele and
wavering, we ourselves cannot endure to have to deal with
such a man as is so.

They manifest by this, that there is no fear of God before
their eyes; for were the fear of the great God in them it would
over-awe them so, that they durst not do thus.

This is a great pollution of the Name of God, Jer. 34. 16.
when they had let their servants go, and in an hypocritical
manner, cald them home again, in this thing God faith, they
polluted his great Name.

This is an argument that the things of God and matters of
Religion are looked upon by you as things indifferent, that
there is no great matter in them, things of little consequence,
when thou haft a mind to them thou canst use them or thou
canst let them alone; is not this a mighty dishonor to the Spi-
rit of God?

This shews that such people never had any good begin-
ings or sound Principles in them at the first; far from the
life of Christ, which is said to be a steadfast life, and the life
of every Saint should be like unto his, their hearts were not
right with him, neither were they steadfast in his Cove-

Now
Now as it is grievous to God and to his Spirit, so it is very real of dangerous to our selves. For,

We lose many an opportunity, many a soul-stirring, which at our first awaking we have had. When the soul is first convinced, Oh the many stirrings and good motions which are put into it, anything would then take impression upon the heart; but when we give back there is a hard brawniness upon the heart.

You that are so unconstant, shall never grow to any eminence of grace, and godliness, though there should be truth at the bottom: It is said of Ruben, Gen. 49. 4. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. Men that do but very little yet go on in a constant way of godliness, though their parts be weak, and their performances mean, many imperfections in them, yet going on they come to something; but those who at the first do a great deal, run very fast in their youth, and afterward grow cold again, are very bad; the cooling after heating is very dangerous, as to the body so more to the soul.

This hardens the heart very much; when the spirit is cooled after a heating, it's like water which being hot and cold again, is more cold than it was before, or like iron heat and quenched, is harder than formerly.

This aggravates all other sinning; what, wilt thou sin thus after God hath appeared thus?

This spoils the acceptance of all our other services, be they never so specious; as a man that hath a child lunatick in his fits and moods he is very fencilss and sottish, but in his Lucida intervalla he comes to himself and speaks sensibly and well; now if a man should see him at this time he would think he aild nothing: So there are many who seem to be eminent Christians for the present, but let a temptation come, or lust stir, and they are overcome.

There is nothing will more damp the heart when it comes before God in duty, than this unconstancy of spirit; God may say to thee, Oh soul, how darest thou come before me in such a duty as this, when thou knowest thou art guilty of breach,
breach of promise and falsifying Covenant with me? this will be an eating corrosive upon thy spirit, God may say to thee, how canst thou expect that I should be constant in my mercies towards thee, when thou art so unconstant in thy duty to me? this unconstancy towards God, brings wavering in faith, and unsettledness in our confidence in God, the one makes way for the other; unconstancy in duty, and wavering in believing; God shews himself to us, as we carry our leaves to him, to the pure, he will shew himself pure, Tit. 1. 15.

How should this hit us up to look to our own hearts, seeing they are so fickle and deceitful? let us watch over and daily suspect them; John 2. 23, 24. 'tis said of the people, that many believed in Christ, because of the miracles which he wrought; yet Christ would not commit himself unto them; for Deut. 5. 24. there is a people that made large promises to God, that they would walk in all the Statutes and Ordinances of their God; now faith God, this people say well, they are good words, but Oh that there were such an heart in them! God regards no work you do, except he find it rooted in you, John, 8. 31. Then are you my Disciples indeed, if ye continue in my words; no true Disciple of Christ without abiding in Christ; all flesh is grass; that is, whatsoever is done by fleshly principles, every duty though never so well done to the outward appearance, if it come from a principle of flesh, it is but as the grass; and as the grass withereth and dies away so will these specious outside duties vanish away; therefore look to your hearts, and above all keepings, keep it very diligently, for if the root be found the branches will be so too, and the fruit savory which comes of it.

Means to persevere. 'Tis a very dangerous thing to let beginnings to die; Therefore would you be preserved from such an evil as this is, of fickleness and unconstancy? take my counsel in these particulars.

Do not rest in sudden flashes and stirrings of spirit; perhaps at a Sermon some truth or other that nearlty concerns thee is pressed home upon thy conscience and it begins to stir the heart and warm the affections, now do not think the work is now over
over, or that the hazard of miscarrying to all eternity is over; no thou must rise higher and go further than this, or else thou art undone for ever; this is that rock upon which many poor souls split, and overthrow themselves for ever; therefore look to your hearts in time.

Labor to get your hearts off from all earthly engagements; 'tis not like that man should ever stand constant toward God who is intangled with the snare and cares of this world. That man whose heart is constantly fixed upon God, though he does but little in way of duty, in comparison of many an hypocrite, yet he shall hold out, when the most glorious hypocrit in the world shall fall to the ground.

Take heed of secret sinning: secret sins will undo thee, if they are loved and maintained: one moth in a garment may spoil the garment; one leak in a ship may drown the ship; a pen-knife may stab and kill a man as well as a sword: so one sin may damn the soul, nay there is more danger of a secret sin causing the miscarrying of the soul than open prophaness, because they are not so obvious to the reproofs of the Word; therefore take heed that secret sinning cats not out good beginnings.

Often take an account of your hearts how things stand with them; say, Oh my soul, how is it with thee? how stand tears between God and thee? Come my soul, there was a time that there was such good stirrings and good motions in thee, what is now become of them? at the first beginning thou were very forward and active for God, such a chamber, such a closet can witness the intercourse God and thou hadst, thou didst walk close with God and his fear was in thee; this would be a special help were it observed to keep the heart upright: but I fear many a Minister may say of his people as Paul did to the Galatians, Where is now the blessedness which you spake of?

Never trust your hearts after warmings with comfort and spiritual revivings: when thou in any Ordinances hast met with God's presence, and he hath shined upon thee in love, if thou hast got a smile from Jesus Christ at that time, have a care of your hearts,
hearts, and look for temptations and prepare for them; many when they have good desires, and hopeful beginnings in them, think that the work is past, and the danger is over, and then for the most part comes a temptation of Satan and encounters with them and they are basely foyled, and lose their peace again, great consolations usually precedes great temptations. Mat. 3. 17. when God testifies that Jesus Christ is his beloved Son, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, in the very next chapter, how was he led into temptations? what a combat he had with the Devil? As after the greatest mercies many times follows the greatest miseries: See how Christ thinks of these temptations, all his glory and magnificence could not put the thoughts of his sufferings out of his mind: John 12. 12. Christ comes riding in pomp to Jerusalem, and the people they magnified him, crying out, Hosanna to the Son of David, yet ver. 27. he cries out, Father, save me from that hour.

When you find any stirrings of good desires to arise, any motion of the Spirit to affect you, work them downwards, to humble your hearts, making you base and vile in your own eyes, that so you may grow downward in the root; this is very dangerous when beginnings run upwards presently, but when they shew us our sins and unworthiness then they work kindly: If there he no moisture at the root of the tree, though there be never so many blossoms they will die, vanish, and come to nothing; so if your joyes and secret raptures of soul are not moistened in the tears of sorrow and humiliation they will blow off and be shaken down by the next temptation; but when the inward workings of joy in the heart, do as well operate to humiliation as consolation, when they work both ways, then will not your goodness be as the early dew that goeth away, and as the morning cloud which soon vaniseth? Psal. 110. 3. He prophesied that in the times of the Gospel Christ's people shall be a willing people in the day of his power, Christ's power shall be put forth upon his people to subdue their wills to the will of God, so that if we find this effect of Christ's power in us, then may we be sure that our goodness shall not prove as the morning cloud.
Rest not in stirrings and beginnings, except you find them to work you to union with Jesus Christ: therefore as soon as your hearts begin to work, you should stop a little and ask your hearts what of Jesus Christ is there in those beginnings; have I more of his righteousness, wisdom and love than I had before? only such stirrings of heart as bring Christ into the soul will hold and stand fast; that is very observable which we read of concerning the Manna, Exod. 16. 14. that the dew which was upon the ground that passed away, but the Manna that stayed on still; so the good affections and desires which are in many are even like the dew, which as soon as the Sun is up is gone presently; now if you would not have the efficacy of them gone, try what Manna there is left behind, what of Christ is strengthened, is your faith propped, your love increased, your humility acted? then it's something; the Israelites could not feed upon the dew, but the Manna was their nourishment; so how is it with you when the heat of your desires and stirrings are over? can you then feed upon Christ this spiritual Manna; look what word of promise is left in your hearts after your stirrings are over, and how your hearts are affected with it; such as find the promise remaining when the dew is gone and that these promises are as sweet now as they were at the first working of the affections, such a soul will hold out, and his righteousness shall not be as the morning cloud or early dew that passeth away.

Ver. 5.

Therefore have I hewed them by my Prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and by judgments are as the light, that goeth forth.

Therefore have I hewed them.] We would think there were little dependance upon these words, yet there is a very fit one. Therefore, that is, because they are so fickle and unconstant, so off and on, therefore have I caused my Prophets to deal sharply with them to cut them to the quick; I would not have dealt thus with them, but that I have no other way to take
take with them, seeing that they are so vain, so flight in their spirits I deal thus with them, that if it were possible I might fit them, and they might be brought to see what a God it is they have to deal withal. The Apostle in Titus, 1. 13. is commanded to reprove them sharply that they might be sound in the faith; sharply, that is, cuttingly, rebuke them cuttingly. My Prophets have been as an ax, [in Prophets] as an ax that cuts hard knotty wood, or as the instruments of Carvers in Stone, which cuts rough things. And have slain them by the words of my mouth; the seventy Translators carry these words thus, Have slain the Prophets, that is, have hewn the Prophets; and Hierom refers it to the time of Elijah, 1 Kings, 18 40. who slew so many of Baals Prophets, and unto Jibus time, that slue also many of Baals Priests, 2 Kings, 10. 25. thus they carry it; and in this you have an objection answered that the people might plead thus.

Expos. 1. 'Tis true we have been led aside and have not worshiped God as we should do, but it is our Priests and our Prophets which have led us aside, we did but as we were taught, and if we have been led aside our Prophets and our Priests have done it: Nay faith God you cannot plead so, for you have seen my hand against the Prophets sufficiently, I have cut them off. So that though I conceive not this to be the meaning of these words, yet from this tense this useful Note may be observed.

Obser. That when God comes out against false Prophets, and appears against them, then God look especially that people should not follow them, nor do as they have been taught by them. Ezek. 13. 10. there is a woful judgment denonnced against the false Prophets, for prophesying peace when God's purposes were set against Jerusalem, for destruction. Their judgment was, That they should not come into the Assemblies of his people, and my hand shall be against them: (and mark,) you shall know that I am the Lord God. They shall then know more particularly that I am the Lord God, when my hand is thus out against them. It is a mighty conviction of people, when they see the hand of God out against their false teachers; and if so, how may the people
people of England be convinced of the evil of that way they Apply for, to admire and cry up, when the hand of God is so heavy up-for England on the superstitious time-servers and maintainers of these superstitious waies?

But there are others who carry the word unto the good Expos. Prophets, as Pareus with some others, & so in a twofold sense they are said to be slain.

First, In their charge. I have sent them (faith God) to deliver my message to this people, and they have flown in their faces and have killed them, and destroyed them, and I account it as if I had done it, because I sent them about their work: and this was spoken at that time when the Prophets were grossly abused, when Zaccariab the Prophet delivered his Message to 24.1. King Josiah, and was slain for it; and (faith the text, Acts, 7.52. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers murdered? But now here is their encouragement against all the ill usage & the hardships which they meet withal in their work: I look upon it faith God as I doing it, I had a hand in it: therefore certainly God will not let them go unrewarded. 1 Sam. 22.23. David said to Abiathar, Abide thou with me, fear not; for be that seeketh thy life, seeketh my life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard. David was the occasion of Abiathar's fathers death, and because of that, what respect had David of him for this? and shall not God much more? So that, have you a friend, a brother, or a father slain for the Cause of God, or in it, standing for Him? shall not God take his part? yea, He will. Ahimelech was slain accidentally for the Cause of David, & yet he would deal well with Abiathar: but faith God, thy friend was slain, standing for Me, and owning My Cause; he shall lose nothing by it, for I will deal well with thee, and preserve thee alive for his Cause of God.

I have slain them.] That is thus, Their Ministry hath been Expos. so heavy that it hath even killed them, I have followed them on so with work, that I have even slain them; so that this people cannot say, they have not been warned, or that they have had no Prophets among them, or that their Prophets have been idle, that they have had no work to do; and certainly it is a good
An Exposition of

Ver. 5

a good death for a Minister to die preaching. PARENTS makes much use of this, faith he, How much more honorable to die in doing Gods work, than by committing sinful acts of intemperance, uncleannesses, &c. they cannot spend their strength better than in Gods service: O let that people who have such Ministers look to it, that they bring forth fruit answerable in some proportion to the cost that is bestowed on them: and if you take the sense thus, then God seems to speak grievingly, Oh what shall I do with this people? what means hath been used, what losses have I sustained by them? I have spent many choice Servants among them, the lives and strengths of such spirits have been spent upon them of whom the world was not worthy, Oh what shall I do unto such a people! Surely such a people, enjoying such a Ministry, had need look to their profession: May not this be said of many Congregations in London? hath not God sent many choice spirits among you to do you good? and have they effected the end for which they were sent among you? If not, woe to you: God hath a special regard unto this, when he shall spend the lives of his choicest and most precious servants, and if he have not a considerable value and return in peoples fruitfulness it will migh- tily provoke and incense him against them: God hath an high esteem of his Ministers lives and strengths, they are valued more than so, to be spent and wasted upon unfruitful people, who neither care for them nor their Ministry.

Expos. But to come more particularly, and according to the genuine sense of the words: This slaying refers itself to the people: Now the Word slayeth in these two respects.

1. In its denouncing of judgement upon men; for what the Word threatens it is said to do, Jer. 18. 7, 8. At what instant I speak concerning a Nation, or concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy, and when God promises mercy & good he is said to give life; and we should look upon them as performing of it.

2. In the operation and working of it, it hath a mighty efficacious in it, for the working upon impenitent sinners to ruin, it is as a twoedged sword which doth execution every way Isa. 11. 3. It.
It makes men of quick understanding in the fear of God; and God is said to consume Antichrist by the breath of his nostrils, and by the Word of his mouth, the Word is of such a force that sometimes it brings death in a literal sense to some who withstand and oppose it, Ezek. 11. 2. Pelatiah gives wicked counsel in the City, and the Prophet is commanded to prophesie against him, and in the 15. verse we read that when the Prophet prophesied, Pelatiah died: so many times God makes the Word so powerful in the mouths of his servants that it strikes men dead presently: Guatler hath this note from hence, that the power of the Word appears in this, that it awakens, convinces, and terrifies the consciences of men, so that they go home and make away themselves, and become self-murderers, and the truth is, it is nothing else but the word working powerfully to the ruin and destruction of men.

Or the words may be taken hyperbolically; as men that are oppressed and in misery, Oh ye kill me, I am not able to endure it, you will be the death of me; the Prophets came so close to them, that they cried out, Oh they will kill us, we are not able to suffer them. Luther faith that these words Thou hast slain them, by the words of my mouth; that is meant the Luther Law, by the Law thou hast slain them, and by the word Prophets he faith is meant, that part of Doctrine which is necessary to be preached, to prevent the abuse of the Doctrine of the Gospel, which otherwise men would be ready to pervert, and he further adds, that, those men which deny the use of the Law were not so much as to be suffered; I mention this of Luther the rather because those who deny the use of the Law urge him so strongly for the upholding of them in their way.

It follows.

Thy judgments are as the light. That is, passively, thy threatnings upon them, or the execution of those threatnings upon them shall break out as the light; though they have slain my Prophets, and think thereby to free themselves from those judgments which they threatened against them; no faith God, for all this I will make known my threatnings, which they have:
have denounced against them; when the Prophet Jeremiah had delivered the message of God to the Princes and the Priests they laid hold on him, and said, he should surely die, Jer. 26. 8. Now see what the Prophet saith in the 14 and 15. verses, As for me, behold I am in your hands, do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you, but know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall bring innocent blood upon your heads; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you. You think perhaps that when the Minister is gone his words are gone and there is an end of them; no, they shall lie upon you, and shall break out so perspicuously that they shall clearly convince you; though formerly they pleaded for themselves as they in Isa. 58. that let them be never so well conceived of themselves, I will discover them to be but a company of base Hypocrites, I will then shew you such clear demonstrations of the ways of righteousness in which you should have walked, that all shall discern what you are, it shall then appear as clear as the light wherein you have gone astray from the rule.

Expos. 2. Again, the words may be taken actively, and then the sense is, That my power shall so appear upon them, that their righteousness and holiness shall appear as the light. And then though my judgments were smart and tedious at the first, yet you shall not repent it; you shall see so much good from them which will make amends and pay all charges: Or thus, I have sent my Prophet among this people for this very end and purpose, to make this people a righteous people, and that they may manifest this as clearly as the light. And thus you have the meaning of the words, the observations follow.

Obs. 1. Unconstancy in the ways of Religion causes God to be incensed against a people. Such men as are off and on, which make overtures in the ways of Religion had need to have cutting truths preached to them. Therefore have I heaped them (faith God) by my Prophet's; and as God's Ministers must deal thus with their people, so must every man in particular who loves his own soul, and if so be thy soul be precious in thy eyes thou wilt willingly deal sharply with thy self, say, Oh wretched heart that I have, to let such stirrings die, such motions of
the spirit come to nothing, dost thou know whom thou hast to deal withal, the infinite great God? and for what thou hast to deal with him, for no less than eternity, and hast thou stirrings of heart about this? and dost thou let them die? this provokes God.

Many men's hearts are like knotty timber and rough stones.

I have hewed them. And the longer men continued in their sins the nofter they are; as timber which hath lain long rocking in the water is tough & hardened; so men's spirits that are soaked in their evil ways. Oh how untoward are they, and how hard a thing is it to fasten any thing that is good upon them? so that when we see men's spirits tough, flubborn and hard to be wrought upon think of this text, I have hewed them by my Prophets.

That this is spoken of a people whose goodness was as the morning cloud, and the early dew which passeth away: The Note is, That many people although their goodness be but as the dew, soon off, yet their evil is hard and settled: the goodness of many is like the softness of a plumb soon crushed; but their wickedness is like the stone in the plumb hard and unflexible; so that you may here see grace & truth doth not consist in good motions, stirrings, and desires, for these may be where the heart is not melting, soft, nor tender; the heart is not changed, for were the heart kindly wrought upon, it would kindly yield and buckle under the power of the Word, when it comes against their sins, there would be a taking part with the Word.

God's Ministers are hewers. I have hewed them by my Prophets; elsewhere they are called Gods Workmen, and ther eHewers, and that in these two respects: Either to prepare them for God's building, or to call them into the fire; these are God's ends in sending His Ministers, His Hewers; now they hew all, good and bad, to take them off from their own rootings and make them as beams in God's building, or to be as an ax laid to the root of their souls. *Tis recorded that in the building of Solomon's Temple there was no noise of knocking with hammers or tools, the materials being prepared, fitted, and squared beforehand: so those which will be mem-

M m m m

Obs. 2.

Obs. 3.

Obs. 4.
bers of God's Temple hereafter, must be hewed and fitted for it here; therefore John is said to be one sent to make rough things plain, to level great mountains, mountains of Inns, crabbed and rugged spirits.

Use. Ministers of the Gospel when they meet with such rough, crose, and untoward spirits must deal with them answerably.

That the Ministers of the Gospel when they meet with such rough, crose, and untoward spirits must deal with them answerably.

I have hewn them by my Prophets, my Prophets have done their work upon them, God seems to speak to the Prophets to bid them sharpen their tools, make their instruments keen, preach suitably unto them, saving some with fear, as the Apostle Jude speaks, verse 23. I wonder what people can say to this Scripture, who cry out against Ministers for preaching the Law, when the text saies plainly, and save some with fear: therefore let those that are the Ministers of the Word have a care that they sharpen their tools by the Word, putting an edge upon them that so they may encounter with the greatest oppositions.

When the Ministers hew, God hews. I have hewn them faith God, when as it was the Prophets that did it. Is the Word sharp, and doth it come close at any time? then look to God which makes it so. Is the tool sharp, and doth it smart? then look to the hand that directed the stroke, and know that if God hew thee, he will have his will upon thee, he will accomplish the end he aims at; when God hews thee, if thou dost not work under his hand to make something of for use, he will throw thee into the fire, as a workman in an angry fit of passion throws away the piece he is at work upon into the fire;
fire; so faith God, this man or this woman they are good for nothing, I'll throw them into the fire: take heed, you who have stirrings and motions unto good, and yet have your secret lusts, beloved bosom-corruptions, know that God may cut you down for the fire, and thou mayest be already cut down for the fire, though thou livest in the bosom of the Church under the Ordinances; before thou art cut down by death, as we may see, the figtree was cut down, yet had leaves for a while; green and flourishing; know, 'tis possible that a man which makes a glorious profession and performs many duties, yet may be but a vessel of wrath, one cut down by the stroke of the Word by wrath, this cutting down, is like unto that which we find in Luke 14. 24. For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper; and yet these men had stirrings and motions in them. Oh! the consideration of this should make sinners to tremble, that it is possible for men, yea for men professing godliness to be cut down by the Word of wrath, and that while they are living and well; now God may be said to cut a man down for vengeance when he in judgment determines and secretly resolves against him, that no means nor mercies shall do him good, now wo to that man against whom God is thus resolved and determined. But that none may be discouraged and disheartened by this, but awakened, know, that so long as God still strives with thee, and is yet working upon thee by his Word, and by his Spirit, he hath not yet determined against thee, thou art not past hope of cure, therefore improve the seasons, and do not despair this that hath been said, let it support you from despair, but not encourage you to presume.

Gods Ministers are Gods Tools; and as tools by working are worn out, so are Gods Ministers worn by working; but when the work goes on though the tools are worn, the laborer thinks not much: so God when he sees people come in and accept of mercy, he is content to bear the loss of the wearing of his tools; and as men reckon not only for the work done, but also for the wearing of the tools, and the more precious the tool is, the more he accounts of, and reckons for the
wearing of it, so will God also, not only reckon for the lives of his servants but also for their strength and the weakening of their bodies by sweating and labor. Therefore people had need to look to it, that their fruit may answer the cost. God is at with them; for know, that God sets a high price upon His choice servants lives, and He will have a vailable consideration for them, either in you or upon you; and we be to you if God forceth the price of such blood as theirs is in your ruin.

**Ob. 8.**

Gods Ministers are Gods mouth to His people. I have slain them by the words of my mouth: Jer. 15. 19. If thou take forth the precious from the vile, then shall you be as my mouth. And look what is threatned by them, is threatned by God; and what provision they open and press upon a soul in distress, is done by God Himself, and it is to be looked upon as God speaking to thee in particular.

**Ob. 9.**

The Word of God is of great power, and full of efficacy. I have slain them by the words of my mouth. The word is like a two-edged sword which smites every way and doth execution: every time men hear the Word it is for life or for death, Dent. 32. 46, 47. Set your hearts unto all the words which I testifie unto you this day, for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life; it is your life which lies upon it, therefore look ye to it; so in Revel. 11. 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouths, and devoureth their enemies: Though the witnesses be as Olive branches, yet if any wrong them they must be killed by devouring fire.

**Obj.**

But if the Word be of such efficacy, of a slaying nature, why should we hear it?

**Answ.**

We are bound to hear the Word as our duty: and when we come we should present our lusts before the edge of the Word: were sin presented before it, it would only slay the sin and not the person. When the Word comes, it will slay the one, either your sins, or your souls; therefore if you would have your souls saved, put your sins to death: the upright man need not fear comming to the Word; but such as are resolved to keep their sins, the Word will slay both them and their sins too. It follows.
And thy judgments shall break forth, as the light that goeth forth.

Hence observe: That God's judgments, while men go on in a profane way of sinning, lie in the dark; they see them not, they sin and judgment appears not, and therefore they take liberty and embolden themselves in their sins.

When judgments do come, they break out. Judgments were working their ruin before, they did not sleep: Judgments when they come they break out upon sinners: as mighty waters being stop'd in their course of running, when they work over the interruption they run the faster.

God hath His time to punish sins openly by His judgments; as they sin secretly in the dark, God will punish openly in the light to make them ashamed.

God will have His time to convince men by His judgments; then their filthiness shall be punished.

Now God's judgments may be said to break forth (to convince men, and) as the light, three ways.

1. When the same thing threatened in the Word comes to passe.

2. When the judgment inflicted is suitable to the sin committed.

3. When it is executed by a remarkable hand upon the sinner, then that judgement breaks forth upon a man as the light.

God's judgments are gradual. They break forth as the light, not all at once; there is the morning light, and the mid-day; as mercies to the Saints are gradual, so judgments upon the wicked are by degrees, dropping at the first.

There is much to be learned by the breakings out of judgment as the light. Is. 26. 8. When thy judgments are abroad, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Mic. 6. 9. The man of wisdom shall see thy Name: Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. Prov. 28. 5. Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord, understand all things: they shall learn much. Examine your
your hearts by this, what you have learned by these judg-
ments that are broken out so clear upon us, that the greatest
Atheist in the world may learn this, That the Lord He is God,
as the people cried out in 1 King. 18.39.

Ob. 7. When God sends a Ministry to a people, it is to discover the way of
God, and of His Worship to that people; The Lord makes their
righteousness to appear and break forth as the light, and He
will have His way and Worship to appear as clearly as the
light, His way shall not be in the dark to them.

Ob. 8. When God brings a powerful Ministry to a people, the more powerful
and sharp that Ministry hath been, if they do not turn, the more ter-
rible and sharp shall judgement be upon them. Your consciences
shall echo upon this ground in your ears, The Lord is righte-
ous in all His ways, justly am I punished. Oh the sad cries of
many people in their licknesses and death-beds! How many
times have I been warned by the Word? but I sighted war-
nings, I did not regard them; warnings have been no war-
nings to me, therefore justly am I in misery.

Use. Oh that the consideration of this might be more prevalent
and work more upon us, than ever God’s quickness in His judg-
ments wrought towards those that stand out against a quick,
searching Ministry.

Ver. 6.

For I desired Mercy, and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of
God, more than burnt offerings.

This being a great Scripture, having much of the mind of
God in it, and much difficulty in the understanding of
Conexio. it. I read no further at this time. Here we have a reason of
God’s severe expression in the former verse, where it was said
that God had hewed them by his Prophets, and slew them by
the words of his mouth. Why was God so severe against
them? it was, because he would not be put off with their
sacrifices, they bauldered up themselves with these, objecting
against the Prophet when he pressed them to mercy and to the
knowledge of God: Why, are not we abundant in serving of
God?
God? burnt offerings are not neglected by us; and why should not we be accepted? No faith God, I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; never tell me of your sacrifices and burnt offerings, so long as there is no mercy among you; Therefore have I heaved them by my Prophets, & flain them by the words of my mouth; you are so glued unto these outward things, that I must hew you off from them. This sentence is most famous, quoted twice by Christ himself in the new Testament, which we do not find of any place again, which notes the eminency of it; the first time it is quoted you shall find in Mat. 9. 13. and the second, in Mat. 12. 7.

For the meaning of of the words: For I desired mercy] the Expositor, word signifies to desire and to will a thing with a great complacency, or delight; as if God should say, mercy is a thing so pleasing to me, that I desire it at my heart; the word in the Original is fuller than is express in our English translation, יְנֻנֶּנְּנָּן nothing in the world is so pleasing unto me as mercy. There is Gods great mercy in reconciling the world unto himself by Jesus Christ; and this is more worth than all the sacrifices in the world; but this is not the mercy meant in the text, Heb. 10. 5, 6. burnt offerings, and sacrifices thou hadst no pleasure in, but a body hast thou prepared: there is no mercy like this, the mercy of God for his Son Jesus Christ. But the mercy here meant in the text, it is the mercy of man, and the word here, mercy, is the same word in the Original with that in the 4. verse, your goodness is as the morning cloud that passeth away; so that I desire mercy, that is not the mercy of God, but mercy to man, and that mercy to ourselves, so Chrift interprets it, in Mat. 12. 7. If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. As if Christ should say, God in some cases would have men provide for themselves, though they neglect the keeping of the Sabbath, I will have mercy, as to our selves so to others, mercy to men, either to their bodies or to their souls; mercy to the body every one will grant, but it ought to be especially to the soul: warranted from Chrifts other quotation of these words, Mat. 9. 13. Go ye, and learn what this meaneth, I will have.
Mercy. I have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: This word mercy is a synecdoche comprehending all the duties of the second Table under one, but sacrifice is meant synecdochically all instituted Ordinances and Worship, all the affirmative precepts of the second and fourth commandments, all Ordinances commanded them then, or that ever should be commanded them hereafter are included in these commands; and this appears to be so by Christ's applying of the text in Mat. 12: 7, where it is applied to the sanctification of the Sabbath, and in Mat. 9: 13, there Christ applies it and quotes it under an Ordinance, whether true or not, humane or divine, it matters not, the separation of the Jews from publicans and sinners, it being unlawful to eat with them, yet in a case of mercy they might, having thereby an opportunity to do good to their souls; so that from these two texts you see a clear warrant for the interpretation of this text.

Now in the further clearing of it, I shall answer some questions, satisfy some objections, and lastly, raise certain observations.

Quest. 1. What is an instituted Ordinance? There are natural Ordinances, and instituted Duties: Now what is the difference between them? for natural worship, God stands so much upon it, that He will have it before all kind of mercy; inform us therefore of the difference of these two.

Answ. For the unfolding of this, know, that by Natural Duties we understand, such Duties as we owe to God, as God, and to be performed by us as to a God: Then there are other duties, to be performed by men, as unto men, which if there had been no law to bind them to the performance of them, yet they would be performed by men, & they were bound to perform them, they are radicated in the heart, such Duties as the first Commandement binds us unto; To have no other Gods but the Lord, to fear this God, and Him alone, to love Him before all, and above all, to trust in Him for help at all times: these are Duties to be done as unto a God, Nature it self teacheth a man to perform these Duties.
Then there are Duties to be performed unto men, As honoring of parents, speaking the truth, not deceiving one another, defiling men's bodies, these Duties are radicated in the heart; that were there no Law of God to bind men, yet it were in men's hearts to do them: Now these Duties must not yield to mercy. But for instituted worship, such which if God had not revealed had not been duties, neither could men be bound unto them: As for their sacrifices under the Law, by Bullocks and Goats; these kind of sacrifices, were they not revealed by some Prophet to be the mind of God they had not bind bound unto them: So for our Church Ordinances of Sacraments, Christian Admonition and the like, are such as flow from God's Prerogative, and not so much from God's Nature; the other duties lie in God's Nature and Holiness, and are to be performed unto Him as to a God so holy.

But how did God say here, mercy and not sacrifice? did not God require sacrifice as well as mercy?

Yea, God did require sacrifice as well as mercy: But we must understand this with these limitations.

1. I will have sacrifice, but not without the Spirit: Sacrifices without the Spirit joined with them are nothing worth; when spiritual worship is joined with their outward sacrifices then they are accepted of, instituted worship separated from natural worship is regarded.

2. Not sacrifices to make atonement for their sins. The people thought by their sacrifices to make atonement for their lives though they were never so vile and base; but faith God, I will not have it thus, I will have it only typical, in relation to Christ; but they left out Christ in them: therefore faith God in this sense, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

3. Not sacrifice. That is, of your own; They had many sacrifices of their own, which God did neither require, nor would He accept them from them. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

4. Not sacrifices. That is, such as are injuriously gotten: the Jews were a very oppressing, grinding people, they would be much in sacrifices, but it was out of the rights of the poor, they
they would oppress and grind the poor and then think to make up all again by their sacrifices, in this case I will have mercy and not &c.

5. Not sacrifices; that is, comparatively, mercy rather than sacrifice; this negative in Scripture is often set out for half the thing it self, as in Prov. 8. 10. Receive instruction, and not silver, and the knowledge of God rather than fine gold. Receive instruction, not silver, that is, rather than silver, God's requiring of knowledge does not forbid men seeking estates, but it shews us rather that knowledge is to be chosen before it. So Paul is sent to preach the Gospel, and not to baptize; that is, rather than to baptize; for Paul did baptize in some places: so faith God here, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; that is, let me have both, but if both cannot be had, let me have mercy of the two, I do so much delight in it that if I cannot have mercy and sacrifice together, let me not miss of mercy.

Quest. 3. Why should God require mercy rather than sacrifice?

Answ. 1. Because mercy is good in itself, but sacrifice is good only in reference to something else, the good of sacrifices are only in their references to Jesus Christ.

2. Mercy is good in itself, but sacrifice is good because commanded by God's Prerogative, God's command puts its goodness upon it.

3. Mercy is part of God's Image in man, but sacrifice is not, and by how much more excellent God's Image is in man, above any other excellency, by so much is mercy more excellent than sacrifice.

4. All instituted worship was made for man, not man for it; but for natural worship man was made for it, and not it for man; therefore must needs be more excellent. Christ's reasoning thus warrants this reasoning, faith Christ, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath: Now this cannot be said of Natural worship, of the duties of fearing God, loving of God, trusting in God.

3. There is more self-denial in a duty of Mercy than in any Sacrifice; to do good to the poor, and that in obedience to God's
Gods command argues more self-denial than to be offering up to God sacrifices, it puts a great honor upon the creature to offer up sacrifice to God, because then man hath to do with God in an immediate manner.

Mercy is, _Aeterna veritatis_, it is an eternal everlasting duty, it was always, and shall be so, and the habit of it shall be to to all eternity; though in Heaven there be no objects to be delivered out of misery, yet this disposition of mercy remains in them.

Sacrifice is a typical duty for the obtaining of the pardon of sin, but mercy is a moral duty; now that which is a moral duty is better than that which is but to further us in the getting of pardon for a moral offence committed against the great God.

Because sacrifices are but to further us in natural duties: to what end serve Sacraments and why do I receive Sacraments but to strengthen my faith, encrease my love, and to further my appetite in hearing God's mind? why do I hear the Word of God, but that it may turn me unto God? Now the end of a thing is better than the means, for the attaining of that end, therefore upon these grounds God may be said to desire mercy rather than sacrifice.

What are these cases in which God will have mercy and not sacrifices?

The principal cases are these ten.

Sometimes in the case of a beast he will have mercy and not sacrifice; if a beast should be in danger of losing its life by any casualty upon the Lord's day, God doth allow us to forbear all Church Ordinances at that time rather than let the beast perish; but because this liberty by God is allowed to men in this case, yet you must not think that a beast is better than all Gods Ordinances.

In case of mercy to the poor; and that I conceive to be the principal scope of the words of this text; these people here they wronged, oppressed, and tyrannized over the poor; and then they thought to make amends to God by their sacrifices and offerings; men must not lay out so much of their estates either...
either in superfluities, or for the maintainance of Gods true worship, as to hinder them in their benevolence and charity to the poor, no Ordinance of God should hinder us in shewing mercy to the least member of Jesu Christ; although those which are next us ought to be first relieved, yet know, 'tis a shame that others should be neglected and forgotten, yea it is a reproach to the waies of God, that profane men should be more liberal to the poor, that more hungry bellies should be fed & naked backs cloathed by them than by those which profess Religion and would seem to honor God most; do not you think this will be sufficient to excuse you before God, when the cry of the poor shall come up before him, that you have been at such and such charges for the Ordinances, and for Gods worship: no in this case God will have mercy.

Mercy to parents, to relieve parents in their necessity, is a case in which God will have mercy and not sacrifice; if providence so cast it, that parents should stand in need of our help, if we are able to help them in their decay, it is our duty to do it, though by this means you are deprived of Gods Ordinances, you ought rather to regard the reliefe of parents than the observation of the Sabbath if the case should fall out: you are ready to think thus, Were not I better to let my parents alone, I must obey the command of Christ who


That be which forsakes not father and mother for my sake and the Gospel, and follows not me, is not worthy of me. Here now is a mistake in this, It is not worthy of me, that is, if your parents should counsel, advise, perswade, intice, or command you to the practice of evil to the omission of any good, to the breach of any command, and upon your refusal they should be angry with you, that you will not obey them, but follow the command of God and not go out of Gods way, in this case father and mother is to be forsaken for Christ and the Gospel, but in no case if they stand in need of your help; this is grounded upon that text in Mark, 7. 11, which text I shall open to you, but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free: Now what is the meaning of this word Corban?
Corban? The word signifies a gift consecrated to God; now the Jews thought that if they could say the word Corban, they were exempted from all duty to their parents in this kind; 'tis true, I had an estate, but I have consecrated it to God, and Church services, and though I owe duty and respect to you as my parents, yet more to God, as my Creator: this is most vile and abominable, and reproved by Christ himself, Possidemus in the life of Austin reports that Austin condemned parents, who used to give their estates away to Monasteries, and pious uses as they thought, and neglected their children: so for children to neglect and slight parents in the time of their necessity, and think to excuse it with this they have given to the Church, and now they are not able to do any more, this will not do it; and this was the old way of Papists, to get people to give to their Mother, the Church. I find cited a tradition by some of the Jews used by them, when they fell out and were throughly angry one with another, they would tell him he should never have any benefit in any thing which they had, and this they called Corban, and this in Mat. 15. 5. is called a gift, The gift of the Altar: therefore some of the Heathens forbad this Oath Corban; and yet this was the Oath that these did swear by, and by some is used (upon the matter) even at this day as an Oath, as thus, when any that we have relation unto, having throughly angered us, we use to say, well, you shall never be a penny the better for me, this is no other than this oath Corban which they used to swear by in this place.

In the case of the good of souls, and this is Christ's case, Mat. 9. 13. Go ye and learn what that meaneth; I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: though men ought to prize Ordinances, and to set a high esteem of God's worship, yet if it should so fall out, that instituted worship and mercy to souls come together, and both cannot be done together, instituted worship may be left undone so not slighted, and the work of mercy to the soul must be valued before it: we are ready to think that nothing must give way to instituted worship, but certainly immortal souls
souls are of more worth than Ordinances. Paul was of such a disposition, that he could wish himself out of Heaven and become an Anathema for his brethren, that souls might be saved.

In case of humane societies, and for the quiet state of Kingdoms, and yet this no prejudice to Gods Ordinances: God hath allowed to men the art of Navigation; we read Solomon sent ships to Tharshis to fetch gold, which were it not for this text I could not see any warrant there were for that employment of Navigation; when men shall be three or four yeers out perhaps and never hear Sermons, nor receive Sacraments; and yet it is lawful upon this ground, that God will have the peace of States and quiet of Kingdoms preserved and maintained, he will rather suspense with men in the use of his own Ordinances, for the prosperity of Civil States: therefore Solomon is not reproved for sending Ships to Ophir for gold.

In the case of Church societies, when the People of God are scattered, and cannot meet together, God is content in such cases His people should be without Ordinances, and yet no sin to them: as is clear in the case of the children of Israel all the time the Church was in the wilderness even for forty yeers together they wanted Circumcision; but when they came into Canaan, that they enjoyed any settlement than they were circumcised again, and had the Passover which before they could not partake of; so that in some cases and upon some grounds the people of God may be without Ordinances, and that for a long time, and yet without sin to them; and upon this ground in the text, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: therfore this may be the reason of those words which Christ spake to His Disciples; I have many things to say unto you, but you are not able to bear them: so may we say, Christ hath many truths to reveal which yet people are not able to bear, therefore he with-holds the revelation of them until that time.

In case of mercy to our bodies: And this is Christ's case in the 12th of Matthew, 7. verse, If ye had known what this meaneth, ye would
would not have condemned the guiltless: yet, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Gods care of the bodies of men is such, that he will rather have men do the one than the other. He will rather have mercy than the duty: Christ doth not plead here for the Disciples, that this was not a breach of the Sabbath; but the case was such that their bodies required it, it was a case of mercy, and now God would rather have mercy than the duty: A servant perhaps thinks much to stay at home to tend a child, or look to the house upon the Lords day, he objects, Why should not I go to the Church? Is not my soul of greater worth and price than this child, or this house? Now these people go upon a good principle; yet here they er in their acting of it: as to instance; A father commands his child to do two services for him, the one to wait on him at the table, the other to make clean his shoes; to wait upon his father at the table he is willing to do, because this is creditable, but the other he grumbles at and is discontented: now in which doth he shew most obedience in? Surely in obeying of the meanest command. So God requires of us two sorts of Duties, one the more honorable, the other more mean, yet perhaps the meaner, a work of mercy: God is wonderful careful of our bodies, God care and would have us also careful of the bodies of others, men ought not to massacar their bodies, God doth not require weak sickly bodies, to spend whole nights in fasting and prayer: God in this case will have mercy, and not sacrifice of us.

Mercy in case of our own estates. But here some may say, What, may we regard our own particular estates before the service of God? Yea, in some cases we may; as thus, Suppose we were in the Assembly at publick Ordinances, and there should be a fire in the Town, or theives breaking into a house, we might lawfully leave the Ordinances to quench the fire, or to apprehend the theives, and save our goods. Num.9.13. If a man were in a journey, and in the mean time the Passover were to be delivered, he might go on in his journey, and do his business, and yet no sin to him. So may we, if in a journey or special business, if not on purpose we go about this in flighting
lighting or contemning of the Ordinance, we may go on in our business without sin, God will have mercy.

9. In the times of persecution, God doth allow his people the forbearing of some Ordinances; as is clear in Acts 8:1. There was at that time a great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem, so that the Church was scattered and could not be together to enjoy Church-fellowship, and yet it was no sin to them; it had been an unjust charge if any should have come and said, What, do you prize your lives so highly, and fear the loss of them, more than the Ordinances of God? will not you join together in Church-fellowship and constant assembling your selves together, because you think you shall suffer by it? No, in such case, God will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

10. In the case of some eminent service for God. As in the case of Nehemiah, he being the King's cup-bearer he must attend it, and when he was to go up to Jerusalem by the King's leave, when he had finished his work he returns to the King again to serve in his place, though he wanted the Ordinances there in the King's Court, which he might have enjoyed at Jerusalem, yet that he might be more serviceable in the Churches. Cause he is contented to deny himself in his own comforts. These are the cases, with others of the like nature, in which God will have mercy, and not sacrifice.

I shall answer some Objections that may be made against this.

Obj. 1. But mens hearts are deceitful, and they may pretend cases of mercy when there is no such thing in hand.

Answ. Know, though in such a case thou couldst not do it, yet do not thou judge another man that may or can do it; the rule is difficult, that's true, yet do not thou envy another man's grace, to whom God hath given power to manage his business with Christian wisdom; thou thinkest that if thou were in such places and hadst such temptations as others have, thou shouldst miscarry, and aim at self in them; yet do not thou judge another man, that may do it in sincerity, do not thou judge another man's duty through thy weakness: God's servants in this world are as his stewards; now we know that a steward
fiebard hath not every thing given him in a particular command by his Lord, but only general rules given him to order particulars according to prudence, faithfulness, and zeal; for the exercise of these three graces are required in a steward: Prudence and wisdom, faithfulness and trust, care and zeal, in all these. So doth God give general rules for the ordering of a Christian life, and these general rules being observed, particular cases are to be ordered, in prudence, faithfulness, and zeal; wisdom to judge, faithfulness in doing, zeal to keep up life and spirit in action, and where there is a miscarriage through frailty God will have mercy.

But it may be asked, Can any duty of the second Table be more excellent than the duties of the first Table? of the one God being the object; of the other man is the object.

The duties of the first Table, are to be understood either for the substantial and internal duties of the heart, or some superadded duties of the first Table, joyned with the internal and substantial duties; then there are duties of the second Table, some more substantial some superadded; now if we compare the internal and substantial duties with the superadded duties, there the substantial are above them, and to be preferred before them, they having God for their immediate object, yet in some cases God is pleased to indulge with men so far, that he will let the duties of the second Table, duties of mercy towards men go before the more substantial duties of the first Table; so in the duties of the second Table to men, some duties which are but circumstantial and not so necessary God allows should be done when others more fundamental shall lie still omitted, yet without sin.

But if God’s Ordinances are duties, can they be omitted at any time and that without sin? Are they duties or not duties?

For answer, Take notice, there are two sorts of Precepts, Answer, Negative and Affirmative; a negative binds semper, & ad semper, always and at all times, but an affirmative doth bind only semper, but not ad semper, always, but not at all seasons; at one time we may omit a thousand actions which are to be done, but we cannot do many actions at one and the same time.
time, therefore for affirmative duties, if they be done in their season, God accepts of them as done continually; as for that command, *Pray continually*; if it be done in its season, God looks upon it as done continually, and always done; if providence should so order it, that another duty be brought to be done at this instant, that duty which I was going to perform ceaseth then to be a duty to me at this time; if two good things come together, the one can be done but at a time, so that the other is not a duty at that time to you, which otherwise is a duty, else if this were not, man would be necessitated to sin, and all the grace and mercy and assistance of God could not help in this case, if two affirmative precepts must bind at the same time, to be done; therefore this must be remembered for a truth, that when two affirmative precepts come together, the one is a duty to be performed, the other not.

**Instance.** But what say you to the case of Daniel, when he knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house and prayed more earnestly; *Dan. 6. 10*. Might not he have saved his life according to this rule? *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*; yet his was a sacrifice that he tendered up to God, it was more than a prayer.

*Daniel at this time was cal'd to manifest Jehovah to be the true God, for he was forbid at this time by a Decree, to pray to any God, or ask a petition of any man fave of the King, in thirty daies: now had he done this he had denied the true God, and acknowledged Nebuchadnezzar to be God; the thing he had to profess was higher than the sacrifice, it was a duty of the first commandement, a manifestation of God to be the true God, and the case coming thus, who is the God that must be praid unto? Daniel resolves the case saying, I'll pray to no God but the true God. And surely in this high case, profession is to be made whatever becomes of mercy, yeain a lesser case of sacrifice than this, if it comes to profession, it is turned from a duty of the second Table, to a duty of the first, and must be done as a duty of the first; as thus, Suppose a man be forbid the doing of such a duty which formerly he hath consta-
flantly performed, and held lawful, and his forbearing of it shall be to them a testimony of his denial of that truth which he formerly held, in such a case he is cal'd to suffer the hardest things that can be, yea life itself, if it come to it, rather than to omit that duty, or to do the least thing that may be, which to the enemies of the truth may interpretatively be a sign of denial, the doing of such a duty against such a command is a witnessing to the truth, and not offering up of sacrifice; it is not alwaies that a man is cal'd to this, but if it ever come to this case, interpretatively to deny a truth of God, then must we suffer, rather than obey in such a thing, though never so small: and this was the case of the Primitive times, they would rather suffer the loss of life, estates and all, than do that which interpretatively should be a profession of the denial of any of the least truth of God. Turtullian reports of a Soldier who when all the rest of his fellows carried Baies on their hats, in testimony of their worship to the false god, he carried a sprig in his hand, and being asked the reason why he did so, he answered thus, I am a Christian, and this manifested him to be so, and being further questioned about it, he at the last suffered for it rather than he would yield. How many among us would think this a small matter, and had it been their case they would have done it, yet this man considering it was a note of distinction, chose rather the loss of life than yield to do it; and this act of his was approved of by learned and godly men, to be lawful; if we should have lived in those times as many of our forefathers did, that the question should be, who is a Christian, or who is not? and this by way of distinction the case is different; changed from a sacrifice to a precept and duty of the first commandment: there was a time that the Saints would not assemble together because of the persecution, Acts, 8.1, but at another time they would not for sake joining together, whatever become of them; when their assembling was made a note of distinction, who was a Saint, who not, who held for such a truth, who would not, in this case for them not to have assembled together had been a great sin in them, and interpretatively a denial of the truth.

O o o 2
Chap. 5. An Exposition of Ver. 6.

Obj. 4. But if God will have mercy in case of outward things, saving our estates and preservation of our persons, rather than his own Ordinances, is not this to prefer the body before the soul? &c.

Answ. The preservation of a man's outward estate and condition is to be considered in a threefold respect.

1. As it is in itself, and when a man shall love his estate only in reference to itself, certainly it is sin, to regard it before sacrifice.

2. It is to be considered as it enables us to do service for God and our brethren; and this is in a higher respect than the other, of loving our estates for our selves.

3. It is to be considered as a duty in such and such cases, that so I may be made more serviceable for God, and for his people: Now in this case it is an act of Religion, the saving of our estates, as well as praying or hearing of a Sermon, in this case it is a act of sacrifice, for I do it in obedience to God, for Religious ends; though the thing itself be an outward act, yet thus done it is an act of Religion, for by this I manifest both my love to God and Religion.

Obj. 5. But is not a man bound to part with much of his estate, yea and to suffer much for the enjoyment of the Ordinances?

Answ. Yea certainly very much, we ought both to give and to suffer much for the enjoyment of Ordinances, yea we should choose rather to live in a poor condition so we may enjoy the Ordinances in their purity, than to be in a rich condition and want the Ordinances; we are to be liberal our selves and careful in putting on others to be so, even till it come to the case of unmercifulness, and then God will have mercy and not sacrifice.

Quest. But when may it be said to come to a case of unmercifulness in which God will have mercy and not sacrifice?

Answ. 1. When a subsistence is so denied, that the subject would be destroyed; in this case God will rather have mercy than instituted worship performed to him.

2. When a greater opportunity is denied, to do good to our own souls and brethren, than this is of enjoyment of the Ordinances, then surely God will have mercy and not sacrifice;
it is impossible, to give particular rules in every thing, this is
left to the sanctified prudence of the Saints.

But is not this the justifying of, and consenting with those that took Obj. 6
up Innovations, and read the Service book?

I answer, No; This Scripture gives no warrant for any Answ.
such, for there is a great difference between the yeilding to
that which may pollute and defile the Ordinances, and to forbear an Ordinance; we must not do any thing to pollute an Ordinance, though it were to save our lives, but the forbearing of an Ordinance and that for long time may be, and yet without sin.

But is it not a greater mercy to enjoy Ordinances, than estates, we Obj. 7
think it a great mercy, yes and we have many mercies in the enjoy-
ment of them, though we suffer many hard things, in the mean time
we enjoy communion with God and Jesus Christ in them.

Certainly the mercy is very great, and much communion
is there to be had with God in his own Ordinances rightly administred, and happy are those souls which find this effect
by the Ordinances and Communion with God.

But yet know that the maintainance of the subject is to be
more regarded than the comfort of it, though it be spiritual: but now have a care of turning what I have laid into poisons;
do not ye say that you may now do any thing for the preserva-
tion of the subject, we must not do the least thing that can
be, by which an Ordinance may be polluted and defiled.

To be serviceable in publique use is more than to enjoy Or-
dinances; as for a Minister to preach Jesus Christ to a people
is a greater mercy than his particular good can be; and this
hath been the judgment of all the Churches, yea it hath been
the practice of the Churches to send forth men to preach the
Gospel, and to open the things of the Kingdom to them, in
which time they could not enjoy the Ordinance of the Sacra-
ment: Paul would have been content to have been Anathema
for his brethren, the being of publique use for the Churches
good was a greater good to him and more in his esteem than
private. Thus far of the objections, the observations follow
answerable to these, Ten.
Chap. 6.

An Exposition of Ver. 6

Obf. 1. That carnal hearts who make little conscience of their duties towards men, and are very cruel in their dealings towards them, yet may be contented to submit to instituted worship: This very Scripture, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, is a secret rebuke unto such people as these; such were those in Jer. 7. 4. who cried, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, yet very wicked in their dealings, Isa. 58. those Hypocrites they could be content to submit to instituted worship, frequent in solemn duties of fasting and prayer, yet were such as did smite with the still, oppress, and grind the poor. Ezek. 24. 21. the sanctuary was accounted their strength, the excellency of their strength, and that which their eyes did pity, and yet these very wicked, and in the 28. verse their minds were on it, their hearts did love it, yet themselves carnal.

Real. Because men may be exercized in instituted worship without any power of godliness, it is a very easie work to flesh and blood there is little difficulty in it, in respect of the outward act of performance.

2. Because it hath the most shew of the power of godliness, they seem to be as sincere as any in their worship, there is a great shew in the flesh, in the outward man; whereas God's worship is inward, soul worship, which carnal hearts cannot endure, nor do they desire it, 'tis outside worship which they prize; now God forbid that any should have low concepts of Ordinances because wicked men joyn in them.

Obf. 2. Carnal men by joyning in outward Ordinances think thereby to satisfy their consciences. Thus did they in this place, think to put off God and their own consciences by living in the external acts of worship, and yet live in the love of known sinne; what a deal of tit had the Prophet to convince these Hypocrites of this their wickedness?

Obf. 3. God and mens consciences will not be put off with this; God will despise both it and them: the Heathen gods would not be put off with such outides, even the Heathens had such a conceit of their gods: one faith, What a vile thing is it to think, that the gods will be put off with gifts? no, these are despised.

Ezek. 24.
fed by them, they look that the souls should be just: And an-<nother faith, It is not for sacrifices, but inward performances that God looks at.

The Lord has a high esteem of mercy; and it appears in this, that he will have it preferred before sacrifice; and this is called, an acceptable sacrifice, and a sweet savour in God's nostrils. Phil. 4:18 Chrysostom faith. That he had rather work a work of mercy, than a miracle: and surely that must needs be high in God's eyes and esteem which he pales so dear for.

Oh Christians! imitate God in this, let your estee ms of mercy be raised higher than ever before, from this that you have heard concerning the excellency of it. The works of mercy are glorious works, there is more in such acts of mercy, than in those acts of religion which men think are more spiritual: I speak the more of this, because it is a scandal which is laid upon godly men by the men of the world, that they are miserable and close handed; now in this we should labor to convince the world by the practice of mercy.

It is the Christians skill, when two Duties come together, which to choose: This is a snare in which many Christians are caught and foiled, they think both must be done at the same time, when as the one is the duty, the other not.

Though the object of an action be spiritual, yet it is not a sufficient ground to prefer it before another action whose object may be but natural. The Ordinances of God have God for their object, and the enjoying of communion with him, yet in other actions which may be only natural I may shew more obedience to God in the doing of them, than in offering up of sacrifice.

If God's own Worship may be forborn in case of mercy, how much more men's institutions and inventions? Oh what a vile spirit is there in those men which will not suffer their superstitious vanities to give place to mercy, men must be undone in their bodies and estates rather than their wills be disobeyed; the Prelates faction have confessed themselves, that the Cross, the Surplice, and the rest of that trash were their own institutions; yet Ministers must be silenced, bodies imprisoned, fa-
milies starved, and thousands of souls destroyed rather than their wills should not be fulfilled: Oh the intolerable pride of these men, had they been God's institutions, yet in this case they might have been forborn, what did these men say in plain English but thus much? Let Christ never be revealed to millions and thousands of souls, rather than these ceremonies shall be omitted or neglected.

**Ob1. 8.** If God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, *Certainly he will have mercy rather than disputing about sacrifice.* Suppose there be a truth in that which is disputed about, yet God in this case will have mercy rather than sacrifice, rather than mercy shall be neglected he will have sacrifice omitted; we have Ordinances and plenty of preaching, but the Lord knows how soon we may be deprived of them, let us not dispute and wrangle away our mercy.

**Object.** But must we not enquire after truth, and at this time also?

**Answ.** God forbid we should deny or speak against any which shall search into, or enquire after truth, yea at this time, when it is a case of mercy: as thus, when young converts are taken off from fundamental truths, and led into errors, and souls hindered from coming in to Christ, in this case we should abstain from contending.

**Instance.** But young converts must abstain from all appearance of evil, and labour to come to the knowledge of Christ's will in every point.

**Answ.** It is true, they must, but this must be orderly, they must first be established and grounded in fundamentals, and then they have liberty in this; that rule is perpetual and holds in Rom. 14, this case, *Rom. 14. 1. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, 3, urged, but not to doubtful disputations:* Now let no man say, the point was a case of indifferency, some would eat herbs out of conscience, others would forbear; now certainly it is a sin to do that out of conscience which God doth not regard, not command; the thing it self here was indifferent, yet in this case they must not receive them to doubtful disputations: now, if not to doubtful disputations, then surely not to disputation.
putation to hold up error, and to ensnare and betray young beginners in godliness, Acts, 15. 24. There were troublemakers crept in among them, who were formerly of them, and they laboured to subvert their souls: The word in the Original signifies, as if a man should have been packing up wares in a fat to send beyond the Seas, and there should come another and scatter and undo all again which was packed up; or as Soldiers who have packed up their artillery, their bag and baggage, and all forced to be undone of a sudden again; so did these false teachers, that did unvessel them, scatter, and bring them all into a confusion, so they labored to subvert them from the faith.

If the duties of inward worship and mercy to men be preferred before sacrifice, then surely before our own wills, and lusts: God is contented, that we may perform our duties to our brethren, to forbear his own Ordinances; and what shall we stand upon our wills and humors? Oh proud spirit that exalteth thy self against the Lord; we must be content to deny our selves very far for the publick good, and our brethren, because in this case God is pleased to indulge with men so far, as for a time to be without that honor which he should have from men in their acknowledgment of him in publick service.

As God is contented to forbear his Worship, let men also be contented to forbear their Institutions with those which cannot yield in their consciences to them; but let there be peace and quiet maintained by us, we should indulge and bear each with other in such cases, of mercy especially, there should not be the urging of lesser things upon tender consciences with that severity as to undo them, though they be Gods Ordinances.

But if this be so, then what binders but men may do what they Object.

No. What hath been said hath been limited only to inward worship, and so it be not to the undoing of men, punish them they may, but not to the ruin of them; nay in these controversies in which men are so divided, many sitting in consultation, some thinking this to be the way, others thinking another to be the way of Christ, things ought not so to be
be urged, as to undo the other party that oppose; certainly such a practice as this, is contrary to the rule of mercy in this text; but men must unsatisfie themselves presently, and lay down their opinions upon such a day as shall be appointed them: Is not this cruelty?

\[\text{Instance}\]

But you will say, It is sufficient that learned and godly men hold this opinion, they find sufficient to satisfie them, and we may mistake.

\[\text{Ans.}\]

To this I answer: That those who are ignorant in this kind must understand the grounds of those men upon which they hold their opinion, and if their grounds can satisfie you, then it is something, but to say, I must hold such and such things because others do & I ignorant of their grounds, this is folly; for as we must not have an implicit faith, so we must not have an implicit judgment, to hold an opinion because others hold it. And thus I have given you the mind of God in this Scripture, so far as God hath revealed it to me for the present. It follows.

\[\text{Text.}\]

*And the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings.*

\[\text{Expos.}\]

For the understanding of these words, I shall, 1. Answer some Questions, and then give you the Observations.

\[\text{Quest. 1.}\]

*What knowledge of God is it that is here meant?*

\[\text{Ans.}\]

Certainly, not a knowledge barely notional, but such as is joyed with faith, and obedience, a practical knowledge which brings the heart to love and embrace the truth; Isa. 53. 11. By his knowledge, shall my righteous servant justify many.

\[\text{Quest. 2.}\]

*Why is the knowledge of God joyed to mercy here? was it not full enough before, Mercy, and not sacrifice?*

\[\text{Ans.}\]

Because as God accepts not mercy without sacrifice, neither doth he regard knowledge without mercy; men are here in the extreams on both sides; some are very merciful, as the Papists, but withal very ignorant of the knowledge of God and his ways, that as the Apostle faith of love, *If I should give all my goods to the poor, and my body to be burnt, it were nothing*: so if we
we be never so merciful and ignorant it availleth nothing; others have much knowledge yet very rugged and hard hearted, now when these are separated God regardes them not, but when mercy and knowledge meet together then are they pleasing.

*Why is knowledge only named here, when as there are many duties*? 

*Of the first Table, as well as this?*

Because both of the excellency and necessity of the knowledge of God, the knowledge of God it hath an influence into all the duties of Gods worship.

Because many are very much exercised in instituted worship,yet very ignorant in the knowledge of God, it was so then and is so now in our daies, many who contend for Ordinances and Christ's Government in his Church,yet are very ignorant of Christ's redeeming the world, the way of God in reconciling himself and sinners together, ignorant of the Attributes of God and their working for his peoples good,therefore he requires the knowledge of himself to be in men principally.

*Why is the knowledge of God put after mercy, it being better than*? 

*mercy?*

The knowledge of God is not set after mercy,because mercy is to be preferred before knowledge, but because mercy is more apparent and most conspicuous, it is most convincing to men, now when people are convinced of one duty, they are the sooner convinced of another, conscience will easily convince them of what is God's mind.

*But why is it said burnt offerings, rather than peace offerings, and*? 

*sin offerings which we read of?*

Because these have more respect unto God than other offerings. 

*As if the holy Ghost should say, I require mercy and not sacrifice, and the inward worship of God, faith and knowledge rather than any natural worship.* The Notes from hence are these.

The duties of the first and second Table are to be joined together. 

*Obl. 1.* 

*Mercy,
Mercy, and sacrifice, knowledge of God, and burnt offerings when in their place are acceptable, therefore let us take heed of separating that which God hath joined.

Obs. 2. The knowledge of God is a most excellent thing. This is that which sanctifies God's Name, and manifests him to be very glorious in the world; Paul accounted all things but loss and dung in comparison of the excellency of this knowledge of Christ.

Use; Instruct your children and servants in this knowledge, else how can God have his glory from them; how few are there which glorifie God as God, and the reason is, because of the ignorance which is in their minds. Eph. 4. 18.

Obs. 3. Men may be very diligent in instituted worship, and yet very ignorant: none so acted in their instituted worship as these people, yet none so ignorant as they.

Use. That you are forward in instituted worship it is your commendation, but take heed this be not your sin, to be ignorant of fundamental things. It is the great design of the Devil to set up the man of sin, to keep men in darkness and ignorance; many who think themselves, and would be thought to be opposers of Antichrist, even in this, by their questioning of fundamentals of Religion, and disputings about their new Opinions, they raise him up; when as the truth is, it is the way the Devil useth to darken the truth of Christ and Religion, by casting a vail over it, therefore you that are guilty of this distemper, take heed though you have light in some things, yet take heed that a vail be not drawn over those things which do more nearly concern you, and are of greater consequence.

Obs. 4. Soul-worship must be preferred before all other worship: we must not give God a carrion service, a carcasse without a soul; strong are the expressions in Scripture which are used against such outside, formal worship, Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13. God professes of them, that he regards them not, he is full of them, his soul loaths them, they are iniquity, and a trouble to him, they are looked upon as a burden to him, such as God will hide his eyes from, and when they make many prayers, he will not hear them; in this one Scripture we have fourteen expressions.
expressions against outside, formal duties, besides those four Isa. 1.11, which we find in Isa. 66:3. Thus you have the mind of God in this short, but full sentence.

Now God forbid that what hath been said out of this Scripture should be abused to liberty in a sinful way.

VER. 7.

For they like men have transgressed the Covenant.

Here is an argument, that mercy in the former verse is to be understood in a large sense: Why? Because it is the very substance of the Covenant; they have been hard-hearted, cruel and unmerciful, and thereby they have transgressed the Covenant: I am merciful in the Covenant, and my grace is free and full to sinners there; but they have transgressed the Covenant by being cruel and unmerciful, for they like men have transgressed the Covenant.

Like men] That is, like Adam, these men have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; Rom. 15.14. speaks of those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression: But these, as they have old Adam in them, so they have dealt with me as he did; and as he for his sin was cast out of Paradise, so these men have deserved to be cast out of the good Land. But Vatablus & Tremelius and others, read the words thus; They have broken my Covenant as a man, they thought that I had been as their fellow creature; as they made it their practice to break covenants with men, so they thought to do with God: so they have transgressed my Covenant. This sense may be taken, and so the note of Observation would be reasonable.

That the cause of breach of Covenant with God, is, because we consider not that it is with God that we make our Covenants.

But the words are more usually read, as in our books, But Expos. 2, they like men have transgressed my Covenant: that is, Not as I, who like a God have kept Covenant: but they like such men as themselves, i.e. weak, unconstant, frail, unfaithful creatures have transgressed, Job. 31.33.
But may not this seem to be an excusing or diminution of their sin, to say, They like men, (implying the common frailty of humane nature) have transgressed?

**Answ.** No, 'tis rather an aggravation of their sin. Therefore the word here translated Men, is used for man in his corrupt estate, for weak men, frail men, not men at their strength, but weakness, and so distinct from that which signifies, generous and strenuous men; and so the comparison is not only between God and man, but between the several degrees of men.

Or thus: They have transgressed my Covenant like men. That is, not like my people. Saints that are of my Church, they have not transgressed my Covenant so. Their ways have been the ways of ordinary men, and as such they have transgressed my Covenant. The two last senses are principally meant here.

Covenant]

The Covenant of God we usually divide into two parts; but the Scripture to me seems to hold forth a threelfold Covenant: the one of Works, that which was made with Adam in Paradise. The other Covenant is that which was made with Abraham, the Covenant of Grace, the tenor of which is this, I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee. Then there was a Covenant which was made with them upon mount Sinai. Now the Covenant here cannot be meant immediately of the Covenant of works, nor of the Covenant of grace, for this Covenant here implied, is one especially made with them, and therefore must be understood of that at mount Sinai, made many hundred years after the others, yet it hath reference to that of Works, and of Grace.

And were this knot rightly understood and untied, the Antinomians and we might easily be reconciled; for we grant that Believers are delivered from the Law in respect of the power of it, as condemning; from the rigor of it, but not from the duties of the Law; for the things commanded in the Law were duties before the Law was given, the Law was written in the hearts of the Saints from the beginning. But the opening of this point would require a whol Exercise, and I shall reserve this to some other time.
Now then the Covenant which they transgressed, was the Covenant at large, but especially that Covenant which God made with them when they came into the Land of Canaan.

They transgressed] the word is, They went over it, the Covenant was betwixt them and their sins, and they went over it to their sins, the bank was not high enough to keep them and their sins asunder.

There] they transgressed the Covenant, there in that good Land of Canaan into which God had brought them, and given them possession, to the Chaldae.

Again, There they transgressed the Covenant, there when God had hewed them by his Prophets, and thought to work them to good.

Lastly, There, that is, in the Covenant itself, and that in those things wherein they thought they kept the Covenant, and thought they honored me most; in those things they broke the Covenant.

They dealt treacherously] The Greek renders it, they have despised me; they have forsaken me, and chosen other lovers, and left me; even as a woman leaves her own husband to whom she was engaged and goes to other men. It notes, the hearts joyning to some other rather than God, so as to be willing to leave the Lord, and either out of affection to some other, or for private advantage, to forsake God and his Cause, to promote and further that which is against God. The Notes of Observation from the words are these.

That it is God's goodness that he will please to enter into Covenant with such poor creatures as we are. It is made an aggravation of their sin here, that they did falsifie the Covenant, the love of God in entering into Covenant with such mean worthless creatures should command duty from us in the most difficult precepts that are, and that with willingness.

- God is constant in his Covenant with men. This is in opposition to their unfaithfulness, they deal falsely with God in the Covenant, but God is constant in his Covenant, he confirms his
Dan. 9. 27. His Covenant with the strength of a Giant, Dan. 9. 27. And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one week: The word there signifies, he confirms the Covenant like a Giant, or a mighty strong man; they as weak men break Covenant with me, but I with strength confirm my Covenant, therefore David faith, 2 Sam. 23. 5. Yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, it is immovable.

Obs. 3. Mans nature is very weak and unsettled. They like men have transgressed the Covenant. We must not lay too much upon men, for when they are most unfaithful they do but like men. Oh what folly is it in men to forsake the eternal God and run to the creature! We trust our servants in our businesses, and shall we not trust God much more? the Word saies, all men are liars; nay, every man in his best estate is vanity. Psalm 62. 9. God is our refuge: men of low degree are vanity, men of high degree a lyer: if they be laid in the balance, they are lighter than vanity itself.

Obs. 4. The apprehension of our obligations to obey, should keep us within Covenant. Oh never let it be said, that our sins are so strong as to break Covenant, to get our own desires; it is a sign of a most vile wretched spirit, to to desire sin, as to break over this bond of the Covenant; think of this all you that are so easily overtaken with sin; when a temptation comes to any sin, say thus, such a sin I would have and my desires are after it, but did I never Covenant against it? and what, shall I be so wicked as to break my Covenant for it?

Obs. 5. The breach of Covenant with God, is a most grievous aggravation of our sin; it provokes God highly against that people or person, there have they dealt treacherously against me, Deuteronomy 29. 24, 25. Why hath the Lord brought all this evil upon this people? Then men shall say, because they have forsaken the God of their fathers, and the Covenant in which they were bound to him in. What cause have we to bless God that he hath not destroyed us for breach of Covenant with him? why should not our condition be the condition of this people here in Deuteronomy? had God turned his hand and let our enemies prevail this might have been our case.
God expects something from his people which cannot be done by every one; they must not plead they are flesh and blood as other men, God would have you more than men, you must remember that you are Saints and Members of Christ, and therefore must live as the redeemed of the Lord, in the first of the Corinthians, 3. 3. Are you not carnal, and walk as Men? The Apostle rebukes the Corinthians for this, God looked that they should walk beyond other men, and that which the Apostle makes the ground of his reproof, they make their excuse; Jesus Christ descended from on high, to this end; to purchase a peculiar people to himself that might honor him in the world beyond that which he hath from other men; we should live as those which have the Divine Nature in them, we should beware of passion and anger, even as God is slow to anger: how far are those from doing any eminent thing for God, which cannot deny themselves in their wills and passions, and have not so much as humanity in them?

If God at any time give us hearts to keep Covenant with him, it is more than is in us; we have not that power of our selves, therefore bless God for this mercy.

Men may go on in multitudes of services and yet be Covenant breakers. 'Tis possible for a man to have committed the sin against the holy Ghost, and yet be a professor of Christ and the Gospel; therefore we had need look to our hearts.

Many times in those things which we seem to be most Religious in, there we may be false and Covenant breakers. But may this be in the duties of God's worship? yea, thereby this may be; thus, When men shall think by this to cover any sin they live in, by their performing of duties, this is treacherous dealing and playing false in the Covenant.

The sins of the Saints which break Covenant with him are sins of a double dye; other mens sins are rebellions against God, but theirs are treacheries.

The want of the right knowledge of God, is the main cause of breach of Covenant with God. Dan. 11. 32. And such as do wickedly against the Covenant, shall be corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. Who shall be
corrupted by flatteries? those that know God? No, they shall be strong and do great exploits, such shall be employed by him in his work.

Obs. 12. There can be no keeping Covenant with God, where there is unmercifulness to men: let there be never such professions and expressions of Religion in words, if there be cruelty and unmercifulness there can be no keeping of Covenant with God, Heb. 3. 10.

Obs. 13 The consideration that it is God that we break Covenant withal, is a humbling consideration. It is against Me who am their God, who have protected them from dangers, delivered them in straights, 'tis against Me that they have thus sinned; as a man that should bring up a poor child and take care for him, and when he comes to yeers, this child should abuse him and wrong him, would not this be ingratitude and unkindness indeed? so the consideration of what a God it is that we break Covenant withal, doth wonderfully set forth our unkindness to God.

Ver. 8.

Gilead is a City of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood.

We reade in Num. 32. 1. of the Land of Gilead which was on the other side of the river, which Reuben and the false Tribe of Manassah possessed, in it were divers Cities of refuge, which were the Cities of the Levites, and one of them the most famous which had the name of the whole Country, was Gilead: which thing is usually among us at this day, that whole Countries receive their names from some eminent place in that Country, as Northampton, Northamptonshire, Leicester, Leicestershire: in this City of Gilead the Priests were, and should have been holier than the rest, but it was polluted, and from thence the rest of the places of the Kingdom.

The word translated [They have wrought] is drawn from a word that signifies, they have wrought iniquity, that is, vain things.
things. And is polluted with blood, or supplanted with blood, or overturned with blood; the Levites which had their abode there have undone the City, how many Cities are supplanted and overturned by the Priests which live in them, by their cruelties, and by their distinctions and subtil pretences for sin and wickedness? they have supplanted these Cities of refuge: these Cities of refuge were for those which had shed blood at unawares, they flying to them were secure; but these Cities were supplanted, and polluted; now this was done these four ways.

1. By taking those in which were wilful murderers, when as the City was for the shelter of those which had kild any by accident; now these men they would judge wilful murder to be but manslaughter (as we call it) and I wish our Kingdom be not deeply guilty of this sin, even by this distinction as it is used, when men in their passions shall make nothing to kill a man, and this shall be accounted for manslaughter; certainly God will never account it so, but even willful murder.

2. By refusing to take in those which of right they should, except they had good store of money to give them, when some that were poor came to be let in, they would refuse them and put them by, and by that means they were often taken by the pursuer of blood: for these Priests were to judge of it.

3. By casting those out which were in, and could not be gainful to them, and many times they did deliver those out to the avenger of blood, when they should have protected them.

4. By their cruelty to those that would not joyn with them in their false worship; perhaps they might some of them be men of tender consciences and could not joyn with them in their superstitious worship? now these Priests perhaps would make complaints of them to the Magistrate, that they were troublesome persons and bred divisions, and by this means they got them out of the Cities of refuge. And hath not this been our case of late? thus they supplanted these Cities of refuge. The Notes of Observation are,
That through man's wickedness the best Ordinances of God for the
good of his people are corrupted and abused. These Cities of refuge
were for special use, Ordinances of God set apart for the sa-
ving of blood, and they made it a means and instrument for
the shedding of blood. The Sacrament is an Ordinance set
apart by God, for union and communion; and what doth
more separate from this, than the abuse of this Ordinance?
mens coming unprepared separates tender consciences from
joining with them: so likewise in Civil Ordinances for mens
outward good, how have they been perverted? where have
they tyrannized more, and used more cruelty and injustice
than in those Courts of Justice, where justice should have
been done? and such as should have seen equity performed,
were the greatest instruments of oppression and mischief.

We must not always judge of places as heretofore they have been.
Gilead was a City famous for Gods worship, yet now how de-
filed with blood. So in Rome, how famous was it for the
worship of God? yet now it is become the very filth of abo-
mination.

Places set apart for Gods worship, and Religion, if they are corrup-
ted, they are the worst of all others. Gilead a City of refuge, yet
where was there ever such a defiled and corrupted place as it
was? so in our Universities, and Colledges, what superstiti-
ions, and vanities did abound among them? even like Augustus
Stable, a place of filthinesse, and vilenesse, and this is no new
thing, for Gregory Nazenzenzine reports of Athens, that it was the
plaguest place in the world for superstition, and he acknowledg-
eth it a great mercy that God did preserve him and Basil
from those infections.

To be a worker of iniquity is a most abominable thing. Gilead is
a Citie of them that work iniquity, Gods people sometimes
be overtaken by sin, but they are never workers of iniquity,
for the Scripture tells us, that he which works iniquity is of
the Devil.

That of all wicked men, Clergie men (as wicked) are the worst.
No men can work out or bring to pass their own ends so as
they can, the Priests were in Gilead, and they were the men,
which wrought the mischief: and hath not our times sealed to this truth? Who have been so vile and wicked as our corrupted Clergy? but how hath God broken the plots, and crostth the designs of these vermine?

The cunning plots of the wicked Clergie over-whelm rebel Cities Obs. 6: and Countries: These were they which over-turned this City of Gilead: And thus would they have done to us, had not God in his infinit wisdom and mercy prevented their hellish plots.

False worship and tyranny are joined together: Where ever you Obs. 7. see tyranny, there conclude is false worship: therefore we had need to pray, hard for the Ordinances in their purity, that we may not have false religion, and so have tyranny ushered in. Luther tells us, that the Devil is a tyrant, and a murderer, so that where there is a lye in Gods religion there is murder.

There are none so cruel to the lives of men as wicked Clergie; so Obs. 8. they may have their wills and lusts satisfied, though it cost the blood of thousands of souls they care not.

That of all cruelties, cruelty in the Clergie is the worst; for it is Obs. 9. required of them to be men of peace: But who are the great Incendiaries of our times, and Fomenters of these wars, but the vile, wicked Clergie? And thus much for the 8. verse.

Ver. 9.

And as troupes of robbers wait for a man, so the company of Priest's murder in the way, by consent; for they commit lewdness.

This Verse hath much of the former in it. [Troupes of robbers] The Kingdom of Israel had their troupers robbing and spoiling up and down; and who were these robbers, but their Priests? their Priests were turned robbing Troupers? And have not we this Text literally fulfilled at this day, in our Kingdom? The Gown is cast off, and the Armor is put on, and now they are turned Troupers. They were before murderers of souls, and now they are turned murderers of men.
Hierom

6^0

Chap. 6.

An Exposition of

Ver. 9

mens souls and bodies both; so that we might send their Gowns after them, and say as Joseph's brethren said to their father Jacob, Do not you know this? is not this your son Joseph's Coit? They stood in the way to rob; how was this, in what way did they rob? Hierom putting this question to a Jew, asking him the meaning of this text, his answer was; that at the time of the Passover, and the Penticoft, the people used to come to Jerusalem, and as they were going in their journey, these Priests would stand in the way and slay them; they were the least suspected of any, Gilead was a City which should have defended them from robbers, and they were turned robbers themselves, and so took the advantage of them. The Notes are these.

Obs. 1 Wicked Ministers are the most outrageous against those that forsake and leave them, and cannot join with them in their superstitions and false worship. The Priests were so.

Obs. 2 Wicked men, especially wicked Priests, wait for to do mischief; how much more should God's people wait for opportunities to do service for God, and for his people?

Obs. 3 Many people when they think themselves most secure, are then in the greatest danger of undoing; it was the case of these poor travellers here; they thought themselves most safe and secure and then were they slain and murdered, by these wicked robbing Priests.

Obs. 4 Wicked men abuse the esteem which others have of them, and their innocence. These Priests were the least suspected, and reputed harmless, innocent men, so at this day; and in other things, as in theft, many servants who are trusted by their masters abuse their masters confidence which they put in them, and so are the more false.

Obs. 5 Men that are judges of others, are the least called to an account for their wronging of others, and therefore are the more bold to sin. These Priests were to judg of murder done by others; now instead of judging others murders, they murdered themselves, now who should judg of their murders? It follows.

They
They murder in the way by consent, for they commit lewdness.

The word is Schethem, taken by Luther and others, for the City Shechem, which stood near Jericho, and he saith that Christ in the parable of the man which fell among the thieves, between Jericho and Jerusalem had respect to this place of Hosea. But I shall speak of them literally because I find it in another Scripture (Zeph. 3:9) signifying consent, Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. The word is Schethem, i.e. with one shoulder, and is a metaphor taken from Oxen yoked together.

When God's people join together in a work, it should be a shame for any to withdraw from them: thus these Priests they murdered by consent, they set to their shoulder in this wicked work, the one was not ignorant of what the other did. The Notes hence are.

Wicked men can join together in wickedness; How much more should the Saints join together for God? What shall we say to those differences which are made amongst us? It is not long since we were under Antichrist's yoke, and were we not galled and pinched? then why will you not take Christ's yoke on you, which is easy and light? It follows.

They committed lewdness.] The word is, they studied wickedness, they plotted for it. The Notes are.

There are none so plotting and contriving for wickedness as Clergie men are. Gilead is that wicked City of robbers, there the Priests consulted together, and plotted their wickedness.

Studied and plotted wickedness is the most vile, and abominable. Exod. 28:6. the Ephod was to be made of cunning work, of a work which had much thought in it, so it is in the Original, that work is very good which hath much thought and consideration in it, and that sin is wicked with an aggravation, which is thought of, and meditated upon, then it is lewdness.
Think of this all you that do plot, and think of your sins before you do commit them, in those sins there is lewdness.

Luther turns the word lewdness a little from the Original, which may be the meaning also of the word lewdness, they do whatsoever they think, he faith that they had a proverb in Germany, that the Monks were so wicked, that there was nothing so bad which they could think of, but they would dare to do it. None so bold in sin, and dare to venture themselves in it, as wicked Clergy men, many men are vile and wicked enough, but they want capacity and audacity to vend and utter it, but these wicked Priests could do it, calumniate and reproach without fear, these have impudent bold faces, and concerning such, I say no more but this: The Lord rebuke them.

Ver. 10.

I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel; there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.

The Lord proceeds further in His complaint against Israel.

I have seen an horrible thing] The word signifies a thing that may make the hairs of our head to stand an end, the Seventy turn it something to the same purpose, by a word which signifies a storm in the Sea, this word sometimes signifies the Devil, Levit. 17. 7. They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto Devils after whom they have gone a whoring.

Tremelius in his comment observes that the letters are more than ordinary in this word here, to encrease its signification: as if he had said, 'tis a horrible thing, a very horrible thing: what is this horrible thing? it was this, Ephraim had defiled himself.

Obler. From whence note, That Idolatry is a very horrible thing; to worship a false God, and that for politick ends, as they did here, is amost horrible thing, they to preserve their estates and their liberties, fell from the true worship of God, to worship at Dan and Bethel, Jer. 2. 11, 12, and Jer. 18. Will a nation change their gods, for those which are no gods? but my people have
have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be ye astonished, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, and be ye very desolate, faith the Lord. Jer. 18. 13. The Virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. Jer. 44. 4. Do not that abominable thing which I hate. God doth not put an aggravation upon this sin, beyond what is in it; as it is usual with men, they, if any thing be done against them, make it very horrible with circumstances and aggravations, but God never doth so: a notable example we have of men aggravating an offence. Dan. 3. 14. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, O Shedrack, Meshach and Abednego, do ye serve my gods, the golden Image which I have set up? Is it true, the words in the Original are, what desolations have these made, not to obey me; this is the manner of proud hearts, but this is not God's way and manner, he never speaks more against a sin, or punisheth men for sin, than it deserves, we can look upon God's judgments as horrible, but where is the man that looks upon sin as horrible? it may be you tremble at gross sins, but where is the man that trembles at false worship? the apparitions of the Devil are very horrible to us; and sin is here set out by the same words that the Devil is.

I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Judah.
Though we may seem to color it over, yet God he sees it.
I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel.
Idolatry is a provoking sin, but especially in the house of Israel.

There is the whoredom of Ephraim. Ephraim was the Tribe of Jeroboam, and by Ephraim is to be understood, the Court, and the Nobles, there (faith God) did I see this abominable thing, that Nation where the common people are wicked for the generality, it is a sign of much evil, but if the Gentry are profane, it is much worse, but if the Nobility and those at the Court are Idolaters it is night indeed, if Ephraim be vile it is no marvel if Israel be so also. It follows.
Ver. 11.

Also O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, etc.

These words are something difficult. I shall shew the meaning of them, thus. Judah hath wrapped up herself in the same offence, in the same transgression received from Ephraim (the ten tribes) and it was grown up to an harvest of judgment, which was set, had its fixed time. But when? When I returned the captivity of my people. This refers to that time in 2 Chron. 28. 6, where you shall find these three things: 1. The harvest set for Judah. 2. The captivity of Judah. 3. The return of their captivity. The harvest was set when Pekah, the son of Remaliah flew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand men in one day, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers: what a harvest was here set? and the text saith, They were all valiant men for the war.

Obl. Idolatry is a horrible sin, and God makes it as horrible for judgment. But what was it that provoked the Lord thus against them? because they had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers. God's judgments in Scripture cutting down a people, are compared to a harvest, Joel, 3. 13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. But where was this captivity? in 2 Chron. 28. 8. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren, two hundred thousand men, sons and daughters. But when was their return? in the 9. verse, the Prophet comes to them, and tells them in the 11. verse, they must deliver up their captives which they had taken from their brethren; these were brethren as is clear, yet behold the rage of brethren! yet in the 15. verse, see how this took with them; they cloathed, fed, and restored all their captives again presently. See the mighty power of the Word to still the rage of the stoutest spirits. Oh that it might do so with us at this time, as it did here with this people, this would be a kindly work indeed; so that by this you may see what the harvest is here in the text.

The Notes which we may observe from hence are.
That the sins of a people are seeds for a harvest of judgment; and good
actions are seeds for a harvest of mercy.

God hath a fixed set time for a harvest of judgment; and though
you have a time, yet know it is fixed, therefore sow as fast as
you can, there will come a harvest ere long.

In the time of God's judgments, the Lord remembers mercy for his
people. He hath set a time for the return of their captivity.

Thus you have (I conceive) the genuine sense of these
words.

There are some that read these words thus: Judah, since A2d
you are guilty also, you shall not enjoy your peace nor your
interpretations in quiet, till God return your captivity; Israel shall not
enjoy their harvest, but Judah shall.

Now that which makes me think this is not the meaning,
is this, Because the Lord still goes on to threaten Judah still;
I have set an harvest for thee.

Some others read it thus: When God was about to turn A3d.
away their captivity, Judah did so harden Israel in their way,
that it was the cause of my hardening my heart against them,
and not to return their captivity. Israel might think thus,
Though we are bad, & in many things amiss, yet Judah is
also filthy in such and such things, who are a people neerer to
God than we, yet they do so.

"Many are ripened for judgment by the example of others,
especially of great professors, and chiefly of professing and
reforming Churches that have the name of pure worship in
them. Let such be very wary what they practice, especially
in a time of reformation, lest they harden others in their cor-
ruption.

Thus I have finished the Sixth Chapter.
When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

HIS Chapter is filled with complaints wholly against Israel. The two former Chapters brought in Judah with them; but this Chapter is spent wholly against Israel. Luther faith, that by the reading of this Chapter we may see, that the Church hath alwaies evils of one and the same kind, even at this day that it had in those times, even as one eg is like to another eg. We have had a cleer and lively pattern of this held forth to us in our times concerning our evils.

When I would have healed Israel] Before God took upon him the person of a husband, that would have recalled his adulterous wife: but in this Chapter He compares Himself to a Chyrurgion who would have cured a wounded person: and His people He compares unto such. But coming to cure them He found the wound in them worse than He expected; as when a Chyrurgion sometimes first comes to a wound, he thinks it not so bad: and dangerous as indeed it is upon the searching,
searching of it; and all this while perhaps the patient is very mild and quiet and struggles not at all, but when they are put to pain by searching of their wound, then they are froward and struggle: so faith God, so many wails and means have I used to do them good, judgments, reproofs, and exhortations: and nothing doth them good, but they grow worse and worse, then the sins of Ephraim did break forth, the sins of the Court they work out: and the sins of Samaria (which was the chief City) shew themselves; in Isa. 7. 9. The head of Ephraim is Samaria: as if the wickedness of the Court should be complained of by some in the Country.

When I would have healed Israel, the iniquity of Ephraim and Samaria did appear; the Prophet looks upon Ephraim the wicked Court, and Samaria the prophane City, and sees death, in the face of both, the sin of Ephraim and Samaria, it is in the head which speaks them in a dangerous condition, Levit. 13. 44. they ad iniquity to iniquity, which shews their perverseness, and he that is of a perverse spirit shall be despised, Prov. 12. 8. and is forgetful may considered as such.

Their wickednesses. In the Original it is in the plural number, When I would have healed Israel, then the sin of Ephraim did break out, and the wickedness of Samaria appeared.

In great Cities where there is such concourse of people, there is all manner of evils.

But now, when was the time that God was about to heal these ten Tribes? to what time doth this refer? Some interpret this to be the time when God went about to cure the evils and the abominations that were in Rehoboam's time which Time of was a very sad time, had he hearkened to the counsel of his this Pror- wife, grave Counsellors, it had been well for him, and his people; but he giving credit to the counsel of his young green heads, he indangered the very life of his Kingdom by it, and when he would not hearken through the pride of his heart, God rent the greater part of the Kingdom from him, and gave it to Jeroboam, and now when there were such hopes of delivering them from these their oppressions, then the iniquity of Ephraim did appear, then did they oppress and crush those
those which would not yield to their superstitious Idols and false worship; but this cannot be the meaning of this story, for at this time the ten Tribes were not divided, nor broken off, neither was Samaria built, for it was builted in 2 King. 16. If this be not the time, then what time doth this refer unto? Surely to the time of Jehu's reign who was made the chirurgion of those times, who was anointed in Gilead the City of chirurgions, for God saith, Is there no balm in Gilead, no Physician there? God used Jehu for the doing of a great deal of work for their curing, he destroyed and diffipated Jezebel and the Priests of Baal; and at the time when this was a doing, comes the great Courtiers of Ephraim and the Citizens of Samaria, and give him their counsel: Jehu, take heed what you do, be wise, consider what you do in such cases as these, take heed you do not over do; it is enough that you have done in destroying Baals Priests and putting down Idolatry; now say they, if you pull down Dan and Bethel, and suffer the people to go up to Jerusalem, you will lose all, then farewell all obedience, your Kingdom is now lost; then the Citizens of Samaria they come and tell him that if he yeild to this, they shall be undone and lose all their trading, and we shall be separated; and why should this be seen? seeing there is no need of it? we may worship at Dan and Bethel as well, and it will be more for our ease; this might be the language of the people, and in this the iniquity of Ephraim and the sin of Samaria appeared, and this was wickedness with a high hand. The Notes of Observation are these;

Obl. 1. That the sins and the miseries of a Kingdom are the sores of a Kingdom, and the wounds of a Nation. Isa. 1. 6. From the head to the foot there is no soundness in them, wounds and bruises are upon them; First, in regard of their sins, then in regard of their miseries.

Use

By this we may see that wicked men are the sores and wounds of a Nation, Parish, and Family; therefore one having three wicked daughters calls them the imposthumes or cankers of his family; even so are wicked men, filthy menstruous defiling creatures where ever they come: Oh that people
people would think of this their condition: thou that art a wicked man runneft up and down with filthy stuff more odious in God's eyes, than a lazar in our eyes.

As sin, so afflictions and miseries are the wounds of Kingdom, family, or person, and if we will not be sensible of the one wound made by sin, God will make us sensible of the other by suffering them. Our Kingdom is like the man which fell among thieves (half dead) as he went from Jericho to Jerusalem, doth not the Nation lie now a bleeding? and where is the man that pitties: it, nay, are not men so far from pitying these wounds, that multitudes flock together, to make advantage of our sores? even like the flies which suck out content and sweetness from the sores of the poor creatures, such I mean who strive for places and offices in the Kingdom to suck out the blood of the Kingdom in their offices and places, men that are altogether for themselves, and how they may make themselves and theirs to be great in the world, though the Nation lie a bleeding. One tells us of a man that had a raw place, the skin being off upon his body, the flies using constantly to suck it and lie upon it; his friend coming by him and seeing them upon him beat them off, the man was discontented at it, saying, Alas what have you done? faith he, I thought I had done you a good turn; Oh no, for when these are off fresh ones will come upon it that will suck me worse than the other did before. Had we not those that did suck us before? have we forgot those oppressions? shall we have worse now? It follows.

When I would have healed Israel.

Hence note, That the Lord is the healer of a people; it is He alone that can do it, and none but He: we may use many means to be healed, but all in vain except the Lord heal us, with pardonings and sanctifying mercies: Jer. 17. 14. Heal me O Lord, and I shall be healed, save me and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise. So Psal. 60. 2. Heal the breaches thereof for it languish. How many are there that would go about to heal our wounds slightly? Jer. 8. 11. we are like many silly persons who feeling a little pain of their wounds will needs have them skin-
ned up and healed presently, and then they putrefie and are worse than ever. But the Lord is the healer of his people, and when he heals he doth it to purpose; and many encouragements we have in Scripture, to seek to God for healing, the promise of God, 1 Chron. 7. 13, 14. If my people which are called by my Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from the evil of their ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and forgive their sin, and heal their land. Mark the connexion of these words; first, seek to be forgiven, and then healed; if we should be healed before pardoned, woe be to us, we should then be undone. Isa. 57. 16, 17, 18. verses, The Lord will not contend for ever, neither will he be angry for ever; lest the spirit should fail before him. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wrath with him, and smote him; I hid my face from him, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart. Now what may we think will become of him? Surely now, nothing but desolation and destruction. No faith God, I have seen his way, and will heal him: I will lead him, and restore comforts unto his mourners. Jer. 3. 22. Return ye back-sliding children and I will heal your back-slidings. Oh that the answer of this people might be ours: Behold we come unto thee, for thou art our God.

How God heals.

1. Now the Lord cures accurately, as Chyrurgions do by purgation, and allaying the misery, so the Lord heals his people by taking away the cause, and the malignancy of that trouble which is upon them. So thou that art under any particular trouble or affliction, if God sanctifie that trouble by taking away the cause of it, God may be said to heal, though the affliction be not quite taken away.

2. Then God may be said to heal by Fermentation, as Chyrurgions use to do, when the part is able to resist and oppose that which would feed the humour: so when the Lord puts strength into the soul to oppose disquieting and vexing thoughts that sink into the soul from its afflictions: now where this work is accomplished the soul is healed.

That God in willing things, doth not alwaies will them according to his Omnipotent power.
I would have healed Ephraim: That is, I would, and I did use all the means that was possible to heal them, and which might have done it.

But it may be objected, If God see that we are unable of our selves to be healed, how can we be healed, when we have no power to be healed?

Now for answer to this, we must know, That men are not so much healed, it proceeds not so much from the want of ability, as their will; men do not do what they can, therefore they do not will to be healed: God doth not make men unwilling, but speaks to us after the manner of men; (though there be also an inability, yet because men think not of that in not turning, or because the inability is chiefly in the perverseness of the will, 'tis not a metaphysical inability as I may so speak, but a formal wilfulness) though men think that God is in all the fault, that they are not healed, but God will make this one of his works at the day of judgment, to clear Himself from those aspersions; now men are so proud, that they think themselves too good and too lofty for God, but God will clear, and shew Himself to be righteous in their destruction.

There is much wickedness lies hid in many times in a Kingdom; or person till the means appear to cure them. It was thus with Paul, Rom. 7. 9: he was sinful before, but when the Law came sin revived and I died, yet notwithstanding God by his almighty power helped him over them all: As when a man comes to repair an old house which is rotten and decayed, he doth not conceive the trouble of it till he comes to remove the rubbish: Who would imagine the wickedness that is in many mens hearts which discovers it self when the means comes? had not God set many servants in good families the vileness and the vanity of their spirits had not discovered it self: certainly this is our condition, some few yeers since, there appeared much wickedness in England, but how much more since God hath sent the means to cure it? As appears,

By a bitter spirit of malignancy, against the power of godliness. No people so wicked as we were before, but now it is much more, our
our wickedness is now grown to a spirit of malice, and opposition against the Word and the Saints. At the first men cried out for a reformation, and cried down Bishops, but when God's people began to rejoice, and thought that they should have a day, of a sudden, what a desperate spirit of pride, a spirit of malignancy was there raised to oppose with all the might that could be the way of reformation so much desired, and this so much the more vile, because of their malice against reformation.

1. Blind men's eyes, so that they cannot see their misery, by reason of the falsities, and flatteries, and treacheries which is used against Scotland, Ireland, and England, nay. these men rather than they will be subject to the yoke of Christ, they will be slaves to men, any men, yea the worst of men, and that to their vilest lusts rather than yeild to the way of Christ, and doth not this shew a desperate spirit against God?

2. What a base fordid spirit is there now among us? that rather than men will be contented to suffer a little trouble, will rather endure perpetual enslavement by vile men. A most treacherous spirit appears in the most, for their own private gain and advantages, when men shall betray Kingdoms, overthrow States, and deceive the trust and confidence that is put in them, undermine and destroy Parliaments, doth not this manifest a most vile spirit in the people of this Kingdom? Heretofore the rascality of the people could not be brought to fight against the Scots, yet now there can be found a Gentry to fight against the Parliament.

3. What a blasphemous spirit is there abroad, this sin abounded before, but how much more is it now increased; nay, are there not now new oaths invented and pressed?

5. A cruel bloody spirit is now risen in the people of the land; some few years since who could have imagined the cruelties that have been used by English men.

6. What a spirit of division is there among us? we should have thought that in a time of publick calamity we should have sodered together, when there was private persecution more love was expressed, and that which makes the rents the more
sad, is, that they are between the best people.

What an oppressing, tyrannizing spirit is there now in many; men who have been formerly oppressed by oppressors are now turned oppressors themselves: what doth this but prefigure what these would do, had they the power in their hands? this iniquity is now discovered.

A spirit of envy and jealousy: if any man be in publik place and active in it, how are they envied and spited, how many stand newters now? and upon this very ground, because they see others not so rich in estates as they made use of, therefore they sit still, and fret themselves and seek to hinder them that are active in publik service, and so the work is hindered.

A spirit of superstition: Would ever any man have thought that the Parliament should ever have met with such a party to oppose them in their way of reforming? we might rather have thought that there should have been a general spirit rising against these superstitious vanities, to have kickt them out. Oh what misery doth these rotten teeth put this Kingdom unto at this very day! this iniquity is also discovered.

A wanton erroneous spirit: such opinions as were never known before, doubting of the Immortality of the soul, that there is no visible Church upon the face of the earth, and all this under the Name of Christ and free grace. Now what doth all this but shew thus much, that when God would have healed us, then our iniquities did appear: what sad passages are these of our miseries approaching?

What an unmerciful spirit is there among us. Everyone seeking his own, and how he may make him and his great in the world, and neglecting the poor and those that are in distress, we have cause to say, Oh Lord, what shall become of us? Know this, that I may not altogether discourage you; though our times are miserable, yet are they not like unto Israel altogether, it cannot be denied but that our Court hath seconded Ephraim, which was their Court, and though the City of Samaria did join with Ephraim, yet the City with us hath not joined with Ephraim but the bulk of it hath kept faithful with their God; for which mercy the children

Siff 2
yet unborn will have cause to bless God.

yet unborne will have cause to bless God.

A fit observation is this; That when a people grow worse upon the means of healing, it is a sign that their condition is desperate; Isa. 1:5; why should you be smitten any more? Ye will revolt yet more and more. Jer. 5:9. We would have healed Babylon, but she would not; for she is in her filthiness, because I have purged thee, and thou wouldst not be purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more until I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. Now certainly had not God found a party in this Kingdom which closed with him, when he would have healed us, we might have had occasion to make use of this Scripture, how just were it with God to leave such a people as we are in our healing, because we are so impatient under the rod, and oppose him even in our healing, Arius Montanus quotes it out of Hippocrates, that the Physicians in his time, were bound by an Oath to leave such under their wounds to perish by them, that were incorrigible and would not endure the Chirurgions to cure them. When a man is engaged in a bad cause, and means is used for the convincing of him, and yet oft times he will proceed and fly out the worse. Oh the vileness of men's spirits in this thing; we had need take heed what we engage our selves in; that the thing be good, the cause warrantable, how many men are there which break their consciences rather than yield to take shame to themselves for their sin. Oh what cause have we to fall down and be humbled for our iniquity, and to say as they in Jer. 1:18, 19, 20. So for particular Towns and places where God sends the Gospel, the means of grace, and that people is the worse for it, they have cause to tremble at it, do not cry out against the preaching of the Word as if that were the cause of it, this were most wicked and abominable; it was thus in Christ's time: we never read of any possessed with Devils before Christ came; now shall we say, it had been better that Christ had not come? Oh blame not the Ministry, but your own hearts; and consider of this you that God is working upon, the Lord comes close by the Ministry of his Word to heal you, and then you discover your wickedness.
wickedness, and rotten hearts, the Lord he stirs such a conscience and begins to heal the soul, now 'tis the Devil's policy to spoil such beginnings, now thinks the Devil, if I can make such a soul to commit a sin against conscience, or live in the omission of any known duty, the word then will never work more to do such a man good. I have heard of a man who being troubled in conscience for committing that great sin of uncleanness, the Devil tempting him to commit it again, and told him if he would he should never be troubled more for it, the poor man yielding to do it, and venturing upon it again, after he had done it he was never tempted again nor troubled more, but presently lay in a wanzeing, languishing fenceless condition and so died. Oh take heed of this you that are convinced in your consciences of the evil of such and such courses; for it is the great policy of the Devil to make thee who art convinced in conscience, to sin against conscience, and then he thinks the work is lost, the Devil doth not much fear the Words working upon him, whom he hath prevailed over to live in secret known sins and to venture upon the commission of sins against conscience; you who are under God's hand of cure, be silent, and submit quietly under God's hand and be not sivard, as many are in their troubles of conscience, but hearken for a word from God; as the men of Benhadad did from that King, in 1 King. 20.33. hearkened diligently whether any words of comfort fell from him, and they caught at them basily. Know that it were just with God to make you as that people, Isa. 6. 10. that your hearts should be made fat. This concerns all people, but especially those that are in trouble of conscience, those that God begins to stir and work upon, take heed I say; doth Christ himself begin to work upon you? doth he desire to heal you? is he willing to offer his blood to cure you by applying it to your wounded consciences? Let not the corruptions of your hearts now break forth, now take heed of sins against conscience; let he let you to perish in your lusts, be willing to let God alone to do his work in you, lie quiet and still, take heed of murmuring and repining speeches, but follow on the work begun
begun and beseech him not to leave you till the work be completed in you, and the great hazard of your miscarrying over, little do you imagine the wait and burden of those sins will be upon conscience which now you commit against conscience; what a torment will it be to thy conscience to think, that at such a time I felt Jesus Christ coming to heal my soul in the Ministry of his Word. Oh happy had it been for me, if I had lain under his hand, and to have kept his salve upon my sore! but because it was for the present troublesome, and smart, I cast it off and went into such company, and listened unto such temptations, and by this means have wounded my soul anew most desperately, and now what can I expect but that the Lord should for ever forsake me, and leave me to die in my sins, and wallow in my blood, and his eye not pity me, & make me to inherit the curse of that people, whose ears should be deaf that they should not hear, whose eyes should be blind that they should not see and be converted, and I should heal them.

When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they committed falsehood; and the thirst breaketh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

Furthermore, In these words the Prophet showeth in what particulars their iniquity did appear: they committed falsehood, they wrought a lye in regard of their falsehood, their false worship; and then in regard of their oppression, wronging one another, but especially in falsifying their trust one to another, and in their relations not performing the duties which their relations called for, and bound them unto, so the word in the original (Shekar) in the propriety of it, signifies. **They commit falsehood.** That is, they commit such a sin as the breaking of that duty which the law of their relation calls for from them. The Notes hence are:

**Obs. 1**

It is the description of a wicked man to commit falsehood: As the godly man is said to be for the truth, and to do the truth; so wicked men are against the truth, and go contrary to the truth.
truth: as the Devil is said, not to abide in the truth; even such are these who commit falsehood, and work a lyce.

It is a forerunner of great mischief, when men are false in their relations. In Mic. 7. 6, 7. It was an ill time when all sorts of people were so unfaithful in their relations.

The thief breaks in to rob and spoil by violence.

From whence note: There is much secret wickedness committed by those which have forsaken the true religion, such as these are secret and cunning workers of mischief in Church and State. Gal. 2. 4. There are false brethren crept in secretly, which afterwards fought to bring us into bondage. 'Tis a great evil in a Commonwealth to have secret oppressors, but far worse to have publick spoiling: We have had much of the first formerly, and the Lord knows how much more of the second we may further cast of; I verily believe, there is none that ever thought the Enemy would have spoiled in such a manner as He hath done, and that ever English men would have endured it; and we are the first people that ever endured such oppressions, that were not slaves before, and what the counsels and thoughts of God are in this thing concerning us we cannot tell. Violence and spoil before me continually, is grief and wounds. What then? Be instructed O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, Jer. 6. 7, 8. The first part of this Scripture is ours at this day, grief and wounds are continually before us: but be thou instructed, O England: In what? In this, That dreadful breach which sin hath made between the King and Parliament; be instructed in this, Jer. 15. 13. Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoilers without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. So Isa. 44. 22. 24. But this is a people robbed and spoiled, they are all of them shaven in holes; they are for a prey, and none delivereth them; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, against whom we have sinned. Who among you will give ear and hearken to this? Men are wicked and tyrannical: But who is he that hath given this our Land to the plunderers? Is it not the Lord? Therefore we should look beyond the troubles, the hand that strikes, to God who gave them their commission, and delivered us up into
into their hands. When God gives up a people to the robbers and spoilers in such a kind, his wrath is said to come upon them; as in the 25. verse, Therefore he hath poured upon them the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle.

Ver. 2.

And they considered not in their hearts, that I remembered all their wickedness: now their own doings have befallen them about, they are before my face.

They considered not in their hearts] In the original it is, They say not to their hearts. This phrase in other Scriptures is used for laying in their hearts: Jer. 5. 24. Neither say they IN their hearts, Let us fear God which giveth rain. And in Eccles. 1. 16. Considering, is, communing with our own hearts; I spoke or consulted with my heart. From this phrase of speaking thus to our hearts, we may observe:

It is a good thing to be often speaking to our own hearts, thus: Oh my soul, how is it with thee? what care art thou in? how stand things between God and thee? what terms standest thou in for eternity? canst thou look upon God's face with comfort and not be afraid? what guilt is there in thy conscience? canst thou behold eternity and rejoice in the thoughts of it? Such meditations and questionings as these would be very profitable for the soul; Many people can talk abroad in company of these things, but where is the man that sets apart time to question with his soul about these? Ps. 4. 4. Stand in awe, and sin not, commune with your own hearts upon your bed, and be still: There are in the soul many times boisterous distempers, but then we should cause a silence and a calm in our hearts, bid them be still; there are great distempers in that family where the husband and the wife go two or three days together and speak not one to another; so there is no less distemper in that soul which can go two or three days without questioning itself and examining its condition: But what is it they should speak? This.

That I remember their iniquities: the old Latine carries it thus,
thus, lest they should consider: do not you think that God remembers the sins of your forefathers only, that they were vile and wicked; no, but I also remember the sins that are present before me. But according to the reading of the words in your books is most agreeable to the Original; therefore Luther faith, that these words are a reproof of their security. Luther then which no evil being worse: the Princes they feel not the judgment yet the principal actors in the wickedness, the common people they suffer much, and yet though they suffer yet attribute their sufferings to anything rather than to their sins to be the causes of them: the observations.

That God doth remember the wickedness of people though long since committed, as we may see in Amalek, God remembers this their wickedness many hundred years after, 1 Sam. 15. 2. I remember the prank which Amalek played to you when you came out of Egypt. Amos, 8. 7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works: nay they are not only remembered, but recorded, the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, & with the point of a diamond, Jer. 17. 1. every oath, every lye, ye and every vain thought which thou hast committed, and continuest in under an impenitent condition, know, that thy sins are remembered; and that thou mayest be sure of it, see what the text faith, Job, 4. 17. 14. 17. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou seest it opened, my iniquity. They are sealed in a bag; as the Clark of Affizes seals up the inditements of men, and at the Affizes brings his bag and takes them out; even so will God; as God hath his time to seal up mens transgressions in his bag, so he will have his time to take them out to reckon with sinners for them, and then woe to them, Deut. 32. 34. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? It is sealed up to be remembered though perhaps committed forty or fifty years ago, and it is thy sin if thou dost not remember them, when and where they were committed, and if thou wilt not, know, that God hath his time to make thee know them.

Wicked men will not consider that God doth remember their sins. Obs. 2. In Psal. 94. 7. they commit horrible wickednesses, daring
fins, yet they force themselves not to believe that God doth remember them, and take notice of them; yet they say, *The Lord shall not see it, neither shall the God of Jacob remember it.* The Jews tell us, that when Jeroboam's hand was dried up, the false Prophets told him that this was but by chance; and so kept him from thinking of God that had smitten him. Did men consider that it is God that remembers them, it would work humiliation in them, and stop them in their sins; were the danger that sin brings men into, always in their eye, they would think it a great madness to sin against God, and folly too; *Joshua thought it so, 'Is the iniquity of Peor a small thing in your eyes, that you should add more to them? Didst thou know that God remembers the sins of thy youth and thy elder age, thou wouldst fear, that upon the next sin thou committed, God might bring upon thee all the rest of the sins which thou hast committed; as a man that hath used his body to drink poison, at the first and second time he may do well, but at last he is overcome, and destroys himself: so the next sin which thou committed, though it be a less sin than formerly thou hast committed, this sin may set all the rest on working: as suppose there be many barrels of Gunpowder in a room, and there lies but a thimbleful by it, and a spark falls into that and so fires all the rest; so thy former sins are as the barrels of Gunpowder, the next sin thou committed, especially if a sin against knowledge, may be the thimbleful which sets all the rest on work to pull down judgment upon thee. There is no argument so powerful to keep men from their sins as the consideration that God sees them, and knows them all, and will remember them."

*Ob. 3.* When God doth punish for sin, he manifests that he remembers sin:

1 King. 17. 18. the woman of Zarephath falls out with the Prophet saying, *What have I to do with thee, Ob thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin into remembrance, and to slay my son?* God's hand being upon her, brought her sin into remembrance. How doth the consciences of men dictate this unto them in their afflictions, this cross is for such a sin, this misery, for such a base lust that thou wouldst have fulfilled at such a time.
a time, God now puts thee in mind of such an act of uncleanness, such a time thou were cruel and hardhearted; this is clear in Joseph's brethren, whose sin was committed twenty two years before this trouble came upon them; you that have committed many sins a long time ago and think they are forgotten, 'tis no such matter, if the guilt of them be taken away by Christ, know that there will come a time in which thou shalt be put in mind of them, as a man that gets a surfeit in his youth and younger age, or gets many a bruise and rub which simile then he undergoes well enough and never complains of them, but when he grows old or hath an infirm body, then against every rain and change of weather it will appear and he will complain: but this is the Saints priviledge, that God never so remembers their sins, as to condemn them for their sins. It follows.

_I remember all their wickedness, now their own doings have beset them about, they are before my face._

_Their wickedness._] Luther faith their studied wickedness, their contrived iniquities have beset them round about, or their doing, have compassed them round: These words have Expos. reference to these similitudes; as Officers beset Malesactors, who shift up and down and play least in sight, but at the last are found and beset. Just thus their sins had beset them, that they could no way escape; or as Soldiers beleaguer a Town and will not let any in the Town get out; so men by their sins are beliged, and brought into such a condition that there is no way for comfort to come at them, or for them to avoid the judgments which are coming upon them; men's sins are like unto those six men in Ezek. 9. 2. And behold six men came from the way of the higher Gate, to beset the Gates of the City. And know, Oh thou bold sinner, that God hath his time to beset thee with thy sins and his judgments, to awaken thy conscience by setting thy sins in order before thee; and this is the great reason why men cry out in the horror of their consciences, because they are beset with their sins: what a sad con-

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dition were this City in if beleaguered with an hundred thousand men? Every man's sins are worse and endanger a man more than millions of enemies can do; man shall need no other enemy than his own iniquity, thine own iniquity shall find thee out, it shall find thee as in a snare, Prov. 5. 21. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings: that is, I so remember their sins as if they were all present before me, committed at this very instant; so that thou art to consider that God doth not only remember thy sins, but they are before God's face, so that God never can look about him but they are present before his face: thou hast committed a sin and perhaps art troubled for it, but after a while thou forgettest it and the trouble is blown over; but God looks upon it as now presently committed: for as there is no beginning of eternity, so there is no succession of it. If Note well thou went to go to the Lords table thou wouldest not go in a drunken fit, or immediately after an act of uncleanness; but God at that very instant looks upon thee as drunken, unclean, and filthy, though the act may be past many yeers before.

Ver. 3.

They make the King glad with their wickedness, and the Princes with their eyes.

He make the King glad.] That is,

Expos. 1. By their willing yeielding to his commands by the way of their false worship, the King and the Princes were glad to see their edicts yeilded unto and obeyed: at the first when the commands came from Jeroboam to change the way of God's worship, they had cause to fear that it might not take with the people, there would be something to do, to make them change the way of God's worship, but when they saw it go on currently without contradiction they rejoiced.

Expos. 2. By their flattering of him in his wicked wayes; they did not only yeild to his unlawful edicts, but commended them, and applauded him for his care and tender respect which he had to them, in shortening their journey, that they should not go
go so far as Jerusalem to worship, & they flattered him in this extreamly, telling him that this was the way to establish his Kingdom.

He was glad, when he saw the people wicked in their waies and their lives loose and prophane, at this the King was glad, and why? because he knew they were for his turn, his design was accomplished now, he had made them wicked in their lives by letting them have their will in evil, and now he never feared their scrupling or making question of the thing, he never once doubted of their unwillingnesse to worship at the Calves, to go to Dan and Bethel: Thus they made the King glad.

The Notes: First observe, That carnal and wicked people are easily led aside by the examples of those that are their Governours: Which way Superiors go, the multitude will go: if they do that which is good in the outward part of it for externals, they will do the same; if they do wickedly they will do so likewise, though they do not love their Prince, yet that they may have their Princes favor they will sin against God.

It is wickednesse for any people to obey the unlawful commands of their Governours. This people might think this was no sin in them. What, must we not obey our Governours and be subject to authority? yet we see the holy Ghost calls it wickednes. So how many are there who for their worship have no other authority but their superiors, their Governours, this will never pass for currant in Gods account.

It is a vile wickednesse to flatter Princes. Yet how hath this been the constant course of Courts? It is reported of Dionysius, that when he spit, his flatterers would lick it up and say, it was sweeter than Honey. This is vileness in people to do, and more vile in Princes to love to be flattered. Cyril upon this text faith, That the fear and love of God, had it been in Cyrus this people, it would have kept both them and their Princes, to have withstood such wicked commands, it would have balanced their spirits.

It is
Ob. 4. It is a most most wicked and vile thing, to make any glad with their wickedness, or to be made glad by wickedness. Yet how many are guilty of this sin? some are so hardened in their wickedness that they will make others drunk, and then laugh at them when they have done so; How far are these from David's temper? whose eyes ran down with tears, because men kept not the Law, and horror took hold on him; there is no greater sign of a desperate heart hardened in sin, than to laugh at sin in others, and make a sport of it in themselves; and the higher men are in place and dignity the greater is the aggravation of their sins; for Princes to be glad at wickedness and to be made merry by iniquity, who are set to be punishers of sin and a terror to evil doers, this is most horrible wickedness, Prov. 29. 22. If the Prince hearken to lyes, all his servants are wicked.

They make the King glad with their lyes. Note:

The King is in a sad condition, when his ends and plots must be accomplished by the wickedness of the people. Such are the dispositions of these men, that they will do any thing rather than suffer the least evil of punishment, for faith a Prince, these men they have no conscience left in them to check them; but these precise Puritans they will suffer and die rather than sin against God and wrong their consciences. Now these Priests and their officers (which the Prophet here speaks of,) they would reason thus; If I should cross the Kings mind I should lose my place, and be put out of my office, and suffer a great deal of trouble, and rather than they will run upon these straights they will run upon any design for the ruining of that which crosses them, yea, though it be the worship of God: Oecolampadius faith, that bad Princes are always enemies to the strict waies of religion, and unto such as are the strictest in those waies, and walk most agreeable to the Word, and are tender in their conscience, fearful to sin against it, these are disregarded and discon tenanced; but those that are most wicked they are accounted the best subjects, and these they will trust. Therefore where there is no religion, slavery soon follows, that people may be brought to any thing, who have lost
lost their religion; but where profession is maintained it will
 teach men to stand for their liberties, and not to yield against
the truth. But what, doth Religion teach men rebellion?
doth it deny obedience to Governors? No, by no means. Religion
 teaches obedience to Governors, and the more religious any man is, the more obedient he will be to lawful Au-
thority; the Gospel commands obedience to Governors, but
not to Tyranny, to the wills and humors of men. God never
made such difference between men, Religion never teaches
disobedience to lawful authority, to such as rule in the Lord,
yet this was the case of this people. It follows.

And the Princes with their lyes.

Luther carries this to the lye of their false worship, their I-
dolatrie, which the Scripture calls a lye, Rom. 1. 25. Who chan-
ged the truth of God into a lye, and worshiped the creature more than
the Creator. But this is not the full meaning and scope of the
words, but thus:

They put their false glosses upon their false worship, to
make it to take with the people, and with the Princes; as thus:
The Priests did not only submit and yeild to them themselves
but encouraged the people, telling them it was decent and
comely in the worship of God.

Or thus: By denying whatsoever may hinder them in their
false worship. If the Prince should by any means hear that
his Commands were not like to take with the people, and so
he lose his ends, they would boldly come and affirm it to the
contrary; or if they had an ill success, they would deny it,
and say, they had none, it was but a flander which was put
upon them by these factious Puritans; they would make the
Princes believe they had good success when their designs were
crost and put back.

But principally they made the King glad with their lyes,
by raising flanders and ill reports upon the names and persons
of those which might stand in the way to crose and hinder
them, they blasted such men as were in credit in the eyes of the
people;
people; and those in authority loved this at the heart, this was mighty pleasing in the eyes of the Princes; and this certainly was the plot of the Priests who at that time were enemies to the true worship of God.

The Notes are:

Obs. 1. That al Idolatry and false worship is but a lye in God's esteem, He looks upon it as a deceitful thing.

Obs. 2. The old way of false worshipers to further their false worship is, by lyes and calumnations of all sorts, to tel them of their good success, when they had none; and when they had ill success, to say it was a sham, it was no such matter, their success was as good as heart could desire; but this in special was their trick to slander & disgrace those that stood in their way. The text Jer. 20:10 faith in Jeremiah, That they waited for the Prophets halting, and they said, Report, and we will report, do you say the thing, and we will affirm it, we will spread it abroad, Report, and let us alone with it then, we will never stand examining the truth of it, we heard it reported, and that is sufficient; this hath bin the course and practice of our times: and in the stories of later times against Luther, what calumnies & reproaches were by the Papists raised against him? men set on work on purpose to do it. You may perceive my strait at this time, how loth I am to rake in these villy puddles, and yet led by this Scripture so fully to it, that I must either baulk the mind of God, or else touch upon these jarring strings; but I shall for peace sake for the present wave it, and reserve it to its more convenient place, howbeit this will stick to some whose course it hath been; but how vile and wicked is this course? for what recompence is it possible that such can make for the wrong done.

Evils of Flanders

1 For first, It cannot be expected that an answer should suddenly come to clear such reproaches. And secondly, When an Answer is come, it will be but ones yea, and another's nay.

2. And thirdly, If it should be satisfactory, all the mends that can be made is, a recantation, I am sorry, I was mis-informed, I had Letters of it; and this is a poor requital. Then fourthly, 'Tis a question whether ever the Answer shall come into
into all the hands that these Reproaches have.

It is a very evil thing, to make men glad with falsities. This was their sin here, they had made the Princes glad with their lies.

You had need look to your hearts when you hear reproaches and flanders against publick instruments: do you hug it love, and imbrace it? if you do, it is a sign there is rottenness in your hearts; it is evil to sow reports & flanders, but worse to harrow them in: he that reports, is he that sows flanders, and he that carries the report and spreads it, is he that harrows the slander in.

**Ver. 4.**

They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the Baker; who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.

THIS Verse needs but little opening, and the rather because the sixth verse hath much of it, to the same effect. They are all adulterers, either spiritual or corporal. Is the heat of either like to an oven? Therefore let every one take heed of that which may kindle this fire, either of corporal or spiritual adultery: 1. an inward heat. 2. violent, that turns everything to the increase of it. 3. an heat abiding, collected and resting, not of a harsh which scatters the heat, but as the heat in an oven.

Now if wicked sinful heat be so kept in and compacted; how much more should our heat be kept in and compacted for God, in the duties of his worship? when we come to Prayer, perhaps we have a little heat, but it is scattered and confused; if a man were to heat a pot upon the fire, he would take it ill if another should scatter the fire abroad; the Devil he comes and scatters our heat, and spoils us in our affections: now we should oppose the Devil in this. It follows.
Hieronymus

Hierom and others have great light for the understanding of these words from a tradition of the Jews which was this. They say, the intent of Jeroboam for altering of Religion was very hot, but not knowing how it would take, they sent abroad spies to leaven the people to see how they stood affected, they thought if so be this their design were urged upon them of a sudden, it would not take, but if in this way by degrees it might gain upon men's spirits. Thus Hierom and Cyril. As the Baker ceaseth from kneading, he doth not presently put it into the Oven, but lets it lie that the leaven may run through it; so Jeroboam and his Princes were like this Baker, they were set upon their design, and if it would have, but they would have the people first leavened, and then they would put it into execution: and Cyril ads that, those which went to persuade the people, used this fetch and device upon the people, and told them it would be for their ease and profit not to go up to Jerusalem, but to petition the King that he out of his Princely love and wisdom would permit them to worship at Dan and Bethel. And here lay the top of the plot, that the Kings design so much desired by him and his Princes, yet this must be brought about by the people, they must petition to the King that he would grant this liberty to them to worship at Dan and Bethel, and that they might not go up to Jerusalem, when it was first of all the Kings and the Princes own design. By this you may see how wicked and wise Idolaters are for the accomplishment of their purposes, by this means Princes obtain their ends, and their plots kept in.

Behold the cunning plots of the Devil to delude poor souls in matters of worship, therefore we had need to look to our waies when we have to deal with cunning Princes and subtil pated men.

This means was of late used among our selves, our bakers have been a doing their feats, but they had heated their Oven too hot, and so their cake proved over baked, and therefore:
fore proved abortive and came to nothing; and we have cause to bless God, who gave them up to this violence of rage. These in Jeroboam's time were wise enough to carry on their designs with moderation, policy, and secrecy, and so got the day, though our enemies were not.

And as wicked men do stay and are contented to wait, till the fittest time is for the accomplishment of their wicked plots, so the Devil is contented to wait, he first tempts the soul to sin, and when the temptation hath prevailed he stays a while and lets the sin work a while, therefore take heed of letting a temptation prevail, do not rout them up and down in your thoughts, saying: what if I should do such a thing, what if I should not; now know, that the Devil is a leavening your hearts, and when your hearts are thus leavened, the Devil will come in with such strength of temptation that you shall not be able to revisit him; therefore as Christ bad his Disciples to beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, so take heed of the leaven of Satan in this kind, and in this the Devil deals as God doth with a sinner in the Gospel, the Gospel is compared to leaven in Mat. 13:33. God he leavens the heart with some truth or other, and there let it lie and soak a while in the soul, God casts into the soul some truth and doth not presently urge it with violence upon the soul, putting them presently upon difficult duties, which they are not capable to perform at the first, but lets these truths lie, soak, and spread in the heart, till such time as the disposition and favor of the heart be moulded and changed into the truth, and then the Lord comes in with other truths, and works them upon the heart, which it was neither fit nor capable of before; and it were wisdom in the Ministers of the Gospel, to take this course, not violently to urge strict and hard duties upon new converts which they are not capable of, as to say this must be done, and the other must not be neglected, but press the Gospel to them and there let it lie and soak a while upon the spirit, and blessed is that soul which is thus leavened: The Lord will carry on this work to perfection, these beginnings the Lord in his time will finish.
In the day of our King, the Princes have made him sick with bottles of wine, he stretched out his hand with fumners.

There is no preposition in, in the Hebrew, "it is only, The day of our King." The people being leavened with Jeroboam's idolatry, they now make their acclamations in honor of their King, and rejoice in the way of their worship which they had from their King, which he & his Princes had set up; & would not regard the requests and petitions of some few who desired it might not be established, and though they were bound in conscience to go up to Jerusalem, yet notwithstanding the King would tend forth his Edicts, to tell the people there should be no more going up to Jerusalem, but to Dan and Bethel, now at this they rejoice and cry out, Oh the day of our good King which hath set his good people at liberty and eas'd us of our great journey to Jerusalem (to the danger of the Kingdom) and is an enemy to those precise people.

This day of their King was either the day of his birth, or his coronation day, or the day in which he set up the Calves at Dan and Bethel. Now it cannot be imagined but that there was some murmuring amongst some of the people, they were not all of a mind, to give their consent to the setting up of the Calves, therefore they did it by a stratagem, with all the mirth and triumphing in the day of their King, pleasing and pampering the flesh, drowned all the discontents by this way of pleasing the flesh, caused all things to be carried before them. Or thus: If the people were not thoroughly leavened, by this means, they would take this course, Come, we will go set up our King, and magnifie our King, and this will prepare the people to receive any thing he enjoyns. Let the Citizens be in their gowns, and the Gentry in their bravery, and let the King be amongst them, and shew himself courteous and loving to the people, and now let us cry out, Oh our good King! This is the day of our King.

Those
Those who carry this day to the day of his birth, have this
Note, That we never read in Scripture of any godly King that
ever celebrated his birth-day, but of three wicked Kings, of
Pharaoh, Gen. 40.20. and of Jeroboam, in this text; and of
Herod in Mark, 6.21. not that it is altogether unlawful to ce-
brate or observe a birth-day, or a coronation day, if it be
observed with two Cautions.

So that it be not made as a holy day, so there be not put a
holiness in it; for God never gave that power to man, to set
a day apart as holy for his use.

Then it may be here objected, What may not man set dazes
apart for Humiliation, or Thanksgiving? Yea, he may. Then
what is the difference between Gods setting of dazes apart for holy
uses, and mans setting of dazes apart for holy uses?

The difference lies in this: Time and things set apart
by God for holy employments and services, besides that they
make the duties more holy, and the Ordinances more solemn
and spiritual, than they are upon a day which man doth ap-
point: (for mans appointment puts no holiness upon the du-
ties which are done upon those dazes) there is a holiness in
them when out of their use, as in Ministers &c. but there no
more holiness in dazes and times set apart by man for God,
than there is holiness put upon the paper which the Bible is
printed upon; the Printer takes out so many reams of paper
from his heap, and sets them apart to print the Bible; now
will any man think this paper is more holy than the rest.

There may be a day kept, yet so, as God do not at that
time call for some other duty or service from us; man must
not so tie himself by any institution of his own as to croffe
Gods providence: as suppose I have set a day apart for thank-
siving, at that very day providence may so fall out, that God
may call for a day of humiliation; now if I should keep a
thanksgiving day and so croffe providence, being cal'd to hu-
miliation I should sin in the thing: These two things being
observed, I know nothing to the contrary but that it may be
lawful to observe a day, a man may remember his birth-day
in this kind, to be humbled for not doing the work we are
called
called unto; so men married may at the revolution of the yeer bless God for the mercies they have enjoyed in that Ordinance entered into on that day: but how many are there who have little cause to remember either that, or their birth day? nay may they not rather with Job, curse the day of their birth? Suppose you should hear a voice from heaven this day that you must die and not live, that this must be the last day you should live, tell me then, could you bless God for the day of your birth? would the thoughts of it be delightful to you? 'Tis reported of Philip the third, King of Spain, who lived so strictly that he never committed any gross crime, never committed any known sin willingly, yet when he came to die, cries out, Oh that I had never reigned! that I had lived a private life in the wilderness; that I might not have the sin to answer, for not doing the good, or hindering the evil which I might have done. It is a sad thing when men come to die that they cannot look back with comfort to their lives spent, that they have not discharged their places: had Jeroboam kept his birth day in this manner, there had been no evil in it; but his keeping of it was only to satisfy the flesh, till he himself was sick with wine: in such daies Bacbus, and Venus have the greatest portions.

Ob. 1 Festval daies are usually made distempering daies, daies of provocation. It follows.

With bottels of wine.

This wine is like that in Deut. 32. 33. Their wine is the poyson of Dragons, and the cruel venime of Aps: this wine of Aps it makes the spirits warm, and the body sick. Job knew the danger of feasting, therefore when his children were a feasting, he was in sacrificing. They made the king drunk with wine. This was the way which they took to gain the King. And is not this the course which is taken now in our daies, to betray the young Gentry into base filthiness? This was the plot of these Priests, first to make the King drunk, and then they could do any thing with him, could get any edict from him.
him to serve their base ends and intentions, to suppress the
precise people.

Drunkenness is an old Court sin. See how the Prophet, Isa. Obs. 2,
28. 1. fills his mouth, with woes and threatenings against the
drunkenness of Ephraim; Wo to the Crown of pride, to the drunk-
kards of Ephraim. The Court, the Crown of Ephraim was at
Samaria. A miserable thing it is that those which have the
most opportunity for God should spend their time in such
beastly vanities, and do to their bodies and souls as Richard Rich. 3d
the third to his brother, drown them in a Butt of Sack.

Drunkarls courses brings diseases. Be not amongst wine-bib-
bers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh, for the drunkard and
the glutton shall come to poverty; how many are there which
carry about with them the marks of their lusts, as Paul car-
rried about him the marks of the Lord Jesus; men will ven-
ture much for their lusts, but if Christ call them to suffer any
thing for him, then they are tender and sickly, but let their
estates, healths, and credits stand in the way to hinder them
in the pursuance of their desires in sin, they will break
through them all: now a shame is it for a Christian not to
do more for God than these men will do for their lusts: Ti-
mothy is commanded to drink but a little wine; and that for
his refreshment, to help nature; but when men drink & make
fots of themselves by it, what diseases doth this bring men
into? as the falling sickness disfiguring their countenances
making them to look more lik swine, than men, &c. The
Scripture tells us that the Saints bodies are the Temples of
the holy Ghost: do you think that such a body as this, is like
to be a Temple? no but rather like matter for the very finck
of hell where all filth shall be fuel for everlasting burning.
How canst thou answer the weakning of thy strength by this
lust, when God deserves all thy abilities? It may be thou wilt
say, thou wert never dead drunk; but were thou never so di-
stemperd as to weaken thy abilities and make thee unfit for
service? how sinful then is the practice of those that drink
others healths till themselves are sick through excess.

Drunkenness is vile in any, but most of all vile in Gover-
nors,
nors, men of place and power, Prov. 31. 4. It is not for Kings to drink wine, nor for Princes strong drink: It is not for them, and why? because they are above us, and how can any man endure to be under drunken beasts: they are gods, and how vile and abominable is it to have drunken gods? Therefore the Carthaginians made a Law, that none of their Magistrates in the time of their Magistracie should drink any wine.

The law of Carth.

Obs. 4. It is much more vile to make others drunk, than to be drunk ourselves. Therefore in Esd. 1. 8. the drinking was according to the Law, none did compel; for the King had appointed to all the Officers of the house that they should do according to every man's pleasure, none were compelled to drink more than they were willing; you may think they express a great deal of love to you, in drinking to you, and pressing you to drink, and when they have overcome you, then will they laugh at you, and make you a scorn, especially if they can get you who are professors of Religion to be overtaken. Therefore you had need above all men to take heed of this sin, for if you fall, Religion suffereth, and the Name of God is evil spoken of by your means; therefore Christ bids his Disciples themselves to take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness. Therefore you that are professors had the more need to take heed of this sin, and mind this exhortation of Christ.

Obs. 5. That drunkenness is vile at any time, but especially when we pretend to praise God: When God shall shew thee mercy, and thou pretendest to praise him for it, and then take liberty to be excessive in the creature, this is most abominable: we have had many daies of thanksgiving to praise God for his mercies, if we have been excessive in the use of the creatures, be humbled, this is an ill requital of God for his mercy. It follows.

He stretched out his hand with the scorners.

The Septuagent translate this word [Scorners] by divers words, as,

First, Pestilent people; so in Psal. 1. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall
shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the Congregation of the righteous; because every scoiner is a plague to the family, place, and town where he lives, Prov. 22. 10. Cast out the scoiner and contention will go out, yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

Hierom translates these words, cast him out, that is, cast him out of your counsels, let him have no part of advice with you.

Again, The Septuagent translate it, one without understanding, because scoiners are foolish and silly men, Prov. 21. 11. When the scoiner is punished, the simple are made wise.

Thirdly, they translate it pride, because scoiners are proud men, Prov. 1. 3, 4. God resists the proud, Prov. 21. 24. Proud and haughty scoiner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

Fourthly, they turn it by, wanton, unpunished, Prov. 19. 29. Stripes are prepared for the backs of scoiners: Because they go unpunished they grow scoiners.

Luther translates the word mockers and flowters, and interprets false teachers that delude the people, and deprave the Scriptures, and this kind of scoining by perverting the Scripture is the worst kind of scoining of all others, it is most abominable, Job, 20. 14. The meat in his bowels is turned to the gall of Ab's, the word in such men's spirits as these are, is turned into bitterness; these scoiners, who were they? the Nobles and the Princes, the Officers in the Court, these were the men which scoined at the people for going up to Jerusalem to worship, what fools are these which will lose the Kings favor, their places at Court, their honors and preferments, and all for a meer circumstance, and a trifle as they thought; and this was at the time of their feasts and jovialities when they might both harden the hearts of the King and people; now he stretched forth his hand to them, that is, 1. He encouraged them, and gave them his hand to kiss; how unlike is this unto God of whom Job speaks that he will not give his hand to the wicked, to malignants. Again, 2. to stretch forth his hand is to put forward any work, or further designs on foot, as Herod furthered their wicked designs of the high Priests XXX and
and Scribes in persecuting Christ, by countenancing them, he stretched out his hand to scorners. Scorners such as are the basest kind of people, as fiddlers, common servites &c. as if he were a common companion for them, he put off all Prince-
ly dignities and made himself an associate for the basest of
men, that could but any ways further his designs.

Ob. 1. The first Note from hence may be this, That such Courtiers
which live sensuously, are for the most part great scorners. Experi-
ence proves this.

Ob. 2. Times of feasting are usually times of the greatest scorning, and
contemning all Religion; then they think there is none live such
brave lives as they do, when they are thoroughly heated with
wine, then they have a flout and a scorn for every one, then
God himself is reproached by them, & his Saints had in dis-
grace, Psal. 35. 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnaw-
shed up on me with their teeth. There are many which carry
things very fair in the eyes of the world, who seem to be
Chritians, yet when they come in place among scorners they
have a scorn, a flout, and a private jeer; these are odious in
God's sight. Where is there more scorning and scoffing than
in Princes Courts, and great mens Tables? If a Court Chap-
lain had but heard any thing of a Puritan, or of a private
meeting, was it not their musick? Thus they informed the
King, that they were none but a company of precise fools, giddyheaded people, and the King he received this news with
joy, it made him merry, and he gave them thanks for their
pains; Oh how far is this below a true Princely spirit!

Ob. 3. That the right way of worship is by carnal hearts accounted a very
sight thing: and Gods people who stand for Gods Ordinan-
ces in their purity are looked upon as people who stand for
incities and trifles.

Ob. 4. It hath been the old way of the Devil to hinder reformation by rais-
ing up men of pestilent wits to scorn at Religion: and this way
the Devil prevails very much, when he cannot prevail by per-
fecution, he gains much this way; men that are of any spirit
cannot endure scorning, therefore we read of mocking to be
a cruel persecution in Heb. 11. 36. And others had tryals of cruel
mockings,
mockings. And Ismaels mocking is said to be persecution. In the primitive times they would set up an Asses Head, and a book by it, to shew that they professed to learn, and yet were as simple as an Ass. I have heard of a Scholer in Queens Colledg, who professed he had rather suffer the torments of Hell than endure the contempt and scorn of the puritans. And this is the Devils old way; but men will not be jeered out of their inheritance, and God will scorn such scorners, Prov. 3. 34. That place is famous in Lament. 3. 62, 63. The lips of them that rose up against me! behold their rising up and their sitting down, I was their musick. What then? Render them a recompence according to their works, give them sorrow of heart thy curse unto them.

Kings while their hearts are against Religion, shall never want Obs. 5. wits to further their designs in this.

It is a sad thing to that Kingdom when their Princes give their Obs. 6 hands to scorners, and to deny it to the people of God; it was a happy and blessed time with that people in 2 Chron. 35. 1, 2, 3. verses, when the Prophets of God were encouraged by the King himself. It follows.

VER. 6.
For they have made ready their hearts like an oven whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night, in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

The meaning of these words is, to set out the strength of Jeroboam, and his Princes desires to set up false worship, and their subtilty in taking opportunity and lying in wait to leaven the people. The Notes are from the similitude.

The heat of their hearts was so violent, that it did devour all that Obs. 1 opposed it: as fire devours all combustible things, so they devoured all kind of reason which was brought against them and their way, what was spoken to them to contradict them in their worship, it was like straw or wood in an oven, they were so strongly set upon it, they devoured all presently, they tell in all companies, such men have nothing to say for their way &c. Therefore at any time, when we come to men
and see them wilfully bent upon their way, it is to no purpose to speak to them, but let them alone; and let God but humble them upon their sick beds, and then they will hearken. No dealing with Bees in a hot day, but at night there is.

**Obs. 2**

As men's spirits are as hot as an oven in sin, so God's judgments which are prepared for such, are as hot as an oven. Malachi, 4. 1. God will make as little of them as they do of God's people? The day of the Lord cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up. It follows.

**Exp.**

While they lie in wait.

Though they are as hot as an oven, yet they do not run head-long imprudently, but they have will to wait their opportunity: And should not this be our wisdom in the ways of God, not to carry things imprudently? Let not our desires be so eagerly set after any thing but that we can be willing to be without it, or patiently to wait God's time for it. They are as hot as an oven, and yet not cooled because they have not their desires presently fulfilled: So must we take heed of having our hearts cooled when we have opportunities to further any design we have on foot for God and his Cause: though they had not opportunities to further their plots, yet they waited still and were not discouraged: How many times do people, when God sends but a little famine of the Word amongst them grow cold, and lose all the heat which they had?

**Exp.**

'Tis as if men which have a common oven, they put fuel into it and let it burn till they go and call their customers together, and when this was done, then they might go and sleep. So the people were leavened: These people by their Bakers were prepared, they had heated their oven, and now they thought they might go to sleep, they might be quieter:
and did not our Bakers do thus? they had heated their oven, Engl.
but blessed be God that disappointed them in their way: when these bakers slept, their oven heated, notwithstanding.

Subtil adversaries, when we think them to be most secure, their designs are still driving on. Thus it was in Ireland; and here among us, even in their greatest shews of peace in their Treaties; the truth is, if ever we will have the fire quenched which now burns so violently, we must take away the incendiaries and stirrers up of these unnatural wars. Let us in good causes, though opportunities may cease for work, let not the fire go out; let the oven be hot still; at the first their oven did but begin to heat, now it is all in a flame; at the first they would use fair means with the people and persuade them with good words, and answer their arguments, but when their oven was hot, that they had brought their designs to maturity, and got power into their hands, then —, 'tis now no longer, will ye worship at Dan and Bethel? and 'tis your best course; but now Clup law, now no more satisfying of consciences, but, to prisoner with them, now such a prison for such, & the other strong goole for the rest: this hath been the way and course of those which would set up any false way of worship; when their morning is come and their oven hot, then— come the day is ours, no more persuading now; Will they not come in? force them to yield. Their way was at the first to leaven the people, to try how they stood affected; but now enough of that; seize their estates, and imprison their persons.

VER. 7.

They are all hot at an oven, and have devoured their Judges; * for this all their Kings are fallen, there is none among them that can Jeroboam

leth unto me.

NOT only Jeroboam and his * successors, but also Princes, and people at length grew hot in the pursuit of that great design of altering Religion, in so much, that no man for of low might dare to show himself against them; many of the people at the first made scruple of yelding to their new way: but having overcome their consciences, now nothing troubles
them, they not only yeeld themselves, but violently presse the consciences of others which refused: but this similitude we met withal in the fourth verse of this Chapter, which we opened then, and therefore passe it over here. It follows.

They have devoured their Judges.

Some of their Judges (it is like) could not but have some light in them, to see that the altering of Religion could not but be against their Laws, yet seeing both the Princes and the people were set violently upon it, they also yeelded, Hierom observes this.

This is the vile, base, and low spirits of men in honor, and this honor depending upon the favour of Kings, that rather than they will hazard their places, and lose their gains, will yeeld to any thing, and for the pleasing the King will tell him the Law is for him, the bonds of the Kingdom do not forbid him. Mic. 3. 11. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity; the Heads thereof judge for reward, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for money: the Princes and the Prophets ask for a reward. The Princes have a mind to such and such a thing of their subjects, but to cover the vileness of the action and his injustice, he would ask the Judges whether it were not Law or no; now the Judges for their own profit encouraged him, and told him it was lawful, he might do it. How have our Judges imitated these?

Though men had some integrity at the first, yet the heat arising so high in the Princes and Nobles, yea and in many of the High Court of Judicature, that they could not endure it. Thus we see how one time answers to another in wickedness, The Princes designs go on with strength, when they have got the Judges to side with them, and to give sentence for them in their unjust designs.

Expos. 2. Others carry it thus: They having mischieved and ruined their Judges that did oppose them, therefore Mercer that learned Interpreter, for the furtherance of this sense, brings a tradition of the Jews, That the Princes and Rulers had so wrought
wrought about with the people, that they should come to the King & bring a humble petition to him, in which they should desire & intreat the King to give them leave to set up an Idol, which they did; and when they came, the King put them off & told them it was late in the evening now, & bid them come in the morning: in the morning they came, and bid him, Arise, and set them up an Idol. No (faith he) your Synedrium will not give consent to it, nor suffer it. No say they, we have taken a course with them, we have killed them; which is the old way and course which persecutors take with those which might seem to oppose them in their plots.

Or thus: They had devoured their Judges and their Princes by treachery: and this story hath reference to that in 2 Chron. 13. a Chapter of as much treachery as we read of: All their Kings are fallen: that is, into that false worship which Jeroboam was fallen into. And that is very observable, that all the Kings in the ten Tribes were wicked. From Jeroboam the first, to to the captivity, there were eighteen Kings, and all of them wicked and naught, and the reason of this was, that the way of false worship did so fute with their politick ends; so that the Observation may be from it,

That 'tis a hard thing to take men off from their strong engagements. Obser.
It was a work so difficult, that all the Prophets could not do it, it is very hard, especially when their engagements are in great things; they were wise politick men, and therefore could not chuse in all probability but see, how point blank their waies went against God's mind; even Jehu himself who was raised up so high by God on purpose to root out Idolatry, and did root out Idols and Baals Priests, and yet he followed the Calves as well as his predecessors.

Therefore never wonder to see men obstinate, and who will not be convinced of their evil waies, this text-shews it, clearly, many are willing to deny themselves in small things, but when it comes to great things then they flinch and hang off; therefore we see what snares places of honor are to most men, many Ministers see the evil of Ceremonies, and are convinced of it, that they sin if they should yield to them, and rather
Chap. 7. An Exposition of

Places of honor than sin they will leave their livings rather than yeild to them; but when did you ever see a Bishop deny himself? when was it ever known that a Prelate so far submitted to lay down his great dignities and fat livings for his conscience? It follows.

There is none among them that calleth unto me.

They were presumptuous and confident in their way, and none of them would ask counsel of me, notwithstanding their Judges were devoured, they fought to other helps, or rested in their outward prosperity, or 2. They are sottish and stupid, and call not unto me, though all be in a confusion in the State, their Judges devoured &c.

Obs. 1. When people are under God's hand, and Governors set up false worship, such times should quicken our prayers; Mic. 7. 7. I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me: so in Act. 4. 29. And now Lord hear us. The Christians there got into a corner and made their complaints and moans to God, of the evil of the times and do but observe the rise and ground of their prayers, and now O God hear us. They do as men that would leap a great way, take their rise upon a hill to further them; so these people make the miseries of the times their encouragements, not their discouragements; it is a desperate sign to see men sink under their discouragements, and to murmur against God, Oh let us go to God and make our moan to him, and let us die calling upon his Name, let that be our resolution which was David's, Psal. 116. 2. I will call on the Lord as long as I live. And this is a very good argument that the Cause of God will stand; if our spirits of prayer hold, the Cause of God will hold, but if that godown, fear the sinking of the Cause.
Chap. 7. the Prophecies of Hosea. Ver. 8. 673

Ver. 8.
Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned.

Ephraim hath mixed himself.] There is a great evil charged upon Ephraim, and that is observable, he hath mingled himself among the people, the people did not so much seek to him, as he to them; some here understand by Ephraim the Court, because Jeroboam was of the Tribe of Ephraim; and Cyril hath this Note from thence, that it is a great dishonor for them that are in place of honor to fute themselves and their minds to those that are of base low spirits among their people; men of place and power should be men of honor and worth. But we take Ephraim here for the people of the ten Tribes, for so it is more often taken in Scripture, they were guilty of this sin, in mixing themselves with the people; that is, the Gentiles, in their five regards.

First, In their marriages. The seed of the Israelites was too precious to mingle with the Gentiles, this was forbidden them in Deut. 7.3. and the good man Ezra in the 9. chapter, in the day of humiliation, contended this sin unto God against them, and this was typified of the Christians under the Gospel that they should not mix themselves with the wicked and ungodly of the world; they must marry in the Lord, it is a sad affection to be unequally yoked; it is reported of Maxentius a cruel tyrant whose custom it was to judge some Malefactors to death after this manner, viz.: To have a dead man chained to the living man, till the living man was kil’d by the dead man. How many living men have dead wives, and living wives dead husbands? Oh how comely a thing it is to see the delight of our eyes, the delight of God’s eyes!

They mingled God’s worship with their superstitions and Idolatries; they had not wholly defiled the worship of God, yet they had mixed themselves; Jeroboam had been in Egypt where he had seen their Idolatrous Heifer, and he was much taken with it,
it, therefore he would imitate them in his Calves: 2 Kings, 17. 33, 34. in one verse 'tis said, they feared the Lord, and in the next verse 'tis said they did not; They feared the Lord, and served their own gods; unto this day they do after their former manners, they fear not the Lord; never let us satisfy our selves in mixtures of worship: though we have never so much true worship among us, God will never be put off with such excuses.

They mixed themselves in their persons, and suffered others to joyn with them: neither must Christians suffer the wicked to joyn with the in matters of worship; & surely if fornicators, adulterers & profane men are crept in; they must (when discerned) be cast out speedily. Now if such as these must be cast out when crept in unawares, then surely such must not be received in, when they are known beforehand to be such, and certainly a bare confession of faith is not sufficient or enough to admit a man to the Ordinances, for those that are vile and wicked in their lives, may make a verbal and outward confession, yet far from a true and cordial; men may confess with their mouths, and yet deny all in their lives; as if a man should confess his faith in English and deny it again in Latin; yet if any should creep into a Church in which thou art bodied, if thou dost thy duty in admonishing them, and if they will not be warned to profess against them, thou mayest certainly, yea and with good conscience partake of the Ordinance notwithstanding.

In their leagues and covenants they mixed themselves, they made Covenants and leagues with other people, which was forbidden them in Exod. 34. 12. Take heed to thy self, lest thou make a Covenant with the people of the Land, whither thou goest, lest it become a snare in the midst of thee. Deut. 7. 2. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them nor shew mercy unto them. Isa. 30. 2. They went down to Egypt for help, and have not asked at my mouth, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trust in the shadow of Egypt: therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame.
They were mixed in their societies with other people; Psal. 106. 35. they were mingled among the Heathens and learned their works, they served their Idols which were a snare unto them. It is a very dangerous thing to be mixed with a wicked society, And the mixed multitude which were amongst them (people that came out of Egypt) fell a lustful; The mixt multitude fell a murmuring; this is an affliction in any society, but especially in Church societies. But suppose providence cast me into a family where there are such as these? In such a family thou mayst be as oyl in water unmixed, put never so much water amongst oyl, the oyl will be above it, swimming upon the top, Psal. 26. 9. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men; if you would not be gathered with them in the day of judgment, do not you gather to them now in communion in Ordinances, nor in intimate society. The Lacedemonians would not suffer a stranger to be with them above three daies; and shall we associate ourselves with such as are strangers to God? God had made a great difference betwixt Israel and other people, they were a people seperated from all the people of the earth, Exod. 33. 16. in the Original it is marvailously seperated, or set apart for God, they were a people whom God did own in a more peculiar manner, and his eye was upon them for good, therefore it did not become them to mix with other people.

Ephraim is a cake not turned.

We read this expression and make little of it, but there is very much concerning us in it: mark well the expression, the repetition of the word Ephraim: Ephraim is a cake not turned, the Prophet here speaks in a condoling way and manner, Oh Ephraim, what my dear son and do thus. Ephraim was a cake not turned in these four respects.

In their plots and counsels, they did not turn their designs and proceedings up and down, they thought of one way of false worship, but not of another, so wit, the time which might have carried on their plots, they did not weigh circumstances.
2. **A cake not turned, or baked;** that is, you could not tell what to make of him he was so indifferent, that it mattered not much to him whether God were God, or Baal. 1 Kings, 18. 21. How many men are of this garb among us, both in their opinions and practices?

As a cake not turned; in regard of their perverseness: although heavy afflictions were upon them that they lay as it were burning upon the coals, and took no means for their help and cure, they cried out and lay howling upon their beds, yet they turned not to the Lord, they could not devise a way to escape, they were good for nothing, as a cake not baked; like those in Jer. 3. 5. Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold thou hast broken and done evil things as thou couldst: just thus it is with souls in their spiritual estates, in terrors of conscience and sorrow for sin, they lie pining away in their iniquities, and take no course to deliver and help themselves: when thou art in this condition thou shouldst be acting upon God, and looking after him, thou shouldst not lie scorching and burning upon the coals of thy transgressions, but should make out after the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Luther and Vatablus make the sense of the words to note the greediness of Ephraims adversaries, they were like a man pinched with hunger, and coming to food fal upon it presently, and eat the cake presently, and will not stay till it be baked; thus Ephraims adversaries fell upon him; but this I conceive not to be the meaning of the words, but the second and the third. It follows.

**VER. 9.**

Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not, yea gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

Strangers have devoured his strength] By strength we must understand, Ephraims rich and warlike power; and here we may:
may see the poor shifts and strength of carnal hearts; the Almighty is the strength of the Saints, such a strength is God himself that all the Devils in hell nor men on earth cannot take away from them; strangers devoured the strength of Ephraim, wicked men such as were not in covenant with God, may rob the Saints of their outward supports and comforts, a good cause may miscarry when those which are the managery of it are relied upon, and too much confidence is placed in them, we see how just it is with God to cross and turn the designs of men against themselves when they forsake God, and this is a great curse to men, when wicked men are suffered to take away what we have and do enjoy in our estates and liberties; and metaphorically this may be applied to our spiritual strength, we should take special care that strong lusts do not devour our strength for God; and this is the reason of our flatness in duties; you many times complain of deadness in prayer; examine whether there be not some secret lust which takes away your strength: And is it a misery for strangers to devour the strength of our bodies and estates? much more of our spirits. It follows.

And he knows it not.

The Note from hence is this, That the hearts of wicked men do so strongly work after their lusts, that although they meet with never so many difficulties in their way, yet they know them not. But in good they know every little difficulty they meet withal, and have repenting thoughts in them that ever they were so engaged in a good Cause; but in their own ways, the ways of their lusts they are not troublesome to them. It follows.

Gray hairs are here and there upon him.

That is, Such miseries as make them gray, there were at this time many troubles upon the ten Tribes, often afflicted gray hairs by the Assyrians plundering and spoiling of them: and it is no strange thing to see men gray with very grief and sorrow. Scaliger tells us, of a young man who through the extream trouble of his spirit, was turned all gray in one one night. How much more should our spirits be affected with the miseries of our times.
2. **Gray hairs**] That is, their miseries were so long upon them, that made them gray, they were lasting sorrows, they were old in sin, and God made them old in miseries and punishments for their sins. Thus Germany hath been gray-headed for many yeers together, in respect of the length of their miseries.

3. **Gray hairs**: that is, They have been a long time and might have gained more knowledge of me, and got large experiences of the goodness of my ways, yet they know me not, nor my ways; the whiter men's heads are, the blacker are their sins many times; 'tis a most dreadful sight to see a white head and an old sinner. I have read of one Eleazer, which would not do any thing which might seem to be evil, because he would not spot his white head. Gray hairs should be a strong argument to move men to walk blamelessly in their lives.

4. **Gray hairs**: that is, They had many symptoms of their ruin and destruction upon them: As gray hairs show that men's ends are near, men that are gray, and would not be thought to be old, will pluck out their white hairs; but if there be gray hairs upon us, let us know, they are admonitions to us, and warnings of our ruin: *Heb. 8. ult.* There are many symptoms of a kingdom's gray hairs; I shall instance in some of them: As,

1. Oppression in Courts of Justice, is a gray hair.
2. Idolatry and Superstition in Gods Worship and Ordinances.
3. The secret curse of God upon men and their estates.
4. The taking away of the valiant and righteous men out of the kingdom, is a sad gray hair in that kingdom. Such a kingdom where these gray hairs are is in a dying condition, and happy were it for us if these gray hairs were not to be found amongst us; we have lain a long time at the graves mouth, and yet many gray hairs do continue still, and what God will do with us we know not; how covetous and self-seeking are men in these daies, notwithstanding Gods wrath burns so hot, threatening an utter desolation of all? Had we not need therefore to prepare for a dying kingdom. It follows.
And he knows it not.

Doth not this speak our condition likewise? Gray hairs are here and there and we know it not; how have the Ministers of God forewarned us a long time since of these times? but we would not regard them, both they and their message was slighted: this people was so stupified they knew not who it was that smote them, nor for what it was they were smitten.

Ver. 10.

And the pride of Israel testifies to his face; and they do not return unto the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this.

In the fifth Chapter we opened the same words with these, only the scope of the place is different; they would not take notice of God's hands, but braved it out in a proud way, and would not learn his meaning in the rod. Let us learn the contrary humility, to accept of the punishment of our iniquities, submitting, and acknowledging that our father hath smitten us and spit in our face, (and yet they return not to me) Whence observe:

God expects we should turn upon afflictions. Job 33.16. Sealed their instruction. Chap. 36.10. Commands that they return, repentance forced by afflictions.

Afflictions, if not sanctified, will never turn the heart. Obs. 1.

It is a great aggravation of men's sins, not to turn under afflictions. Obs. 2.

Though when afflictions work repentance, yet repentance is seldom true, it will not oft times hold out the trying; yet people should try and see what it will do: repentance coming from afflictions hath a promise: Levit. 26. 14. If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, if then even when my hand is upon them, they accept of the punishment of their iniquities: then will I remember my Covenant with Jacob, and I will remember the Land.

True repentance is rather a seeking of God's face, than our Obs. 5 own ease from afflictions.
Ver. II.

Ephraim also is like a silly Dove, without heart, they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

The word translated silly signifies, easily seduced, persuaded to anything; we use to say, that children and fools are easily persuaded to anything; men that are hardly persuaded to believe in God, and what God faith? yet are easily persuaded to believe errors, these are silly Doves: yet they thought themselves very wise, in going to Egypt, but they have done very silly, 2 King. 17. 4: the leaving of God's ways and following our own is very silly: how many when it hath been too late have cried out of this their folly? From whence this Note may be observed.

That although men by others may be misled and seduced, yet are they not excused; this will not excuse them before God at the great day to say others did thus, and I followed them, thinking them to be in the right.

*Obf.* That although men by others may be misled and seduced, yet are they not excused; this will not excuse them before God at the great day to say others did thus, and I followed them, thinking them to be in the right.

*Without heart.* That is, without understanding, Prov. 6. 32. But who so committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding, Prov. 10. 21. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of understanding, or for lack of wisdom. Now of all creatures the Dove is the most silly: as appears.

The Dove defends not her young ones as other creatures do, the Hen and other flying creatures will preserve their young ones, but the silly Dove lets them go quietly; so was Ephraim, in this respect like unto the Dove, they were destroyed and made a prey on by others, yet they never laid it to heart. The Lord in mercy look upon us, Is not this our case? we suffer our brethren to be destroyed and made a prey of, and never lay it to heart, because we for the present are quiet.

Pliny reports of Doves which will fly many miles to their lockers. Even in this is Ephraim like unto a silly Dove also, where he was many years ago there he is still.

And so it is with many men, they know and are convinced that
that such company hath done them mischief, which they
have frequented, and yet they cannot leave them, here is a
fily Dove, without understanding indeed.

Doves though they be swift in their flying, yet dull in pre-
venting of danger, it is easily caught with the net; so was E.
Phraim easily ensnared by his enemies at their pleasures and
preyed upon by them.

The Dove is delighted in the beauty of her feathers, and
prides herself in the clapping of her wings, and cutting of the
air as it were; Ephraim was priding herself in her orna-
ments, and fine excellent out side; we are very ready and
prone to imitate the creatures in that which is evil, but not in
that which is good; there are some good properties in the
Dove which they would not follow, as in their innocency
and simplicity, their unity and chastity, meekness, without
gall, cleanliness and purity, it loves clear water, loves no car-
cas to feed on &c. Prudentia obsq; bonitatem malitiam est, & simplic-
itas obsq; ratione stultitiae est. From whence we may note, that
godliness does not bear men out in wales of folly, when men
will not go from the rule, but stick unto that to be guided in
all cases of their lives, this is godly simplicity; it is matter
of wonder to see how fubtil men are to damn themselves, and
it is, and should be the care of the Saints to be wise to save
their souls, it is a scandal which is raised upon the Gospel,
that it makes men fools. Those are only wise men who are
truly godly, then men begin to be wise, when they begin to
be godly; our simplicity may aggravate our misery, but it
can never bear us out in it, nor excuse it; true godliness will
undermine all sinful simplicity, therefore take heed of putting
that upon the Spirit of God which is nothing but the sim-
plicity of our own hearts, Therefore be ye, wise as Serpents, but
innocent as Doves.
Ver. 12.

When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them, I will bring them down as the souls of the heaven: I will chastise them as their Congregation hath heard.

In the former verses, the Lord by the Prophet charges Israel for their silliness as the Dove; but as silly as they were they thought to provide for themselves well enough, by their going to Egypt; but it being out of God's way, it proved but silliness, for God was resolved to meet with them: when they go, I'll spread my net over them, my providence shall so begirt and straighten them, that although they may seem to escape, yet they shall be ensnared. This place hath reference unto that story in 2 Kings, 17. 4. the Assyrian was God's net to take them in, the emphasis of the word lies here.

My net, in the pronoun my. Men by their cunning and policy may bring men into great trouble and straights, but when God sets himself by his Attributes of wisdom, power, and justice to bring a people down to ruin, they shall be taken, they shall not escape. The Notes are:

Obs. 1. Those which go out of God's way, it is just with God they should be ensnared. Job, 18. 7. The steps of his strength shall be straightened, and his own counsel shall bring him down. Job, 22. 10. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee. How many men from experience can speak the truth of this? who going out of God's ways have met with snares? and it is God's curse upon the wicked, that their table shall become a snare to them, and God threatens it in Isa. 8. 14. that he would be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And therefore when we are in straights, it is good to think thus, Where am I? what am I doing? am I in my way or no? have I not followed my own counsel and left God? If we have, mark what God's faith, I'll bring you down as the souls of Heaven: you think to escape
escape by flying, no fly a while, when you think you are the most secure, then I will meet with you.

God may for a time let wicked men prosper in their ways, insomuch Obz. 2, that they may think all danger is past with them; but when they are so high, then is God's time to pull them down, when they are at the highest God can reach them; yea even then it is God's delight to pull them down; a famous text we have for this purpose in 2 Sam. 22. 28. But thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down. Thine eyes are upon them: That is, as a fowler sets his eyes upon a bird, which he would take in his snare or net, that sits on high; the proud and haughty spirits fly on high and think themselves very secure, and bless themselves in their way, but God's eyes are upon them, waiting for a fit time to pull them down. It was the answer of a Philosopher being asked what Jupiter did in the highest heaven; faith he, he pulls down the haughty, and exalts the humble. Obadiah the 3, 4. verses, The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, that faith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thy self as the Eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down faith the Lord. This is also true in that proud King of Babylon in Isa. 24. 21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones, which art on high, and the Kings of the earth upon the earth. This cannot be understood of the Devil, but of the King of Babylon, whom God threatens to pull down. It follows.

I will chastise them.

The word translated, I will chastise, signifies both to bind, to chastise, and instruct.

First, I will bind them: sinners shall be bound with the cords of their lusts.

Secondly, I will chastise and instruct them; noting that chastisements should be with instructions: I will chastise them. As they have heard] Moses and the Prophets have instructed them,
them, but they disregarded them, but I'll make it good what they said of them.

**Obs. 3.**

_Sinners had need to regard what they hear out of the Word of God in the Congregation, for it will take hold on them some way or other._ Zechariah, 1. 6. _But my Words, and my Statutes, which I commanded my servants the Prophets, Did they not take hold of your fathers, or overtake them? Oh thou impenitent sinner! take heed how thou goest on in thy wicked ways, for know, that all the power in God is engaged to make good his Word against thee._ Therefore when Christ sends forth his Disciples to preach the Gospel, he engageth all his power to make good what they in his Name and according to his mind deliver, Matthew 28. 18, 19, 20. _All power is given to me in Heaven and in Earth: Go ye therefore and teach all Nations; and lo I am with you always to the end of the world._ Oh how should we from this consideration, be stirred up to hear the word with trembling!

**Obs. 4.**

_When judgments come upon impenitent sinners, it is a humbling consideration unto them, to consider; that that word which they heard in the Congregation was true? How do multitudes on their sick beds prove this to be true? Now God makes them believe the truth of that word which before they had slight thoughts of; it is wonderful to consider how God brings Sermons into the minds of such upon their sick beds which they had forgotten before, it is the office of the Spirit of God to bring the Word into the minds of the Saints though by them it be forgotten,_ John 14. 26. _But the Comforter, which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father will send, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things into your remembrance, whatsoever I have taught you:_ But it is another manner of course that God useth to bring the word into wicked men's minds, even by his strokes, and that not for their comfort, but for their horror and distraction. It follows.
Ver. 13.
Woun unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me, though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

W in Scripture sometimes signifies pity, and misery; here it is to be understood of misery, destruction to them.

They for sake me] The word here interpreted, for sake, signifies to wander; it is a woful thing to depart from God, much more to wander from God: Woe be to you, when I depart from you, but if you depart from me, what will you do? In wandring from God, thou wanderest from the only Infinite good, and then, where wilt thou rest the sole of thy foot? what shall comfort thee in the time of thy distress? It is evil to wander from God, but much more to make halt from God. It is the Devils plot and custom, to hurry backsliding sinners from God, that they should not consider what they do, and whither they are going, he posteth them on in their evil waies as a bird to the snare, and knoweth it not that it is for his life,

Prov. 7. 23. Oh how much more should the Saints be put on for God? not to be kept off with impediments, but let our fouls with Davids, in Psal. 63. 8. follow hard after God; and Psal. 119. 63. I made haste and delayed not, to keep thy righteous judgments. It follows.

Destruction to them.

This is the end alwaies of such as depart from God: and happy were it if thou couldst see it beforehand. Oh how many when they have come to see the end of their waies upon their death beds, have given a most dreadful shriek as seeing themselves past recovery.
They have transgressed against me.

They have not only sinned against me, but have broken covenant also, they have now dealt perniciously with the Lord. Before God said He would chastise them: but now He would destroy them, make an end of them: Utter ruin is the portion of those that break Covenant with me.

Though I have redeemed them, yet they speak lyes against me.

Some read it in the future: Though I would, and was ready to do it, yet they say that the way of worship I prescribed is not so successful, and no such blessing follows it; they say my Prophets threaten nothing but judgment and utter desolation: now faith God, All these are lyes, it is no such matter, I was ready to do them good. But the future is often used for the pretentense in the Hebrew, and so here: the sense is, I have not only redeemed them out of Egypt, but very often since out of the hands of their enemies. And the story which this Scripture refers unto, is, in 2 Kings. 14. 27. the Lord wonderfully prospered them in their wars, and the Lord said not, that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven? but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joas. It follows.

But they spoke lyes against him.

That is, They attributed their redemption unto those helps which they had, or to their Idols, saying in this manner: Other people that served not God were delivered as well as we, we see not so much of Gods hand in our deliverance as you speak of. Or else, They fathered their errors upon me because I delivered. Now faith God, in this you lye against me: They made false interpretations of Gods mercies; As that God was no such enemy to this way of worship, because he had redeemed them. The Notes are:

Gods
Gods redeeming mercies are great aggravations of our sin. When God delivers, and we attribute it to any thing in us, or that we have done, is mighty provoking to God, because it takes away his glory in delivering.

When God delivers a people or person from danger, and they now think to sin by this means more freely against him, is a lying against God. As they, in Jer. 7. 10. said they were delivered for to do all these abominations. Or as that wicked King, being delivered in a storm, said it was to this end, That he might root King of all the Lutherans. So, are there not many so vile who be Spain, ing delivered in a sickness, or from any great danger, think it is, that they might sin more freely: which is a most horrible wickedness, and lying against the Lord.

For any man to urge any false doctrine or opinion upon another, is a lying against God. Therefore take heed how you bring Scriptures to prove any error which you hold, or is maintained by any, for God will look upon it but as a lying against him. It is a dangerous thing to counterfeit the Kings Stamp; and is it not much more to counterfeit the Truths of God, by errors seemingly maintained by Scripture?

But to apply this spiritually: Many whom God hath redeemed from sin, hell, and wrath to come, the hazard of their miscarriage being over, yet dare not, will not say, that God hath showed mercy unto them, they are still complaining. Oh they are still in their sins, there is no work of Gods Spirit upon them; or if they will grant, there is some change, God hath done something upon me, that's true, but it is only to aggravate my condemnation, it is not in truth, God will leave me at the last, at this is but in hypocrisy, I may perish at last for ought I know. Now, take heed of this kind of speaking, beware what you say in this case, lest you be found liars against God, speaking lies against the Truth of God in your hearts. Luther upon these words takes much notice of Gods speaking so in his own person: They have departed from Me, they have transgressed against Me, done wickedly against Me, speak lies against me, call not upon Me &c. Here note,

That the great evil of sin lyes in this, That it is against God. This Obs, in consideration
consideration laid David very low. Against thee only have I sinned. And this is that which humbles a gracious heart, that it should sin so unkindly against God.

Obs. 2. The more a man’s sins are directly against God, the greater is the sin. For now God suffers more immediately in his glory, and this puts the aggravation upon the sin.

VER. 14.

And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.

AND they have not cried unto me]. The Seventy have it thus: Their hearts have not cried to me. Where we may see, that it is not enough to cry with with the mouth, except the heart cry as well as the mouth. We reade of Moses, who though he spake not a word that is expressed in the text, yet it is said, he prayed: It is the working of the heart that is the heart of prayer. Therefore when Eliah prayed, ’tis said, he prayed in praying; Jam. 5.17. And by this we see the great difference there is in praying; Heart-prayer pleaseth God.

A work-man which wants words to express himself, yet may be able to perform his business very well in God’s account; so he that is able to express himself in fine language, eloquent sentences, and multitudes of words, may yet not pray at all: therefore when you pray look that your hearts go along with the duty, otherwise, your cries will be but as their prayers here in the text, which are called howlings, and that in these four respects.

In regard of the hideousness of their crying unto God, as the Heathens used to their Idols, and so the Hebrew seems to carry it, and to express something remarkable, setting a letter more than ordinary to this word howling. And thus the Heathen Indians at this day howl to their gods. And in this manner were the cries of Israel looked at but as howlings.

They were howlings in regard of their distempered and unquiet spirits; they were in their spirits very turbulent and
and unquiet in their lives, and forward in their carriage in prayer. Even thus it is with many in trouble of conscience, they are very boisterous and make troublesome noises, the shallowest waters makes the greatest noise, but the deepest rivers run the stilllest; so those that have the deepest sense of sin, and are kindly troubled for it, are quiet, still and submissive under God's hand, and certainly such a boisterousness of spirit under the sense of sin, is not from the Spirit, although there may be some legal terrors, but when God hath subdued the heart to himself, the heart will seek earnestly for mercy, and yet in a quiet humble way. They howled upon their beds in regard of their pain. The brutish beasts in their pain and trouble will cry out and roar: even thus did these men here, the extremity of the misery they were in forced howling from them. There are no men cry more out of judgments when they are executed, than those that were least sensible of them when they were threatened. Carnal hearts cry out altogether of the misery of the times, the judgment it is that troubles them, more than the sin the procurer of them. See this between Pharaoh and David, Saul and David: Saul cries, he cries to Samuel, saying, I have sinned, and done foolishly, yet honor me I pray thee, before the people. David he confesseth his sin and accepts of the punishment of his iniquity, Lord, tis I that have sinned, as for these sheep, what have they done? Pharaoh he cries to Moses that he would pray to God to deliver him from the plagues that were upon him. David he cries to God, Lord take away the iniquity of thy servant. If iniquity be done away, judgment will soon be removed, sin being the cause of all misery.

Howling, to note, that God regarded their cries no more than the howlings of beasts: Amos, 8. 3. The songs of the Temple shall be howlings in that day: as the prayers, so the sacrifices of such, how pleasing they are to God we find, 1 Sa. 15. 3. they are but as the cutting off a dog's neck; and their cries were but as the cries of that dog whose neck was cut off: They in their pride were wont to speak contemptibly of God, his ways, and servants, contemning them; and God, Aaaa he
he contemns and scorns them, their prayers, and their sacrifices; therefore that in Prov. 1. 26. is verified here, He will laugh at their destruction, and mock when their fear cometh. Oh how vile are wicked men in God's eyes, when they are in trouble and misery. None so vile but we pity them, and relieve them; but for the infinite, merciful, pitiful God, who is full of goodness and hath bowels of tender love and compassion, for him to have them in derision and to jeer (as we may so speak) the cries of his creature, Oh the consideration of this is most sad; Oh vile is the sin which makes man thus odious.

And here we see what little use there is of wicked men's spirits, they are of no use, there is for them in the places where they live nothing that they can do, thou canst easily sin and bring down judgments by thy sins, but when they are come upon thee what wilt thou do? Perhaps thou wilt pray and cry to God, God he abhors thy prayers, thy cries are abomination unto him; it is the Saints prayers that are so acceptable unto him, the prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. 15. 8. the least sigh, which comes from a godly heart is such a strong cry that it fills heaven and earth, so that (as I may speak with reverence) God can hear nothing else but that, because he both prepares their hearts to pray, and prepares his ear to hear; therefore we find in Scripture such expressions as these: Psal. 10. 17. and Nehem. 1. 7. the good man praiseth God's ear would be attentive, and his eyes open that he might hear the prayers of his servant. Psal. 86. 1. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear, and help me for I am poor. 1 Pet. 3. 12. His ears are open to their prayers. And Psal. 86. 6. God gives his ear to their prayers and attends to the voice of their supplication; what doth all this hold forth unto us but this? that the prayers of Saints are very delightful to him, they are pleasant music in his ears, were there no other difference between the godly and the wicked than in their prayers, it were sufficient to make men out of love with the ways of sin, and joyn with the Saints in the ways of holiness, the Saints they send up sweet breathings, and God takes pleasure in them: the
the wicked they howl and cry out, and God rejects them.

They howl upon their beds.

Men in their prosperity go up and down uncontroll'd in their wicked ways, but when God confines them to their chambers and their sick beds, then they howl. It follows.

They assemble themselves for corn and wine.

The Old Latin: Ruminabant, not Comedebant, like beasts they feed: the Hebrew word that hath such a signification, differs not much from that which signifies to assemble, רעב congregare רעב setare, rumniare. The Seventy κατασκευάζοντες they cut themselves as Baals Priests: But rather it signifies to assemble. They flock together, that they might get corn and wine, so they had it, they did not care what became of God and his Ordinances. 2. Assemble to feed themselves with the wheat, so they might be pampered, they looked at nothing else. 3. Or more probably, were assembled at their Temples to cry for wheat. The Notes are these.

That the vilest men in times of common calamity and publick miseries will assemble themselves to pray to God. Now certainly, if they will pray to have trouble taken away, when upon them, 'tis our duty to pray to prevent danger a coming.

When ever Hypocrites assemble together, it is for themselves, not for God: for corn and wine, and outward mercies. Were it not that they wanted some outward good, God should seldom or never hear from them.

Hypocrites in their seeking of God seek him more for sensual things than for others. We assemble together in our faits to seek God, but what is it for? if only or principally for outward things, it is but carnal and not spiritual seeking. It follows.

And they rebel against me. Pre frumento, when they are fed like unto the Ox when it is fed fat it kicks against the Master. Or 2. they rebel after they have assembled themselves, when
once the duty is over, they go to their old courses again, and undo all their prayers; as Jer. 5. 3. Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction. We should from hence learn, That duties should mightily engage us against sin. Hast thou in prayer, either confessed sin, or asked mercy of God to pardon thy sins? Know, there lies a great engagement upon our hearts now to be humbled for our sins, and to walk according to our prayers: Dost thou in prayer beg power against thy sins? and in thy life dost thou rebel against God? Are there not many who will be long in prayer, and very earnest, and judge themselves for their sins, yea and in words justify God if he should for ever condemn them for their sins, and yet afterwards rebel anew against God? Oh! may it not be said, What is this the man that even now was in Heaven in prayer, and is now as it were in Hell in his conversation? Me thinks the very next time thou goest to pray to God, thy mouth should be stopp'd and not able to speak unto God: as we reade Origins was, when he had apostatized, and coming to preach again, and reading that text in Psal. 50. What hast thou to do to take my Word into thy mouth, and hatest to be reformed? his mouth was present-ly stopp'd, and he was not able to speak a word more. So thou prayest to God, and after thou hast prayed, thou goest and sinnest freely again; Oh thou wretch, tremble at this, go and humble thy soul before God for thy sins, and tremble at coming into God's presence in this kind. I put this delemma to you; Either you pray against your sins, or you do not; if not, Oh consider how thou art departed from God; if thou dost pray against them, then how darest thou live in those sins which thou hast prayed against? Tertullian hath an excellent speech to this purpose: he faith, That prayer must alwaies be with remembrance of God's precepts, lest we are as far from God's ear, as his precepts are from our hearts. It follows.

They rebell against me.

That is, When their own turns are served, and their own
ends satisfied, then they rebel against me, as if now they had no more need of God, nor never should want help from him; Oh how many are there who upon their sick beds cry out to God, that he would spare their sins, and shew them mercy, making large promises to God what they would do? God hath taken them at their words, and hath raised them up again and restored them to strength. And what have they done? nothing but rebelled against him more than formerly, and are like the wild ass that muzzeth up the wind.

Ver. 15.
Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischiefs against me.

God in this verse compares himself to a skilful Chirurgeon, who binds up broken arms and wounds; so God had often bound up their arms when broken by the enemies.

2 King. 14. there we find God bound up their broken arms.
It is God only who can bind up broken arms.

2. It is a great aggravation of a mans sin, to be sinful after great mercies. God finds us as Chyrurgians do their patients, all out of joynt, and crying out of their pains, Oh that I had ease! I would give my estate, that I might be cured; and when the Chyrurgeon hath used his skill, and hath cured you of your pain, and hath given you some ease, if now you should stand hagling with him for a shilling matter, Would it not be an unworthy act? and would not the man think his time and skill ill bestowed? Oh how many people are there who deal thus with God? haggle and shuffle it with God in their distress: Oh if God will deliver them, what promises do they make? but when they have peace and quiet forget again.

It were an argument of an excellent spirit indeed, if when after our strength is restored and any mercy anew given into us, we would study how we might glorifie God with the same. Have our arms been broken, & hath God bound them up for us? O let us now use them for God. But this people were far from this disposition, they imagined evil against God: As if a patient which is cured of some
some desperat wound, or disease, should seek to stab his Chyrurgion or Physician.

They imagin mischief.

The word signifies all kinds of evil, and to imagin mischief is in some regard worse than to practice it; it was not a weakness or sin of infirmity in them, for it was an imagined mischief; it was a most vile provoking sin, for it did aim at the mischiefing of God Himself: they who live in sin, live as if they were born for nothing but to do mischief to God.

Quest: What was this mischief they imagined against God?

Ans: Why thus, When the arm was broken, they were more remiss in urging and pressing their false worship; as if God should say, Now they are low and in trouble they want opportunities, and have not that power to set up and press forward their designs, against my true worship, and servants, but now that their arms are bound up, and they have a little more ease and liberty, now they set their wits on work to invent mischief against my people, and worship, and it may be this is the cause why the Lord keeps our arms still broken that we might learn to submit, for when at any time God hath England begun to bind up our arms, how have many improved all opportunities to set up themselves and their waies.

Ver. 16.

They return, but not to the most high: they are like a deceitful bow: their Princes shall fall by the sword, for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

They return] They make shows, yea something they do. This verse hath reference to the story of Jeph who did very much; there were very great beginnings in his time to cast out Idolatry, but neither he, nor the people did come up to the full height that God required of them, but they would have some mixtures of their own. And thus it is in many peoples reformation, they are very hot at it in the begin-
beginning; and even among us, how high did the hearts of England, people rise? but what a damp is there since that time? though blessed be God, great things are done among us. But faith, God, that is not yet done amongst them which I would have done, it is true, they honor me indeed, but it is as the Nations round about them honor their Gods, they do not honor me as the Infinite Eternal First being of all things; I am not worshiped by them as the Infinite, High, Eternal God; people should so labor to reform themselves that they may hold forth the honor of God as he is Infinite, Glorious, Eternal, and having all power in his hands. The Notes of Observation from the words are these.

_That God is the most high God, the supream Majestie of Heaven and earth:_ he is so high that he humbles himself to behold things done in Heaven, 'tis a stooping in him that he takes notice of things in Heaven, surely then much more for things done on the earth: surely then he is a high God, and whenever we come before him in prayer we should come before him as unto such a God who is so glorious and high above all things betwixt whom and us there is an infinite distance.

_A true repenting sinner should have the sight of this high God_, _Obl. 1_, _myes in his eye_; and great would be the efficacy of such a sight as this is upon the spirit, it would be very profitable for the soul. For,

This would make the soul to be very serious with God, not daring to dally with him who is infinitely above it.

It would make the soul abhor itself in dust and ashes, _Job, 42. 5._ there is nothing humbles the soul more than this sight of Gods Majestie.

It shews unto the soul the infinite evil which there is in sin in that I should do nothing but cast dirt in the face of God.

_That there is no standing out against this high God, that I must crouch before him, for he will have the better of me._

_That he is infinitely worthy of all that I am or have, and all that I can do, and this very thing would answer all temptations against God._
6. This fight of God would inform us, that it is not every sorrow and flight mourning for sin which will serve the turn, but it must be such a sorrow as is becoming such a God.

7. In this fight of God I behold that which hath power in it to raise my soul above all things here below, self, the world, and all creature-comforts; all things must be looked upon as under our feet, else we cannot close with God.

8. I see by this fight, enough in God to make me blessed, and that I may bless myself in him, in the loss of all the world; and that there is enough in him to make me amends for all the troubles I have met withal for him. These are the thoughts of a true penitent heart concerning God. Now the soul can say, the Lord is God, and there is no such God as the Lord, and by this you may put your repentance to the trial, whether it be of the right kind or no, by your thoughts of God. Have you sorrowed for sin, as before such a glorious high God as the Lord is, that those that see your humiliations may see glory and honor and praise written upon them to the Lord?

The want of this, these people were charged for here: and this hath been our case many times, the Lord help our reformers to carry on the work of reformation begun, as before the high God. If we lose this opportunity, we lose such an opportunity as yet was scarce ever granted to any Nation upon the face of the earth. Now wicked proud men may lift themselves high in the world, and be thought to be somebody for it, but it is the low, broken, penitent soul which it the high man, because he returns to the high God. But secondly, They return, but it is not to the yoke, as some render the words. They will not come under obedience to God's commands, for there is but a little difference (namely in the pricks) between בַּיִּזֵּעַ and בַּיִּזֵּעַ, and if we understand the word thus, then it notes, that they promised much, and made many fair shews of doing much, but they would not come under the yoke; they will still be sons of Belial, without yoke. So many people, upon exhortation and intreaties will promise fair, they will return, and they will do much, but when it comes
comes to see the yoke, Oh they flinch back and hold off, Oh it is too hard for them. It follows.

They are like a deceitful bow.

Thus did their progenitors they trode in the same steps, Psal. 78. 57. They kept not his testimony, but turned back and dealt deceitfully as did their fathers, that were turned aside like a deceitful bow. Now a bow is deceitful two ways.

When it causes the arrow to turn from them it was level-led to hit, and recoils upon him that shoots it. These people were God's bow, Zachariab, 9. 13. faith God, I have bent Israel as my bow to shoot at evil doers. How vile and wicked are those men, into whole hands God hath committed power to execute justice and judgment against evil doers, and they shall turn all their power against the Saints and those that do well.

A bow is deceitful when it carries the arrow the wrong way though the Archer see the mark, and aim at it, yet it carries quite contrary. Just thus did these people, many of them had good aims and intentions, and purposes, but yet they carried the matter quite contrary; these words refer unto Jehu's time, he was a notorious deceitful bow; Come, see my zeal for the Lord, yet an hypocrit. Oh let us look to our hearts, there may be secret warping in our hearts which may cause us to miscarry for ever, if we take not heed; many who have good intentions, good purposes, aims and desires, and yet have some secret warping which they know not of, which may make them miscarry to all eternity. A man may with a deceitful bow aim at a beast, and yet kill a man; so many may think they strike at sin, and yet with that very goad may at the same time wound the Saints. It follows.

Their Princes shall fall by the sword.

These were they who had the chief hand in the setting up of false worship, and in oppressing those that would not joyn with them: now God would reach these great ones. In times of battel Princes stand by secured at a distance, they have their Life-guards, they put on others and think to be safe themselves, they will bring others into straights, and miseries, and care not though thousand of them be slain at a fight, they shall
shall do well enough, but faith God, they shall not so escape in battle, Their Princes shall fall by the sword, it shall not distinguish them from others.

For the rage of their tongue.

They raged against God, his People, and Ordinances, and thought themselves too big to be contradicted; we may note here,

That when men grow very wicked they grow outrageous, like mad men, there is no ruling of them, there is such a world of wickedness in them they take a liberty to say what they please; we find many strong expressions about the tongue in Scripture.

As Job, 5. 21. it is called a scourge; therefore the Saints are promised to be delivered from it.

2. Psal. 57. 4. it is called a sharp sword. Prov. 12. 18. there is that speaketh like the piercing of a sword, Prov. 25. 18. a man that beareth false witness against his neighbor, is a Mole, and a Sword, and a sharp Arrow.

3. It is compared to fire, yea unto the fire of hell, James, 3. 7, 8. To the coals of Juniper, Psal. 120. 4. which are quickly kindled, but abide long; all these expressions with others we find about the tongue of the wicked. But now see what is laid of the tongues of the Saints, Cant. 4. 11. Thy lips Oh my Spouse, drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue. And Prov. 10. 20. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: The heart of the wicked is little worth.

4. An outrageous tongue is such a poison as poisons itself, which no other poison doth, other poisons hurt no further than they are applied, they cannot poison at a distance, but this is such a strange working thing, that it will both hurt and destroy men that they shall never recover themselves, and this it will do at a distance, and come not near, these men have such dispositions, that they will let none pass without a lash of their tongue. Now the Lord he will not let these go in this manner, he will scorn the scorners; when these men are in their rage none are spared, Magistrates, Masters, Parents, Ordinances, nor nor God Himself; But Christ will convince them of their hard words. Consider how in yours.
your families, or in some companies you have been guilty of the rage of the tongue in these kinds. It follows in the last words.

This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

When they come to Egypt they think to find them their friends, that they will help them and stick unto them; no faith God, instead of helping them, they shall scorn them. One part of the rage of their tongue was in speaking basely of the worship of God, and of his people; and now the Egyptians shall speak basely to them; Why do you come to us for help? Where is your God become, that you so boasted of? Therefore just is it with God, that those which forsake him and his help, and go to men for succor, that they by them should be made a scorn: O it is a most grievous judgment for God's people to be made a scorn by such, the Egyptians! And it should be our care and duty not to put our brethren into such straights, that the poor Saints of God should be forced to go to the wicked for help least they should reproach them, saying, Why do you come to us? What cannot your holy brethren relieve you? do you expect help from us? But in special this is their derision in the land of Egypt, the rage of their tongue, their fallings out one with another, they could not agree but wrangled and jangled among themselves, when the Egyptians shall see this, they shall deride them, and look upon them as the greatest objects of scorn that possibly can be.

The Lord deliver us from this judgment; when was there such divisions amongst us as at this day? Oh the rage of the tongue which abounds in every place! the Devil himself hath a chief stroke in this rage, and he laughs to see it prosper and encrease as well as our adversaries, who laugh in their sleeves at us both; and what should move us more to agree one with another than this? The consideration of that woful scorn and derision we should be to them if God should deliver us up into their hands. Now as this their rage was a symptom to them of their ruin, so the Lord grant that we
may betimes repent of it least it prove a sign of utter ruin and
desolation unto us. And thus though the Lords help
and assistance we have gone through this seventh
Chapter, and shewed you the meaning
of the holy Ghost in it.
## An Alphabetical Table of the 4, 5, 6, & 7. Chapters of the Prophesy of Hosea

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