



David Murray
Glasgow.





The publisher William Wilson,
Law of Manuldie, mentions that
these sermons are published from
notes taken by a listener and
that they are not very correct.

This applies to the greater part of
the sermons published sermons of
the period. Nearly all of them
are printed from the notes of
auditors, often illiterate, which
have more seen by or submitted
to the preacher.

X. C. 37.

T H E

CHURCH'S

Ruine and Remedy,

Holden forth in

III. S E R M O N S.

Preached from HOSEA xiii. 9.

In the Beginning of the late Time of Persecution.

By that faithful Minister of Jetus Christ, Mr. WILLIAM GUTHRY, Minister of the Gospel at *Finwick*: In the Time of Scotland's purest Reformation, Author of *The Christian's Great Interest*.

Hos. xiv. 1. *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.*

G L A S G O W

Printed by ALEXANDER MILLER,
MDCCLX.

The *PREFACE* to the *READER*.

CHRISTIAN READER,

I KNOW of nothing that ought to be so much Man's Study (in order to glorify God, which is the chief End of his Creation) as to know his Misery by the Fall of Adam, and the Way of Recovery from under his Misery, by the free Grace of God, in Jesus Christ. For untill Man know the Source of his Misery and Mercy, he cannot, as he ought, serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, Heb. 12. 28. It was Man's great Happiness, that in his first Estate, he had the Privogative above all other Creatures upon Earth; to be made after the Image of God, holy, upright, and without Sin. But ever since his Fall, it hath been his great Misery, that he hath sought out many sinful Inventions to ruine himself, Eccl. 7. 29. The Imputation of Adam's Sin, hath so corrupted the Fountain of Man's Heart, that from it proceed all these Things that both defile and destroy the Man, Matth. 15. 19, 20. And tho the Actings of Sin be very various in their Kind, yet they all work so, as to bring about one and the same End, viz. Man's utter Ruine and Destruction. For, 1. Some by holding and maintaining damnable Heresies, in denying the Lord that bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction, 2 Thess. 2. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 2. 2dly, Some by habitual, immoral Practices, such as these enumerate by the Apostle Paul, Rom. 1. 28, 29, 30, 31. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. Eph. 5. 3, 4. Col. 3. 5. Bringing themselves to eternal Ruine; For they who do such Things cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; Because, for these Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience, Eph. 3. 6. Col. 3. 6. 3dly, Some by their Lukewarmness, Neutrality and Indifference, in the Matters of God and Godliness provoke the Lord to spue them out of his Mouth. Rev. 3. 10. 4thly, Some by their Backsliding and Apostatizing, from the Truths of God, which they once owned, provoke the Lord, that he can have no pleasure in them: and thereby make themselves unfit for the Kingdom of God. Heb. 10. 38. Luke 9. 62. 5thly, Many by Reason of their Unbelief (the great condemning Sin of the World) shall never see Life: But the Wrath of God shall for ever abide upon them; John 3. 36. 6thly, And some by living ignorant of the Righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, Rom. 10. 3. shall with the self-righteous Pharisee, and foolish Virgins, meet with a Disappointment of their Expectation in the End: Luke 18. 14, 15. Matth. 25. 11, 12. These are the Means by which Man is ruined: And the new and living Way by which Man is saved, may be discovered in the following Particulars. And,

I. The first moving, and only principle Cause of Man's Recovery from under his Misery, and bringing him to a new Estate of Favour and Friendship with the Lord, is the free Grace, undeserved Love and Mercy of God, who loves freely, justifies freely, and gives

the Water of Life freely. Hof. 14. 2. Rom. 3. 4. Isa. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 17. Free Grace, therefore, is the only Thing that makes the Elect differ from all others in the World, for they have nothing more than others, but what they receive from him freely, 1 Cor. 4. 7.

II. What God gives freely, Christ hath purchased meritoriously, by the Price of his precious Blood, as of a Lamb slain without Blemish, and without Spot, 1 Pet. 1. 19. By having his Body nailed to the Cross, and his Soul made an Offering for his People's Sin, by which he hath obtained eternal Redemption for them; 1 Pet. 2. 4. Isa. 53. 10. Heb. 9. 12. So being bought with this Price, through the Imputation of his Righteousness, they are accepted as righteous in the Sight of God, have their wounds healed by his Stripes; and their Souls sanctified by his once offering up of himself to God; 1 Cor. 6. 2. & 7. 23. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Isa. 53. 5. Hof. 10. 10.

III. Tho' all the Grace in Time, and Glory to Eternity, which the Elect World are, and shall be made Partakers of, be the free Gift of God, and Purchase of Jesus Christ; yet it is in the Use of appointed Means, that all Things which pertain to Life and Godliness, are to be expected; for tho' God give the new Heart (which is absolutely necessary, in order to obtain Salvation) and all the other Graces of his Spirit freely; Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27. yet he will for this be enquired of by the House of Israel, v. 37. For there is an inseparable Connection betwixt the End, which is eternal Life, and the Means which leadeth to the End: And since the End of Faith is the Salvation of the Soul, 1 Pet. 1. 9. it is sure that Faith is such an instrumental Cause of, and Condition in the Covenant of Grace, that without saving Faith (which is to believe with the Heart unto Righteousness, Rom. 10. 10.) none can please God, nor obtain Salvation: Heb. 11. 6. John 3. 36. And tho' Faith be the free Gift of God, Eph. 2. 9. yet it is the Act of the Creature. Hab. 2. 4. which distinguisheth the Elect which obtain Mercy; from the Reprobate, who perish in Unbelief. John 3. 18, 36. and justifies, not as a Work meriting Mercy, but as an Instrument, laying hold upon the free Offers of Christ in the Gospel. And tho' the Marrow of Modern Divinity, and its Patrons deny, that Faith in any Sense, is the Condition of the Covenant of Grace: yet, I do affirm, That Faith is such a Condition in the new Covenant, that no Man can be actually justified in the Sight of God, till once by Faith he believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as these Scriptures do clearly shew. Rom. 5. 1. Luke 7. 50. Mark 16. 16. John 3. 16, 36. & 1. 12. Acts 16. 31, Rom. 3. 26, 27. Luk 14. 26. Phil. 3. 8, 9. Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 37. Gal. 2. 20. and he that dieth, before he believeth on the Son of God, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him, John 3. 36.

IV. The true Act of saving Faith, which is necessary to Salvation, that is agreeable to sound Words, and ought still to be retained, a Tim. 1. 13. is accepting, receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ
alone

alone for Salvation, as he is offered to Sinners in the Gospel. JOHN 1. 72. ACTS 16. 31. & 15. 11. GAL. 2. 20. ACTS 10. 43. ISA. 26. 3, 4. PHIL. 3. 9. GAL. 2. 16. According to the sound Definition thereof, given in our Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. And not for every Man to be verily persuaded in his Heart, that Christ is his, and that he hath Life and Salvation by him; and whatsoever Christ did for the Redemption of Mankind, he did it for him, as the Marrow of Modern Divinity too erroneously defines it, for this teacheth all Unbelievers (contrary to the Mind of Christ) to deceive themselves, by believing three notable Lies at once, as the Act of their justifying Faith; viz. 1. That Christ is theirs, which he is not. 2. That he died for them, which he did not: And, 3. That they have Life and Salvation by him, which they have not; which is nothing else, but speaking Lies in Hypocrisy. 1 Tim. 4. 2. And to the Believer, it puts that for the Act, which only is a sweet Fruit of Faith, to know that he is Christ's.

V. As that Faith which is without good Works, is not saving, but a dead Faith, James 2. 26. so true Faith, which worketh by Love, Gal 5. 6. is always best known, by the Fruits and Effects thereof, which are Repentance unto Life, Love to God, and new Obedience to all his Laws and Commandments, which is evidenced by Holiness, and Newness of Life, in Mens constant Conversations. Heb. 12. 14. Luke 1. 75.

VI. Tho' in order to escape Wrath, and obtain everlasting Life, God require Faith in Jesus Christ, Repentance unto Life, and the diligent Use of all the Means of his own Appointment; yet in doing of these Duties, Man must be wholly denied to himself, and to all his Performances, Matth. 16. 24. Luke 9. 23. That so he may be saved in Christ, not having his own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness, which is of God by Faith, Phil. 3. 9. And by this an Entrance shall be ministred, into the everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 2. 11. But,

READER, Because I may detain thee no longer, from perusing these valuable Sermons: I must only tell thee, that though they were preached by the Famous Mr. WILLIAM GUTHRY, Minister of the Gospel at Finwick; yet, since they were taken from his Mouth by some of his Hearers, and published after his Decease: The Imperfections thereof are not to be imputed to the worthy Author, who was very capable to have sent them forth to the World, with satisfying Advantage, if he had published them himself: As his great Talent, in his small Treatise, The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ, does abundantly manifest. That the following Sermons may be instrumental to make the Reader know his Misery by the Fall of Adam, and Recovery from it, by the free Grace of God, in Christ Jesus, is the hearty Desire of,

LAW OF MAULDSLEE,
October, 24th. 1739.

Thy Soul's Wellwisher,
W^m. WILSON.

S E R M O N I.

HOSEA xiii. 9. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.*

THOUGH Israel's name speak out his glorious advancement and privilege beyond all other parties in the world, yet Israel may come to be in a very low condition, even to be destroyed in all appearance, and cut off, as to their parts. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.* It is true, the Lord hath a sovereign hand in the low condition of his people, and it is true also, that Israel's enemies have a great hand in their low condition, for which they will get no thanks from God; but it is as true that Israel hath a principal hand in this his low condition, he himself procuring his own overthrow. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.* 'Tis the iniquity of his people that separates betwixt him and them. *Isa. 59. 2. Behold the Lord's hand is not shortned that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquity hath separate betwixt you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* And tho many in Israel are now and then taking with this, that they by their finning have a principal hand in their own overthrow and destruction: yet a through, real and right conviction of this is not soon fastned on Israel. The Lord many times in this prophecy hath told them that their destruction was of themselves, and he hath used several argumens to bear in the conviction hereof upon them, in the preceeding part of this chapter; and yet

yet in the text he comes over it again, and leaves it of new at their door; as if he had said, I have often told you before, and have proved from the beginning of this chapter, that ye have ruined and overthrown yourselves by your sin: But because you are not thoroughly enough convinced of it, I tell you again of it, again consider of it, and lay it more seriously to heart. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself*: which says, That it is not easy to bind on the Lord's people a through, right and real conviction, that they have a main and chief hand by their sin in their own overthrow and destruction.

The Lord's people may be brought under strokes.

1. To acknowledge that their low condition and overthrow is from the Lord. 2. They may be brought to blame adversaries, as being the instruments in God's hand of their trouble. 3. They may blame their own sin, as the cause of their ruin, but a through real and right conviction of this they are not easily brought unto, which hath these four qualifications. 1. *It must be personal*. Some will grant, that it is sin that hath ruined the Church of God, but will not let it light that it is their sin. 2. *It must be particular*: It is not only my sin, but it is this and that sin in me that hath done it. 3. *It must be a pungent, wounding conviction of sin, as the cause of their ruin, a conviction which makes the heart sick, which is very rare*. Many will blame themselves, and particularly many sins they are guilty of, and will grant they have a hand in bringing much wo and wrack on the land, and on themselves, and yet will not be affected for all that. 4. *It must be an abiding permanent conviction*. Many who have obtained the former three, come short in this: many have been so far convinced of sin, of their own sins, as having a great hand in all the wrath lying upon us, and have hung down their heads like a bulrush for a day, but these affections have not bidden, they have not carried that

that weight alongs with them, as a counterballance to other things, till the Lord's wrath was turned away from themselves, and from the land.

What are the marks of a through, real and right conviction that we have destroyed ourselves, and have had a great hand in the destruction of Israel by our sin. Answ.

They who are rightly convinced, they lay their hand upon their mouth; they are silent before the Lord, notwithstanding of all that he hath done, is doing, or may do to them and to the land; so far are they from complaining and repining for any thing that is come upon them. *Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou, O Lord, did it:*

There was a man rightly convinced of sin. As long as a person or people multiply complaints of heavy burdens and sad things on them, there is not a through real and right conviction fastned on their heart; for as soon as the conviction is through, they will be dumb, not opening their mouth: And, *Lam. 3. 39.*

Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? will a rational man, if he be

a man and not a beast, complain for any cross dispensation? he will not, for it is the punishment of his sin, and he is punished less than his iniquities deserve.

2. They are busy in searching out the ways whereby they have brought destruction on themselves and the Church: *Lam. 3. 40. Let us search and try our ways.*

Every man that is throughly, really and rightly convinced, that he hath had a hand in the overthrow of the people of God, he will search and labour to find out what is the hand he hath had in it.

3. A right, real and through conviction hath following in it a sudden and hasty reformation of these evils, which have procured and drawn on that wrath.

And for me to say, that I have laid my sin to heart, as being convinced, that I have had a hand in this wrath that is on the church and people of God, and can father it on this and that evil in myself, and yet

I study not to remove it, it is but a fancy, and not a real and through conviction. And tho I would say, I am convinced, I but lie, for, would I hold a stroak on myself and others, if I iudged it a stroak, and that my sins procured it, it by any means I could remove it? This is also clear from, *Lam. 3. 40. Let us turn again to the Lord*: A through, real and right conviction of sin, and of our ruine by sin, brings every man to seek to reform what is amiss. 4. It makes the person diligently plead at the throne of grace for mercy, reconciliation and peace with God through a Mediator. Speak of other things what ye will, that sticks most in the heart of a thoroughly convinced sinner. *Lam. 3. 41. Let us lift up our hearts, with our hands, or in our hands, to God in the heavens.* Speak to such a sinner of a delivery, and of this and that promising mean, and of an outgate, they signifie not much to him without the peace and favour of God; moyen in heaven is that which most bulks in his eye. 5. They who are rightly convinced, when ever they hear or observe any new emergent, or declaration of God's wrath, or evidence that he is angry, they not only look upon sin, as procuring it, but much shame and confusion fills their face. Alas! we büt sport with terrible emergents of God's wrath and anger, while we tell them over as news, and never reflect upon ourselves, nor are ashamed, nor blush as procuring them. If we were convinced, that we by our sin have a hand in harling the people of God before these miserable, unhappy entnaring courts, is it possible but we would blush and be ashamed. Ye would think it strange, if one should come in and tell you, such a man is harled before the Commission court, another is imprisoned or confined, and ye had a hand in it; but if ye were convinced, that it is right true, your hand was in it, would ye not be ashamed of it? Never think that ye are thoroughly, and rightly convinced, or that you really think your sin had a hand

hand in such a thing, till you also think that ye have reason to be ashamed, and to take shame to yourself for every thing you hear of that kind. 6. They that have such a conviction will not be fortified with every delivery or out-gate, except the bond be taken off, and the Lord remove the quarrel and sin, that brought on the stroak. I question not but this may be a challenge to all the Lord's people, that they have been content of, and would have been at any out-gate or delivery, but is that each one of us to resemble the children of a king, and such a king in our sufferings, who should say (and would say, if rightly convinced) no out-gate, except God give repentance, to take away sin, loose bands, and heal backslidings. And I would ask you, Have any of you this for your work and business, for which you plead at his throne? The rightly convinced soul says, Lord, either deliver thy people from iniquity, or let them ly as they are, either loose our bonds, or no deliverance will content us; for they know any outward delivery could signifie little or nothing to them, except iniquitie were removed, & their bonds loosed, and backslidings healed, because otherwise there would be a new browst upon the back of it. 7. They can put a blanck in God's hand, to fill up what sufferings he pleaseth. It is not their care and fear what may be inflicted on them, they are resolute to suffer whatever he thinks good, and that patiently. *Micah 7. 9.* *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; I will justifie the Lord, and sit silent, not only under what he hath done, but under what he shall do to me, and will never ask a reason of his dealing, for I know he is holy and just, and can do me no wrong; and when it is so, then I take up my self-destroying in the right hew, and am convinced I have a principal hand in it, and will say, Righteousness belongeth unto God, but shame and confusion of face to me.* 8. They have an high and

eminent resentment of new discovered sin, whether in themselves or in others; and we will find some strange thoughts of resentment that this conviction hath driven some to in scripture, as in that holy man *Ezra*, ch. 9. 3. who when he hears of the sin of the affinity of the people with strangers, *he rends his mantle, and plucks out the hair of his head and beard*; his heart fails him, and he falls down upon his face as dead; that is an high resentment, and an evidence of a through conviction. And if such a conviction be, when ye hear tell that this or that man has slipped in a sin, to the bringing of more misery on the people of God, ye will also resent it sadly. Ye will also find another high resentment of new discovered sin in *Phineas*, Numb. 25. when he sees *Zimry* and *Cozby* in the act of uncleanness, he steps out of his station, and sticks them both through the belly. Alas! if there were zeal in us, flowing from a right conviction of sin, when we hear this man falls in this sin, and another in drunkenness, a third hath taken that wicked declaration our hearts would rise in high resentments of the things; our hatred of them would be so irreconcilable, we could not digest them, or our hearts would fail us at the new discoveries of new sins and guilt; new sin would make us sit down astonished, and nothing would weaken our hope, and make us despond, but that alone.

Use 1. *Be not easilie satisfied with yourself, under any convictions for sin ye win at, under all this misery that is come upon the church & people of God, and upon yourself.*

2. *Never rest till you get a conviction qualified with that fourfold qualification. 1. Till your conviction be personal, that you bring home things to yourself, & be made to say, I am the man, God is angrie at me, and I have procured this wrath to the land, and to myself. 2. Rest not till ye come to particulars, this and that which I have done, and am guiltie of, is the cause of all this desolation, ruine and overthrow: general confessions will not do*

do it. 3. Rest not till your heart be kindlie affected with the sins ye are convinced of: seek that the conviction may be pungent and wounding. 4. Let not your conviction be transient, but seek it may be an abiding conviction. The wrath that is on us is no transient thing; it is like a cloud that is settled over us, and it is a sore matter, that our conviction should not be a settled & abiding conviction.

3. Let me say, I fear upon trial, that by the marks that have been given, a through, real and right conviction of sin be very rare, and there be few found, for all that's come and gone, that have said this matter rightlie to heart. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself! Do you think that the Lord's people have been weeping these 3 or 4 Years under a through conviction of their sin, and that the Lord regards not their tears? No surely, this is not it, we have not been humbled & weeping; and therefore, think it not strange, that it be with us as at this day. The Lord's people meet and pray, and there is no answer returned, but one ill on the back of another; and the profane are stumbled and hardned, when they see success doth follow their prayers, and they do prosper in their way. In this we are to clear the Lord, & blame ourselves. I doubt nothing, but if from a through, real conviction, that we have ruined ourselves by our sin, we have been humbling ourselves before God, we should either by this time have had an outgate, or known better the outgate and mind of God concerning the continuance of our trial & outgate; or at least, we should have had some token for good shewed unto us from the Lord. Oh, have we been silent before the Lord under our conviction, and put from our complaining! have we been busied in searching out our sins, whereby we have destroyed ourselves & others? have we made haste to reform these evils we found upon search? have we diligently pleaded at the throne of grace for pardon and peace with God, and the loosing of our bonds? have we upon every new declaration of wrath been ashamed, as having a deep hand in drawing it forth? would we be satisfied with

no outgate, nor promising mean of delivery, except the Lord free us of the yoke of our transgressions; and heal our backslidings? have we been brought to put a blank in God's hand to afflict us as he pleaseth? have we in zeal highly resented new discovering of sin & wrath?

No doubt there are many, who think there is no wrath upon Scotland and that Israel is in a good case, and hath not destroyed himself. But oh! are ye to blind? are ye not convinced that God hath profaned the church and state of Scotland, that he hath loosed the girdle of our Nobles, and hath made their authority vile and contemptible before the people? that all our precious things are taken captive by the adversary; that our interpreters, each of them one of a thousand, are some of them banished, others of them confined, & a godless profane pack put in their room? do ye not yet see, how the land is ruined and destroyed, and the flocks of the Lord's people scattered? & are these things & many moe no evidences of God's wrath? I would not wish to any man such a measure of wrath, as is on that man who thinks there is no wrath upon Scotland. Again, are there not many of you faint-hearted? Is not your Spirit and courage, and valiantness for the truth gone? and is that no evidence of wrath? I doubt nothing, but it is a part of our plague, that we are as *Ephraim, a fillie dove without heart*; nor do I deny that a manifest breach of covenant lies on us on that account: but this is not all. Israel hath sinned, and therefore is his heart faint, and his hands feeble, and he fled before the pursuer. Would ye know then, why the people of God are so faint-hearted and weak? why Abner's hands were bound, and he died as a fool for sin, and want of a through, real and right conviction for sin, and not turning ro God? otherwise I nothing doubt, but they had been as bread to us this day; and one of us should have chased a thousand of them who now banish us, and harle us to prison. There is no hope

as to this thing, till once we be brought to know & be made sensible, *we have destroyed ourselves*. And if we have a heart to believe this text, and the great truth contained in it, it is your sin hath ruined you, and separated betwixt God and you. Why sit ye still looking one upon another? Arise, as it is said of *Ezra*, he arose and tell about the confession of sin, and they entered into a covenant to amend what was amiss. So I would say to you, Sit not still discouraged, arise and fall to search and find out what is your part of the sin that hath brought on this wrath. Make your conviction personal, particular and pungent, every family apart, and their wives apart; set some time for the work, the finding out, and the confessing of sin and repentance for it, and turning to God; and then if the Lord shall not bring about your delivery, you shall have ground of much peace, and ye shall have an easie task in your sufferings. If we were once thoroughly convinced of sin, and if matters were as clear betwixt our God and us, as they are betwixt him and his enemies, I am confident the Lord would appear, and make bare his holy arm yet once more for his people. O but matters are clear betwixt God and adversaries; and if we could say here is an evidence that matters are clear betwixt God and us, and that we have heard the voice of the rod, and of him that hath appointed it, I nothing doubt, but ere long the Lord should do some great thing for us. But I know it is but lost labour for the most part, for a Minister to give you a general charge, and bid every one search his own way and labour that his conviction may be through, affecting and humbling. many cannot be moved to it: ye will hear what we say, but will not do what we bid you; for many a time hath God by his Ministers bidden you search your ways since this work began; and I put it to your conscience, if ye have set time apart for it. And if ye say, though ye win not to much, yet it is the work

ye are and were about. I fear, few of you can say this much; and who have it not to say, have an ill conscience, and scarcely can I think that ever they had this real, through and right conviction, That they have a principal hand in destroying themselves & the land by their sin. Others know not what to confess nor how to further this work of conviction upon themselves.

Therefore it will be best to come a little to You in Your relations & Stations with this charge, and seeing it pleaseth the Lord now to speak to you, & ye know not how long or whether he shall speak to You by us again. I exhort You to take to heart the things that I am to charge upon You, and everie one as he finds himself, set some time a part to mourn before God and to seek for pardon and peace.

The 1. sort I shall speak to, is to ourselves who are Ministers of the Gospel. We cannot deny but our hand hath been deep in the desolation and destruction that hath come upon the Lord's Israel, and tho' the Lord's people have had that much charity, as to clear us, yet God forbid, that we clear ourselves. Many Pastors have destroyed the Lord's vineyard, through their transgressions and sins. And while I am speaking to our own sins, who are the Lord's Ministers, let none think that we are laying open their wickedness to their contempt, I know no way like this to make them honourable, to search out their sin, and to be bumbled for it before the Lord.

The 1. thing I charge on them is this, that we have had a carnal way in managing all his matters, we have taken our own prudential gate of binding things on people, and have laid more weight on these than on the ordinances of God, and the Spirit's working and backing them, and that both in doctrine, and in the exercise of discipline, and our not laying weight on his ordinances as divine; and his Spirit's presence and blessing promised to make them effectual hath made his work take small effect among our hands.

2. We have been more careful to stock ourselves with

with matter of our work, than to bring fresh influences out of heaven to make his work taking, beautiful and glorious; and every word we spake had been more savoury and refreshing with the people, if we had dipped our hearts in heaven's influences; because we have not sought after this, but have only studied words, and to make up purpose; and have not laid the stress of our work upon the spirit, and on his divine influences, in the convey of these things we delivered, *it hath made our work so much the more fruitless.*

3. It hath been our sin, if we got our work off our hand with credit, and were born out in the delivery of our message to the people, we did not follow it with prayer, and seek after it. It hath not been so vexing to us after as before. Why? because we cared more for our own credit, than for the people's profiting; a sin for which the Lord hath judged us not fit to bear office in his house.

4. We may be charged with self-seeking and envying others, that were like to darken us; tho we have seemed to be blyth to hear such a man commended, yet it hath stuck to our heart, and hath afterward vented itself in our censures, which tells we never desired another to come our length, at least to outstrip us; so far have we been from that disposition to rejoice, if Christ were preached, and at the increasing of others, tho we should decrease. This amongst others hath helped to shut us out of our Ministry.

5. We may be charged with much worldly mindedness, we have not given ourselves wholly to these things of our Ministry. I do not say, that every one is alike guilty of this, or of the rest; yet some are guilty of one thing, and some of another; some in one degree, and some in another; and there hath been a great deal of carnality amongst us all. Can any of us say, that the care of the church hath lien upon us, or that the care of souls, that we have had under our charge, hath had the weight on us it should have had.

We

We have not commended ourselves to every man's conscience, nor have we become all things to all men, that we might gain some ; nor have we made it our work to seek that which is driven away, and to bind that which was broken ; neither have the souls conditions of these who were going over the brae lye heavy upon us, till they were reclaimed ; we were not burnt nor scalded with the stumbling of any, that was the least part of our work ; for once we got a gate of them by publick censures, we troubled not our head with them any more.

6. Whatever hath been our diligence and duty, it hath not been our meat and drink to do the will of our master, and to finish his work with delight and pleasure ; we have wearied of it. And many precious Ministers of the Gospel longed for dismissal, and would have been glad many times to have been laid by, therefore God hath granted them their desire, and hath laid them by, and tho they would be glad to speak again in his name, they are justly deferred of that opportunitie, till they know and acknowledge their iniquitie, and be ashamed of it.

7. May it not be said, as the word is, *Jer. 10. 2.* The Pastors generally were become brutish, therefore have they been smitten, and the flocks scattered ; so little Religion hath appeared in the practice of many Ministers, that Ye should not have known them by other men, by their carriage, if their habit had not spoken it. Would to God that sad word might not be applied to manie Ministers in our time, what profanitie hath gone out from them, which hath taught the people to be prophane.

8. We have been more busie in strife and contention to strengthen factions, and to hold up our side in controverted things, than busied with the work of converting souls to God. These and many more things may be charged on us ; but there is enough here to make us ashamed, and therefore You who are
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the Ministers of Christ, and have the honour to speak in his name, know that unto You is that word spoken, *Jer. 12. 10.* Manie Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, & have made my pleasent portion a desolate wilderness. Take time apart, and together to think on these things. Charge Yourselves with them, and confess them to God when You meet, and Your alone mourn over them before him, who hath justlie shut us out of his house, as unworthy to bear office therein, and yet acknowledge, that the Lord hath dealt mercifullie with us in this matter, for when he might have done it on some horrid account for scandalous transgressions, he hath laid us by on an honourable account of sufferers for him, because he hath found some sinceritie in us. And when he hath humbled the Ministers of Scotland, who are laid by as useles, I hope he shall yet take service off their hands; but we would know, that his voice, and the voice of his rod now is, Ministers, go preach to Yourselves, because ye did not preach to Yourselves before, and if we take with our sin, and get our peace made with him, it may be he make us yet polished shafts in his hand; and if not, here we are, let him do to us what seemeth good to him; however, sure I am, it is present dutie to set some time apart for confession of, and mourning over sin; and if we do so, it shall be well with us, however matters go.

The *d*Sort I would speak to, is to you who are Elders and Deacons, Ye have helped to destroy the Lord's people, and to lay his pleasant portion desolate, therefore God hath loosed Your cords by Your sin, and made void Your authoritie, and remarkable he lighted first on You, and shut You all to the door together, not that I aim at Your guilt more than at our own, but I would have You lay to heart Your transgressions, and wish I could further You to a full conviction of Your sin in order to Your peace, and God's being pacified towards You, and his people

ple. Can Ye say that the souls and bodies of the Lord's people have lien upon Your heart? that it hath been a part of Your business to hold up their case to God, and to have them reclaimed, & brought in to him? did Ye think it not enough, if Ye delayed a fault, when it came to Your knowledge, and when Ye had done, Ye thought Yourselfes exoner'd and free? did Ye not manage Your work with carnal weapons, mixing Your wild fire with the zeal of God, boasting of the people of the Lord, ruling over them with rigour and force, disengaging them by Your counsels and reproofs? have Ye taken conscientious inspection of these places respectivelie put under Your charge? have Ye distribute to the poor with bowels of mercy? what account could manie of You give of their condition, if Ye should be put to it? And give me leave to tell You, that Your worldlie mindedness, Your greed and covetousness, Your lying and deceit, Your breach of promises & engagements, Your tipling, and carnal walking hath taught the people profanitie. When Ye made no conscience of Your words, how should they? when Ye obtained not from a tavern, was it not a snare to them to follow? And therefore, I nothing doubt, I do You any wrong to charge You with the destroying the Lord's vineyard. I shall not insist on your sins; but if Ye would search Yourselfes, confess Your sins, let time a part to mourn over them before God, Ye might comfort Yourselfes, that this day Ye suffer not as evil doers, but for his names sake; and happy are Ye, if Ye continue in adhering to him, his truth and cause. But let me obest You, let men speak of conventicles, we have another thing to look to than their acts, and things of that kind: let time apart, Yourselfes apart, and Your wives apart, and meet together and confess and mourn over Your sins. O if I could perswade You to this, I do nothing doubt, but ye should yet live to bear honourable charge in the house of God. A

A 3d Sort I would speak to are those who are more eminent amongst the people. We have not anie Nobles, and God be thanked for it, they have little credit who have most of them; neither would I have You to think, that I mean of anie particular Gentleman, in what I am to speak. We have not a considerable Gentleman in all the parish; but anie of You that are more eminent than others, take it to You, and I would charge You with some things, that I would have You (in so far as Ye are guiltie) convicted of & mourning before the Lord, and amending.

The 1st thing that I charge on You, Gentles, is, That whenever Christ or his cause had ought to do, Ye sent out the blind, the halt, and the lame, the profanest runnagates to fight for the cause; and I wish that there were not ground to say of some, that they should have some males in their flock, and yet send out the blind, the halt and the lame in their room, and the consequence of this was often told you, the miscarriages of the armies did so stumble the Lord's people in other lands, that it hath holden up, & yet holds up jealousies betwixt the godlie in both nations to this day, that they can think on nothing unanimouslie. 2. I charge You with oppression, and grinding the faces of the poor. I know Ye will startle at the naming of this, but I cannot help it. I dare say Ye have used Your brethren as Your slaves, and made their lives bitter unto them. I do not justifie their undutiful carriage to You here, neither would I have You think I reflect on Your credit, to tell You Your sin: Your consciences will justifie Your Ministers, that it hath been a part of our work to hold up Your credit and conscience, and would have sweetned the lives of the poor bodtes under You. I know Ye will say, they will not be the better, tho' Ye should give them down of their rent; but will Ye once use this mean to better them; convince them that Ye are merciful, and if they be not better, put them from You. Is it not lamentable, that everie bit of land Ye have racked to the utmost value, so that Your tenants

vants cannot get Your rent paid, and bread to keep in
 their lives for their labour. I know Ye will be loath to
 be convinced of this, tho' God's dealing with You may
 convince You more than my speaking to You; had not
 Your forbearers less rent, and less land, and richer ten-
 nants? And yet Ye are blind and will not see God
 threating to cast out of Your lap Your dishonest gain;
 yea to cast Yourselves out of the land, and from Your ha-
 bitations. O that Ye would be persuaded to look to God
 in this, and lay Your heads together, and consult how
 this ill might be helped. 3. I may justlie charge You
 with this, that Ye bring up Your sons in vanitie; will
 our Gentles now put their children to callings? No, as
 if that were a discredit to them, and their credit that
 they should live in idleness, and then they turn Malign-
 nants, and persecutors of the godlie, drunkards, thieves,
 and whore-masters, men that will neither do well, nor
 let others do well where ever they come, but are a pest
 in everie societie where they come. Sure I am, it were
 more credit for You and them both, to have them brea-
 at some honest calling, than to have them slaying men in
 other countries, or trailing a pick to fight against the
 Turk, or coming through the countrie, as some of them
 are dailie with their testimonials seeking our charitie,
 or begging from door to door. 4. May I not charge
 manie houses of our Gentlemen, for being nests of un-
 cleanness, cages of unclean birds, so that if anie sober
 man should come into them, they should not think they
 have been bred under Gospel light: and is not this a
 horrid reproach upon You? 5. May I not charge You
 with this, that now and then Ye fall out in Your unhap-
 pie fits of passion, in cursing, banning and swearing, and
 are not ashamed of this? There are not manie of them
 now a days, but ask, what he is? He is a Gentleman
 indeed, but he is verie passionate, and given to banning
 and swearing, and one that can let an oath flee. But
 I have not skill of that man's religion, who bridles not
 his tongue; sure I am, the Spirit of God calls that
 man's

man's religion vain, Jam. 1. 26. It is true, Ye have had a respect to Ministers, and some of You have carried a great respect to them on some account; but did Ye lay as great weight on, and had Ye as great respect to their message? Hath not that been undervalued by You, as if there had been another gate for You to heaven, than for poor folk; and what care we for your respect to us, whilst Ye slight our message. 6. May Ye not be charged for want of charitie? Have Ye opened Your hand to the poor and needie? I fear Your charitis may be soon counted and reckoned from one Year's end to another; Ye will give Your plack at the church door, and Your alms at Your gate, but have Ye searched for poor and needie objects; this should have adorned Religion more than manie other things, that better might have been forborn. 7. May Ye not also be charged for want of zeal to the cause of God? Especiallie of late have Ye not been so afraid for Your lives and estates which was impawnd for the cause that is now overthrowen? Nay, I lay it upon Your conscience, if Ye thought this a dutie incumbent for You, the Lord knows I intend not to lay open Your nakedness, but rather to set you in a way to make you honourable; and what is that? Even to lay to heart Your sin, and take time to mourn over it, and make Your peace with God. Ye get now and then visits from Ministers, make use of them, set some time apart, and make earnest of it, for words will not do it; and when Ye have mourned over Your evils, jet about the mending of them, as I fear Your sad days be but coming yet. I know Ye will think Ye know the worst of it, and that is compliance. I confess, that is the worst of it at present, but there is worse coming; if Ye complie, Ye shall not escape God's wrath, and if Ye mourn not, tho Ye complie not, Ye shall not escape that wrath that abideth impenitents, and Ye may ere long be shaken out of Your worldlie inheritance. And is there not much need then that Ye should have Your peace made with God, and the livelie hope of heaven as an antidote against that?

A 4th Sort is the bodie of the people. I know You have assented to all that hath been asserted against Ministers and Gentlemen, and it is like Ye are glad to hear such doctrine, but have Ye not also destroyed the Lord's vineyard, and laid his pleasant portion desolate by our sins. 1. I charge You with deceitfulness, and over reaching one another, with covetousness and worldlie mindedness, & a spirit of contention flowing from Your covetousness, so that for a pluck of grass, and a beast going over the merch, Ye have taken up a standing quarrel for Year and Day. And have they not taken ten times more of You to whom Ye were not so much beholden, and Ye durst not say it was ill done? and yet Ye did not consider, nor take it from the Lord as a chastisement for Your contention on so seckleis grounds. 2. May I not charge You with complaining, grudging, whinning and whispering, for the little that was taken from You, for upholding the cause & covenant of God, and for paying Ministers stipends, and it may be Ye shall lay more out on a worse account to them who will give You no thanks for it. It may be, Ye would now give out Your money to keep up the Gospel, but it will not be bought with money. 3. I charge You for not taking the Gospel off our hands, we tell You, that God is now giving up treating with You for this, Ye have come to hear, but Ye have returned Your prophane gates. I know Your tipling, lying, banning & swearing, Your scorning of the godlie, Your Sabbath-breaking, envy, malice, disrespect to Ministers, for all Your fashions, and will Ye not be convinced & ashamed for these things? 4. I charge You for having a cruel hatred at Gentlemen, and for contempt of them and others above You; Your fretting & undutiful carriage hath been palpable. I wish You had subjected Yourselfes more cheerfullie. Take time & meet together, & Your alone, & mourn over these sins, & manie moe, & seek God's mercy.

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I have known several of Your meetings, which was left reason. I know not how Ye have fallen from them now. Will Ye fall to them again, and deal seriously with God, that he may pitie You & Yours.

5. I have somewhat to say to servants; do Ye know, that Ye have destroyed the Lord's vineyard, and have had a hand in all the evils lying on his people. I charge You with these things; 1. That Ye have not received the Gospel, tho we have mourned over You with tears; Ye have never made earnest of making Your peace with God; and know Ye not that he is now giving up treating with such rebels? 2. Think upon Your profane carriage. Your filthy words & sports, Your lascivious, wanton and graceless way of conversing, Your pride and vanitie, occasioned through God's goodness, & a cheap Year; fulness of bread hath so puffed You up, that Ye misken Your station; Ye must have word about with those that are over You, and the world dow not bear Your pride, which appears in Your apparel, other things we will not name: I put it to Your conscience, have Ye done Your masters work as Your own? have Ye taken their rebukes and reproofs without snuffing & answering again? nay rather, was not, and is not Your pride such, as that Ye dow not bear a word? but ere long Ye shall bear more with them, to whom Ye were not so much obliged, & dare not speak again. In a word, Ye was well, and wist not, Ye say, Ye had no libertie to serve God; but lie not to God; in all the world there is not a place, wherein servants have had more libertie to serve God, than in this West-country. 3. May I not charge You men-servants, who were pitched upon, that Ye shifted to go out and fight the Lord's battles, for the cause & covenant of God, to which Ye were bound as well as Ministers and Gentlemen, and it may be, Ye be forced to harle a pick to a battle, where the quarrel will not be so clear. Servants, I speak to You, have ye
not

and, considering these things, and manie moe, to take time and mourn for Your sins, whereby Ye have destroyed the Lord's vineyard? Ye will say, Ye have no time; but let me say it, I fear Ye shall get time enough ere long, God will give You the Sabbath day, ere Ye have that excuse, and on Your silent Sabbaths mourn, if Ye have a heart to mourn.

6. *and Lastlie*, I shall speak a few things to the Godlie; and O that I could perswade You, that Ye have helped to destroy the Lord's vineyard. And it is the provocations of his Sons and of his daughters, that have brought this destruction on Israel. It is true, he is angry at Ministers, Elders and Deacons, Gentlemen, Commons and Servants as such. But it is as true, that he hath another quarrel at all in these stations and relations, who are godlie, and as such; and who knows, but he hath reserved You for such a day, that Ye might venture Your life as Esther, in going to the king: that which I mean is, that Ye may go in and wrestle with God for removing of wrath. Ye are persons who have had moyen with God, but it has not been improven; and I have more to charge You with, than my memorie can reach, or time will permit to lay before You. But, 1. I charge You with falling from Your first love, evidenced by falling from Your former diligence. 2. I charge You that Ye are turned formal in all Your religious performances: Alas! that Ye understand not better the voice of the late rod of Sectaries upon You, who cried down all forms, to make You more cordial, rather than to turn more formal in all duties or worship. 3. I charge You with slothfulness, in giving to the Lord the refuse of Your time; he gets but fits and starts of You, after or betwixt turns. It was a great word in that man, *I will not serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing*, 2 Sam. 24. 24. Is not Religion one main clause of the covenant? why then are Ye so slothful and overlie in all religi-

ous performances; 4. I charge you with wordlie mindedness, so that I desie any to draw a straw betwixt you and many others that know not God, as to this thing. Covetousness hath overwhelmed all, so that it is turned into a common saying, he is a godly man, but he is right greedy; there is no halt in the gathering of gear, except in the poor, who cannot get it. 5. I charge you with prevailing passions, and inordinate affections to every idol, that comes in your way. Are ye not as soon saddled, and as soon angry, and in a passion, and down pear as little, as these in nature? are ye not ready to flee in fire at every word that thorters you? 6. I charge you with pride and self conceit, and despising them that comes not up to your measure, therefore God threatens to level you ere long. 7. I charge you with unbelief and ignorance of God & his word, so that I dare say, there's not a Christian among an hundred that believeth this *Bible* to be the word of God so as to lay more weight on a threatening, and a ground of challenge from it, than on the bark of a dog, notwithstanding of a large dispensation of means, and for so long a time: You have sitten down on poor probabilites on an interest in Christ: But there is not one among many fixed in it. How many of you are under heart condemning? Tho' God hath been telling you the evils every day, wherefore he contends, whiles by his word, and whiles by your conscience, yet ye mend not. And do ye think that God can abide with his gospel? Ye may make din and say, what will we do, if we want it? But what have ye done with it? It is to be feared, that many of you would live as well without it as atheists.

8. The true substantials of religion are decayed; as, 1. *True tenderness under challenges: the time has been when ye would have been challenged for an idle word, and mourned over it, but now not for fourteen idle deeds, neither can ye mourn.* 2. *Tenderness in conscience is much decayed, ye are not so tender as to start at a straw, as ye were wont to do.* 3. *Where is that searching out of promises, and the application of them to events, I dare say, many of you some few years ago, had ten times more promises, than ye have this day, and for applying of all that falls out to some scripture, to make out that all his ways are mercy and truth to his own Is not that much gone, tho' by it ye used to hold in your life?* 4. *There was also a beuful to lifie others, but where is that gone now?* 5. *Where is that wanted zeal against sin, and for the glory of God? surely in this trial, God will take us with our back at the wall.* 6. *Add the abuse and ne-*

glect of your Christian fellowship, which hath provoked God to send you. But I insist no further. May I think ye will set time apart to mourn over these evils, and seek for grace to get them helped? O that I could persuade you. Sure I am, considering these things, all ranks will justify the Lord in all that he hath done. But what will all that we have said avail, if it be not taken off our hand; however I shall take heaven and earth to witness, that I have charged these things upon you; and yet I say not on you, but on us all; and would fain hope, that we would take some time to the thorough conviction of them on our spirits. And mourn over them before the Lord. If ye do so, I dare promise in his name, he will hear, and give an outgate; if not, your bands shall grow stronger. I shall say no more; but if Israel were thoroughly convinced that he hath destroyed himself, there were hope that in him were Israel's help, which, if we get an opportunity to speak, shall be shewed to you, even that notwithstanding we have destroyed ourselves, yet there is hope of help in no

S E R M O N. II.

H o s. xiii. 9 *But in me is thy help*

IT would seem that the Lord in his providence hath ordered things and drawn them to such a period, that he intended I should close the scripture of *Matthew*, before I should leave you, that thereby you might learn somewhat of the doctrine of the cross, and of the hazard of relinquishing his cause I did scarce look to have got leave to give an account of that scripture to the end; and when that was done that he had but two other words to speak to you by one word anent your sin, and that ye are your own overthrow, and that God is not to be blamed for it: and another word anent your help and relief, that tho' it be so, that ye are the cause of your own ruine, and that you have destroyed yourself, yet you are bound to hope for relief in me when there is no other to help you. It seems that God intended these two words to speak to you, which no man or power could hinder, till these were delivered.

Ye have heard to what a low condition the church hath been brought, and whatever hand God may have in it, & diversaries that are instruments of it, yet her members are chiefly to be blamed for their own overthrow: And there will have all sorts & ranks of persons, Noblemen & Gentlemen, bond & free, rich & poor, ministers & people, godly & ungodly, particularly convinced of these sins, whereof

are guilty, whereby they have destroyed themselves, and the church; so that he hath not left himself without a witness, and happy shall he be, who shall bear the impression of these ay till he come.

Now the other word he hath to speak to you is, *but in me is thy help*. If the first word hath left a deep impression upon your heart, I could with much confidence speak to the second. These words are not only a ground of encouragement to the poor people of God, the remnant in their low condition; but they are also a vindication of the majesty of God, that he is free of their destruction, and not to be blamed for it.

We shall speak of them, first, as they are a vindication of the majesty of God, that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, *but in me is thy help*. The words may be rendered in the by past-time, *but in me is thy help*: so any evil that is upon you, ye may blame yourself for it, for in me thy help hath been, and yet still is.

Here observe that the Lord hath left abundant testimonies and witnesses at his people's door, that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, or for any miserie, calamitie or sorrow, that is upon them, for in me thy help hath been; I have been ay good to you, I appeal to your own conscience, whether or not I have helped you many times, when ye have been low, and whether or not I have given you many favourable casts of my hand, so that ye have no cause to blame me. God is flytting free with his people, that he is not to be blamed, these scriptures and the like prove it: wherein have I wearied thee? have I been a wilderness to you? hitherto hath God helped.

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall shew you, 1. What ways people do reflect upon and blame him in their condition. 2. What testimonies God hath to produce for himself at the hand of his church, especially at the hand of his church of *Israel*, that he is not to be blamed, which will be very applicable to us. 3. Why did the Lord (who is not tied to render an account of his ways) condescend so far as to satisfy his people, in shewing them that he is not to be blamed.

To the first, what ways do people reflect upon God and blame him. *Ans.* 1. When they reflect upon his providence, when they are under any stroak or misery brought on themselves, by their own sin; as thus, if the Lord had not done such things to me, it would not have been so with me, this

did befall me in his providence, and I could not win by it. This was that which *Adam* began with, and is a clause irri- tant in his familie since *hast thou eaten of the tree*, saith God *whereof I commanded thee thou shouldst not eat?* Who is to be blamed for that? *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. I am not to be blamed, but you and her; thou gavest me her (indeed I got a bonie bride that morning I got her) and she gave it me.* So we blame God when we blame his providence for what we do. 2. When they reflect upon his predetermining counsel, as thus, *This was even ordained for me, before coat or shirt were shapen for me.* It is the language in the 9 Ch. to the Romans, *Who hath resisted his will? who could help it since he decreed it? I say, the plague of God shall be upon you, tho' you cannot resist that will, for your blaming it.* 3. When they reflect upon his free grace and mercy. Something of this is hinted at, *Psal. 77. Is his mercy clean gone for ever? hath he forgotten to be gracious? Free grace might have helped this: Tho' I be an un- serving man, what the matter; if free grace had given me a cast by the common? I have no more grace than God hath given me, which is as much as to say, if grace had done its part, I might have been kept from this evil hour.* 4. When they reflect upon the faith- fulness of God, tho' some dare not speak it out, yet it is in their heart; there is a word to this purpose, *Psal 77. 8. doth his promise fail for evermore?* When folk do question the truth of his promise; this ye would beware of now: For folk are in hazard to question the truth of his promise, in reference to his publick work. To this purpose is that of *Jer. Ch, 20. 7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived, and why art thou unto me as a liar?* These are dreadful words of the crea- ture to the creator, as if he had not infinite ways to make out his promise, that we cannot take up. 5. When they re- flect upon his justice, severite and peremptorinels in smiting of his people. There is a word in one of the prophets that runs to this purpose, *if we be destroyed, how can we live? Which is on the matter this, if God so deal with us, there is no living, or being with him; he will not let folk away with the knot of a straw, but he dings them down.* When folk hear that God smites for this and for that, their heart riseth in passion, and saith, *that there is no dallying with him, let him alone, for many have lived with him, and stood before him, and he will not make new laws, nor ordain new ways to follow, neither for your pleasure nor mine.*

2. What hath the Lord to say for his own vindication at
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the hand of his church, especially at the hands of *Israel*, to prove that he is not to be blamed for their destruction, and the misery that comes on them. *Ans.* 1. God had this to say to *Israel* for his own vindication, that he had chosen them out of all nations of the world, without any thing in them previous to that choice, that might have engaged and influenced him; so did he reason with them, Deut. 7. 7, 8. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you. If the Lord had a mind to drag you down, and destroy you; and had delighted in that, he would not have brought you out of that blind condition, wherein ye were lying with the rest of the world, but he would have left you a few blind moles drowning yourselves in your sin. 2. He had this for himself to say, That he had brought them from the slavery and bondage of *Egypt*, in which they had ruined themselves by their sin, after that he had chosen them, he had ay this to say for his own clearing, whatever came upon them, that he was their God that redeemed them from the land of *Egypt*; so that if he had delighted in their destruction, he would have left them there, and suffered them to riot to the devil with the *Egyptians*, and never owned them nor delivered them. 3. He had this to say for himself, that he had entered into a covenant with them in the wilderness, after he had brought them out of *Egypt*, which privilege he had denied to any considerable incorporation before that time, whatever he had done to some particular persons and families, yet he never formally entred in covenant with any great incorporation, but with them 4. He had this to say for himself, that he had done many miracles, and wrought many wonders among them; he had shewed them marvellous and strange acts, and great signs and wonders, after he had chosen them in *Egypt*, and before and after he had formally entred into covenant with them, for their confirmation and establishing, that he dang down every power that had lift up itself against them; what need him have done this, if he had delighted in their destruction? 5. He had this to say for himself, That he had delivered them from many inconveniencies; that he reprov'd kings for their sake, and suffered no man to do them wrong; that he smote kings, and mighty kings, *Og* king of *baschan*, and *Sihon* king of the *Amorites*; he never spared great nor small, whilst they abode with him, but he carried still as their husband and Lord; this sufficiently clears him from bearing the blame of their ruin.

6. He had this to say, *that he kept abundance of light among them, for to shew them their duty, that they might know what was the way of peace and life; many prophets did he send them, who late and early did admonish, rebuke and teach them, so that it was not for want of light & counsel that they went wrong they had enough of that; this sufficiently cleared him.* 7. He had this to say, *that many times he had fore-warned them of their skaith, whence it should come, and by what, and hath made them consent and submit to their own destruction, if ever they should go that black gate he had forewarned them of.* Now, saith God, *I have told you the right way, and ye may lippen to me in walking therein; and I have also told you the wrong way that will bring you down, and bring you under these folk's feet that are your enemies, if ever ye make covenant with them, I vow and swear, I shall be full of your flesh: And they were so far convinced of the equity of this, that they consented to their own ruin, if ever they should do it, if ever we join with the people of these abominations, let God consume us from off the earth. If ever we take these thieves again by the hand, let the wrath of God pursue us, the heavy hand of God be upon us; that is a strong vindication of him.* 8. He had this to say, *that notwithstanding of all they had done against him, he took heaven and earth to witness, he would accept of a little small thing at their hands* Run ye to and fro throughout the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment and seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it, Jer. 5. 1. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, Jer. 3. 13.* Do but this, I will pass by all bygones; will ye do but this, and I shall defie all the thieves to get you down, but I shall be about with them.

3. Wherefore doth the great God of heaven so confess, & as it were to vindicate himself so at the hands of poor unworthy worms? he is not bound to give an account of his matters, or to render a reason of his ways: For who may say unto him, what dost thou? Ans. 1. *He doth it for the glory of his justice.* Against thee, thee only have I sinned, & done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou speakest. *I clear thy justice of all that is come upon me. God will not leave any ground to reflect on that* 2. *For the glory of his grace and mercy, which his people are ready to reflect upon: But I refer to yourselves to judge, whether or not. I have been merciful, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah*

Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. I refer it to yourselves, and all the world, whether or not you deserve strokes, and whether or not I can spare you longer. 3. That he may the more effectually bind his peoples sins upon them, whereby they have destroyed themselves, and convince them of the evil of their own way, and of their folly.

Use. 1. Lo here the daring boldness of the corruption of men, that dare reflect upon God, and blame him for the miseries, calamities and sorrow that befall them; we have this legacy left us by our father *Adam*, who blamed the holy God for his fall; we have a spice of this from him, altho we will not speak it out; yet we think it often in our hearts. If God had not carved out things to be so and so, they could not have been; you are not to meddle with that, for he is holy in all his counsels, tho' it be so, but you are to be ashamed of your sins, for it is they that are the cause of your destruction. Take heed of blaming the majesty of God, if there be any apprehension in you to do it, suppress it and bear it down.

Use. 2. Know that the Lord hath abundant testimony lying at our doors, as well as at *Israel's*, that he is not to be blamed for our overthrow, but we ourselves are to be blamed; he hath this to say, that he did set his love upon us, & gave these ends of the earth to his son for his inheritance, and that he took intefment of them, and that he took us by the hand, not for any thing in us, for we were but a pack of poor beggars, in respect of other nations, & that he brought us out of *Egypt*, from heathenish, papistical and prelatical bondage: & when we were all running the black gate, with the bishops, and running to black darkness, he brought us back again; and that he entered into covenant never more formally with any nation than with us; and many great and glorious things he wrought for us, that he gave us many victories, and reprov'd many both great and small who opposed us, for our sake, all which we hope to be but an earnest of what is to follow, and that he told us of our duty, & of his way, and warn'd us what would be our ruine. He told us, if ever we break covenant, and joined with the malignant party, and put them in places of trust, & made them captains and officers of our armies, they should be our ruine; and we consented to this, and put in our declaration, that even when there should be scarcity of men, we should not do it, not only in offensive wars (as some do distinguish) but

in defensive wars. We said, God forbid, that even in the scarcity of men we should split upon that rock, and that we would join with these abominations, and yet we never rested till we made them captains and officers of our armies, & joined with them, God forgive them that brought them in, and forgive us also that suffered them to be brought in: I dare say also, that God would take little off our hand, that he may be about with these thieves: Fain would he be at them, and have a fair occasion to be full of their flesh, who have so shamefully broken his covenant, and spit upon his face. Well I wot he would take little off our hands. However he hath many testimonies lying at our door, that he is free of our ruine. O but we had been a happy people, if we had bidden by him. Many things also hath he to say to vindicate himself of at the hands of his people, which would take a long day to tell. He hath this to say, that he hath holden out to you many a time, what is the way of truth, and the way of peace and piety wherein ye should walk, & that clearly; you have not fallen in an evil condition for want of light, and that your idols have overmastered you for want of that. He hath this to say, that he hath not ceased to be a reprovcr to you, tho' ye have trampled upon reproofs, yet hath he made your consciences challenge you, out and in. He hath this to say, that you never set yourself seriously to seek God, but ye got worth your pains, and met you mid-way and more. You never set yourselves so, that ye were at a point; ye would have somewhat in this prayer, or else ye should lay it by: But he met you, *he meeteth him who rejoiceth and worketh righteousness*. No sooner put ye up the sails, but he put wind in them; that is a testimony that he is not to be blamed, he hath this to say, give me the tithes and offerings, as ye were wont to do, & see whether or not I will rain down a blessing. Give me the ancient tale of duty, and see whether or not I will come and bless you. He hath this to say, that he hath sufficiently discovered the vanity of that, which is the ground of the quarrel betwixt him and you. He hath convinced you that he hath made your business thrive, as well when you gave him the due tale of duty, and did not clip them, and better too, than when ye did otherwise, 'tis but daffing for folk to slip prayer, that they may won soon out to the plough, or harvest-ridge; if they do, God may break some soom or coulter, or
 some

some other thing in the plough, or the hook wherewith they shear, or make some, accident to befall them, that they shall loose more time for their worldly gain, than all the time that prayer would have taken up to them. *It is in vain for you to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows, for so he giveth his beloved sleep.* God can give his people that make conscience of the dutys of religion their full of rest, and make their work go on also. Again, he hath this witness against you, that there is something he hath been contending with you for, & desiring you to quite & forsake, & yet ye would not do it for him. Ye know well enough what it is, 'tis even the thing ye know of: What is the reason ye will not mend it? It is something that hath cleaved to you this year, & the other year, & several years. Had ye but done this for me (as if the Lord would say) and forgone this little petty thing for me, I should have made your peace run down as a river. Upon your conscience be it, whether or not I offered it good chape to you, if ye would give but a little more pains, and forgive a little small thing that ye know well enough what it is for, I will not tell you what it is, I think it not worth the naming, ye should have had peace, and perfect peace. It is a fore matter that we should still keep in our vexation, & disquietness, which is all, because we will not forsake the thing we know of. I say then, God hath the right end of the string, come of us all what will, he is free of our ruin. *Let us therefore justifie him, and vindicate his justice, and free grace; for he hath done what it could do, with credit and honesty to the court of heaven. Let us therefore take with our sins, and blame ourselves, for we have destroyed ourselves.*

We come now to the words, as they are an encouragement, and a ground of hope for the future, *but in me thy help shall be;* so the word may be rendered, *not only have I ay done you good, but I can yet help, and I will help you, for all that is come upon you. I shall once help you in spite of their hearts that would hear you down.* Here observe two doctrines; 1. In the lowest condition the church of God and Israel can be in, God can help; there is help in God, if he please to put it out for Israel. Thou by thy sin hast destroyed thyself, and these folk as instruments have broken you all, and dung you all down, and they think ye can never be raised up again, but for as low as ye are, I can help you, for all things are possible with God, even these things that are impossible with men: He doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and in earth, being king of kings, &

Lord of lords; he is higher than the highest. Our God can deliver us, say the three children, yea he will deliver us; they were as low as we are, they had the king & all the court about them, and ready to cast them into a fiery furnace made ready also for them, which also they did, & yet God delivered them. I do not think that ye question this in your judgment, that God can deliver; yet before I speak to the other doctrine, that saith, God will deliver you, I shall shew you some ways wherein God can help his people in their lowest condition, and in any of these ways God can help us, if he please. 1. He can help his people by destroying them, by that he makes them happy evermore; in death he makes them conquerors; he makes them say of the bitter afflictions and strokes, that it is good for me that I was afflicted. He teacheth & instructeth them out of his law by his chastening them. 2. He can help them by his admirable bearing them up, and supporting them in their condition, by staying his rough wind in the day of his east-wind, correcting them in measure & judgment, even when he seems to make the waters run over them, and overflow them, tho' he brings them through the fire and water, yet he brings them through: He takes away the sting of the rod & affliction, & bears them up under it. 3. He can help them, by casting their help in the ordinary channel by ordinary means and instruments, even where their case is very low, & seems to be desperate; as to an out-gate, and there is no man for help appearing, within a short time he can cast their help in the ordinary channel. Ye are, it may be, thinking, that God must work a miracle before we can be helped; but he can put our help in the ordinary channel very soon, as he did in the year thirty eight, when he threw down the prelates. He can cause the spirit descend upon his people, and great saviours on mount Sion, & put it in the hearts of his people to arise, to the raising of his interests, cause, covenant, ordinances and work; he can raise up seven shepherds, & eight principal men. 4. He can do it in an extraordinary manner, he can create help, he shall create help for me, saith David, creat deliverance for Israel, is a prayer of faith that it should be, and God shall send down help immediatly from heaven, he will order all things as they are remaining, God will work wonders, but he will be about with these folk, and help his people.

Use. 1. *The people of God should not despair, tho' their condition seems to be irrecoverable. It seems so to you, but it is not so to God.*

the things that are impossible to men are not impossible to God What the matter, tho' God ding us all down, if he will do good to our souls, and teach us out of his law? What the matter tho' we ly under these folks feet for a time? He will make our worst condition best. What the matter tho' we want the publick ordinances for a while, if he prove a little sanctuary to us, and if ye get your lesson taught by the master himself, who is an interpreter, one of a thousand, not only amongst the threes, but above them all. What the matter, tho' he blow up all outward worldly helps, seeing ye have a proof of their emptiness, and seeing he can help either in an ordinary, or extraordinary channell? Let us never be discouraged, and tyne heart: if the heart be gone, all is gone.

S E R M O N. III.

H O S E A. xiii. 9. *But in me is thy Help.*

I C O M E now to the third doctrine, *That the church of God in her lowest condition, may warrantably look and wait for help from God* Not only can he help, but she is obliged to wait for it. Take only that scripture to prove it. *Psal. 130. last v. Let Israel hope in the Lord for ever and ever, that day can never down; neither can that case befall Israel, wherein he is not obliged to hope; & if to hope, then to look for help from God:*

In speaking to this, I shall speak to these things, 1. *Shortly to the low condition whereinto the church may be brought.* 2. *What grounds of hope hath the church in her lowest condition to look for help from God.* 3. *What conditions are required in a church, which may warrantably look for help from God.* 4. *How far was this promise verified to the church of the Jews.* 5. *Whether or not it be applicable to the church of Britain and Ireland.*

To the first, *the low condition into which the church may be brought.* 1. She may be defaced both as to her civil and ecclesiastical government, the authority of both may be loosed, and the people of God may be as scattered bones about the graves mouth, and few of their own resent this.

2. *What are the grounds upon which the church is to expect help, when thus made low, and there is none to help.* *Ans.* The covenant is one ground, you must understand that God hath made a covenant with this church, which is everlasting and perpetual, that he will do such and such things for her, even a covenant of peace, which shall not be removed. And of the tribe of *Levi* he hath said, that it shall not want a man to offer an offering to the Lord for ever: As *David* shall not want a man to sit on his throne, which is verified in Christ;

So the tribe of *Levi* shall not want a man to minister before the Lord from generation to generation; when they were in a low condition, he said, *I will remember my covenant* Many a black thing did the covenant keep off, & in another place *I will do such and such things to you, after all your whoredoms and adulteries, but not by thy covenant.* God hath ways of making out his covenant that we have no skill of; he hath a pose, & a little purse keeping in his covenant, that many do not see. Indeed folk that have cast off the covenant, and have burnt it by the hand of the hangman, will get sore bones, & sore souls also; but as for these that cleave to it, they may expect help on that ground. *Hos. 2. 19. I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, in loving kindness, and in mercy; not only in righteousness, I will not only do thee all that law binds a husband to do for a wife, but I will give thee a cast by the common.* I will betroth thee in loving kindness & in mercy. 2. A second ground is the headship & suretyship of Christ, under which he is come by an everlasting covenant of redemption betwix him and his father; *once have I sworn to David* (good honest David understanding Christ who never wronged man) *his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne shall last as the sun before me.* *Psal. 89. 36.* As for thee also *by the blood of thy covenant I will send out thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein there is no water,* *Zach. 9. 11.* Thy prisoners, that is, Christ's prisoners out of the pit wherein there is no water, that is, out of *Babylon*, a comfortless & heartless place; by the blood of thy covenant, that is through Christ's covenant confirmed by his blood. It was through Christ they were set free. And saith *Daniel Dan. 9. 17. Look down upon thy sanctuary for the Lord's sake,* that is, for Christ's sake, the great prince *Michael*, that is ay for the church. *Lo Michael one of the chief princes came to help me,* *Dan. 10. 13.* That good honest angel never fails me, but is ay at my back when I have any thing to do for you I never miss him. 3. A third ground is the name & glory of God, which is mightily engaged for the help of the church: What wilt thou do to thy great name, is a strong argument, when all weapons have failed, that hath force and virtue in it: We must ever have a cast of thy hand for that, seeing thou hast taken us to be thy people, and brought us out of *Egypt*, thou must not suffer the heathen to say, *for mischief thou did it to slay them upon the mountains, and that thou wast not able to bring them to the land thou promised unto their fathers:* And sometimes he saith,

wrought for my name's sake; & at other times, for my name's sake I will defer mine anger, I will, hold my hand, and not destroy them utterly. 4. A fourth ground is, that free love, which moved him to pity them, when they were lying in their blood, rank open & avowed enemies to him, he promiseth he will pity them still; he promiseth that he will heal their backslidings, and love them freely, *Hos. 14 3* I will even do this freely, for ye have neither in you nor on you that can help this business. These are most pregnant grounds, whereupon the church may expect help from God.

3. *What are the conditions that are required in a church, which may warrantably expect help from God, Ans.* 1. It is required, that she have somewhat of pure ordinances, otherwise she deserves not the name of a church; for it is not to a land, or such a multitude of people, as such, that God by his promise is bound to, but to a multitude or incorporation having pure ordinances. This is that which made *Israel* a church, when they were miserably corrupted with idolatry, they having some of the pure ordinances, as the word, & some of the sacraments, as circumcision; & until they lost the word, doctrine, worship & sacraments altogether, God did never altogether reject them. 2. There must be a remnant, all the promises have always a respect to the remnant, the remnant of grace, tho' it be but small; hence it is said, *if the Lord had not left us a remnant, we had been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah.* 3. There must be intercessors; the church indeed is in a hard case, that wants them, as is clear, *Ezek 22. 30, 31.* *And I sought for a man amongst them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, but I found none; therefore have I poured out my judgment upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath, their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord.* Yet in some singular cases he helps, where there is none to help, & no intercessor. *Isa. 59. 16.* *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation to him, and his righteousness sustained him; & if so, much more when there are intercessors, altho they were but a few.* *Jer. 5. 1.* *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek and know in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, that seeketh the truth, and executeth judgment, and I will pardon it.* 4. It is required, that that incorporation deserve best the title & name of the true *Israel*, & church of God of any incorporation in the world, & that because God hath resolved still to

have a church, and we cannot think that he will cast off better church, & keep a worse. You shall find, that altho *Isra* was oftentimes corrupted, yet evil as they were, they were the best incorporation in all the habitable world; & that was the thing that kept them to the force, and gave them still right to that promise, *let Israel hope in the Lord for ever and ever*. And yet even in their worst case in captivity, and out of it; in well and wo: indeed they were cast off at last, but there was good reason for that, for the Christian church came in & took their rights & privileges from them. But put out mine eye with any instance, that they were wholly put away, while they came in. Hence I conclude, that that church ought to hope in the Lord for ever & ever, & that even in their lowest condition, when they have destroyed themselves; and so, I hope our case is the better this day.

4. *How far was this promise verified to the church of Israel? Ans.*

1. In respect that he helped them many times, & delivered them when they were very low, even from external judgments, how oft did he deliver them when they cried unto him when they were under the feet of their oppressors. 2. In respect that he kept alway a little stock & stool, & a remnant among them in the captivity, and out of it which did bring forth a new brood, & multiplied three times more, especially it was made out at the coming of Christ, & the preaching of the gospel to them. 3. And chiefly, it shall be made out in their ingrafting, when *Israel* shall return to the Lord.

5. *How far may we make use of this promise, and how far is it applicable to the church of Britain & Ireland.* In answer to this we shall, 1. Shew how far these conditions, which are required in a corporation which may warrantably expect help are to be found in the church of *Britain & Ireland*. 2. We shall shew some additional things, which may further strengthen our faith in this thing.

To the first, what of the conditions which are required in an incorporation which may warrantably expect help, are to be found in the church of *Britain and Ireland*? *Ans.* 1. *That church must have pure ordinances, and we say, we have pure ordinances and much more pure than God gave Israel ground to hope in his promise; who will say against it? We have the pure word of God preached, and pure sacraments, and it is not long since we had pure worship, pure doctrine, and pure discipline and government, all very near to the pattern. Indeed there are very great corruptions now brought in; &*

from whence have they come? From the church of Britain and Ire-
 land? We deny that; for we declare before heaven and earth, that
 these who deserve best the name of the church of Britain and Ireland,
 that they do adhere to the doctrine, worship, discipline and govern-
 ment sworn to in our solemn league and covenant; but these cor-
 rupters have come from a party, whom we have opposed since the year,
 1688. Who have violently riven pure ordinances from us. When Israel was
 cast off, their destruction was universal and arbitrary, volutar and
 by choice; but we by violence and force are driven from pure ordina-
 nces by an ungodly party, whom we have striven with from the womb.
 They shall find that the church of Scotland wants not pure ordina-
 nces, but that ungodly party hath violently rugged them from the true
 dispensers and stewards of them and hath intruded a pack of prophane
 perjured slaves to dispense them; the Lord is our witness, we have
 not done it by choice. 2. There must be a remnant; I never had better,
 for we plead, that there is a numerous remnant in the church of Bri-
 tain and Ireland, and such a remnant as was never found, for any
 thing we know in any nation or kingdom at once. I grant the remnant
 far from their duty, but what can ye conclude from that; that God
 will leave that church? I deny that to follow; I will indeed conclude
 the cloud to be growing, and that it is not at its height, but not that
 God will give up with that church. I will get you scriptures to speak
 the contrary; particularly, Jer. 5. 1. and Isa. 6. ult. The remnant
 shall be as a teil tree; it is a significant word, it signifies the terrise
 that was on the north of Jerusalem, which kept the storm off the
 temple, and shall be as an oak, whose substance is in them; the holy
 ed shall be the substance of the land; and if so, then God and the
 church of Britain and Ireland cannot shed, for that condition is migh-
 tly verified in it. 3. There must be intercessors, I grant, that gives a
 wish to our faith. But altho we have been in the sense of our sin, grant-
 ing that we are far from what we should have been at, yet God and
 the world knows that there are intercessors for the church of Britain
 and Ireland, in the land, and out of the land. And if God sought but
 one, and would have spared for one's sake; I dare say, there are many
 thousands lamenting over the condition of Britain and Ireland. Do
 not think that God will shut out their prayer: He will regard the pray-
 er of the destitute; there hath been many a sappy prayer put up, and
 many a tear shed within these few years; and the people o' God have
 been filling God's bottle with them. and we hope it shall be full ere it
 long, every one of his should be helping to fill it. It is a strange
 thing, tho' there be so many godly folk, that we cannot get God's bot-
 tle filled up amongst us, when it is full, they will make the wheel of

providence go about to the confusion of enemies, and the redemption of his people. 4. The church which may warrantably expect help, may have the best claim to be called the true church, of any church in the world. And I presume, that this condition stands mightily verified, the church of Britain and Ireland; I say it with submission to other who know better the affairs of other churches abroad than I do. We have pure ordinances, and are under covenant with God. We have infest our seed in them, and have laid all to the stake for them, and have been signally owned of God in that work, and the rumour has gone abroad through the reformed churches, that we are the pure church, wherein we will find the best title and claim; if that will not do it, ye may think men may take their word again in their covenanting, but that cannot be without consent of parties. Ye will say that the church of Britain and Ireland hath broken covenant with God. I grant that is a great objection: I grant indeed our rulers have judicially broken covenant to their shame, and the prelatick party have voluntarily and deliberately done it: But is that the deed of the church of Scotland? I deny; for these that best deserve the name of the church do abominate that deed of theirs, and do cleave to the covenant, and are suffering, because they will not break it. That the purest remnant may deservedly be called the church, read Psal. 22. penult. A seed shall serve him, and it shall be counted to the Lord for ever generation. The seed that serves him is counted the church, these who adhere to him, his covenant and ordinances, and bear testimony against all that break his covenant, and are backsliders, and they shall declare his righteousness to the generation to come, that he hath done this. Hold your tongue; they are not yet born, but in their mother's womb, and their fathers' sins, who shall reap the good of this work that we are suffering for. Take up your hearts then, and be not discouraged, seeing we have such access to these four conditions, for they have advanced, they shall get all we have ere they get them: yet let us hold to our claim, while a better come, and take it from us.

I shall in the next room, give you some few items, that every lass and lad may make use of for strengthening the faith, that God will help. 1. We have a very insolent party to deal with, who have made void God's law, & established iniquity by a law. And shall the throne of iniquity have place with God? No it cannot be, they are bloody & deceitful men, and shall they live half their days? No, they shall not. They have broken covenant, and committed the most horrid breach that ever was heard tell of; they have not only broken it, but burnt it with the hand of the hangman.





