

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER, AND OF THE SEED

Thomas Taylor

(1576-1632)

First Published: London 1621

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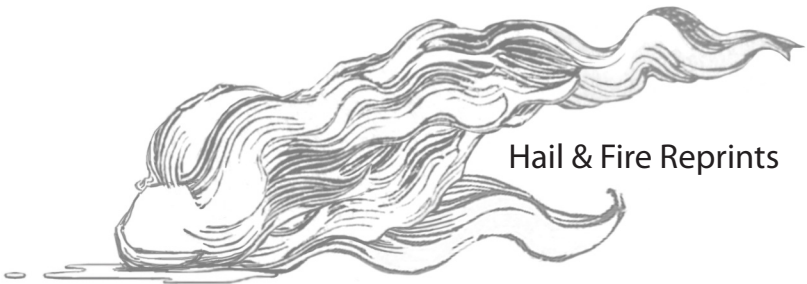
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by Thomas Taylor
(1576-1632)

Thomas Taylor
Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge

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About the Author

Thomas Taylor (1576-1633), a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, was a Puritan divine who gained notoriety as "a brazen wall against Popery." He preached before Queen Elizabeth at the age of only 25. He wrote several books, among them "The Mappe of Rome," (1620), five sermons on the gunpowder treason plot.

The Parable of the Sower, and of the Seed

⁴ And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

⁵ 'A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

⁶ And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

⁸ And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'

⁹ And his disciples asked him, saying, 'What might this parable be?'

¹⁰ And he said, 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

¹¹ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

¹² Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

¹³ They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

¹⁴ And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

¹⁵ But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.'

Luke 8:4-15 KJV

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LUKE 8:4-8

4. *Now at much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of all cities, he spoke by a Parable.*

5. *A sower went out to sow his seed, and at he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden under feet, and the fowls of heaven devoured it up.*

6. *And some fell on the stones, and when it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

7. *And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.*

8. *And some fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold.*



REAT IS the similitude between the spiritual *manna* of God's Word, and that corporeal of the *Israelites* in the wilderness. That refreshed hungry and famished bodies; *This* hungry souls. *That* small both in substance and show, but great in virtue and power: so *this* seems

weak, when it is most powerful. *That* came from heaven, and fell with the dew: so this is heavenly, and

Resemblance
between
manna and
the Word

with it comes the dew of grace. *That* was white as snow, and sweet as honey: so *this* is pure, and rejoices the heart. *That* fell every day, and all, both good and bad gathered it, but not all to the same end: so all must daily gather of *this* manna. Every one hears the Word, but not all alike: some it feeds, to some it putrefies, as manna that was kept against God's commandment. *That* ceased so soon as they came into Canaan: so in our heavenly Canaan shall be no gathering by the Word and sacraments, the fruits of our good land, shall feed us.

He that was the true manna, and the bread from heaven, our Lord Jesus, in this parable shows the nature, quality, use, and diverse sorts of gathering, and gatherers of this little, white, and sweet seed of God's Word, afforded to feed and strengthen us through the barren wilderness of this world.

In the words, consider, 1. A Preface, Luk. 8:4. 2. A parable, Luk. 8:5-8.

The general division.

In the Preface, {

1. The occasion, *as much people were gathering, etc.*
2. The kind of doctrine, *he spoke by a Parable.*

The occasion of the parable

The occasion was, the *gathering of much people together, and coming unto Christ out of all cities*. Christ had powerfully taught them, and with authority, not as the scribes. He preached a strange doctrine to them who had been set so fast in the rudiments of the law. He had wrought many great and potent miracles, mightily declaring himself the Son of God. The course of his life was most innocent in himself, most charitable and helpful to others. Great was the fame of Christ in all the country: so as people came flocking and thronging upon him out of all the cities, by sea, and by land. Multitudes came, all in the same action, but not with like affection: some, to see his person: some, to hear his doctrine: some to admire his miracles: some (perhaps) to pick or catch matter of accusation. But, whatever their intent was, our Lord, who never slipped any opportunity of doing good, apprehended the occasion, and began to teach them.

Here something is to be learned, both from the example of this people, and of our Lord himself.

By example of the people, learn two things:

1. To prease^a with diligence to hear the voice of Christ. He is the well-beloved Son, in whom the Father is well-pleased, Mat. 3:17, therefore *hear him*, chap. 17:5.

Reasons. 1. He speaks the *words of life*, Joh. 6:66, and without them we *abide in death*. He is *the truth and the life*, chap. 14:6, not the author only, but the publisher of it.

2. Consider the recompense: Where Christ sees multitudes of men ready to hear, he will present himself ready to teach: as here, he saw the willingness and diligence of the people out of all cities, and he spoke unto them.

3. It is a sound testimony to the truth, in good and holy manner, with zeal and delight to hear the Word of God. *He that it of God, heareth God's Word*. And not to frequent^b the voice of Christ, is to *withdraw oneself unto perdition*. And such, though they be in the church, yet are not of the church.

4. All other service and devotions are lost and unfruitful, if you are not a diligent and reverent hearer. *Prov. 28:9, He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, his prayer is abominable*.

5. Consider the future danger. If so many sorts of hearers be condemned, as three of four, for want of a right and good manner of hearing, how great damnation abides such as will not hear? Mat. 10:14, *If any will not hear your words, shake off the dust of your feet against that person. Verily I say unto you, it shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorra than for that city or person*. Act. 3:23, *Every one that will not hear that Prophet shall be cut off*.

Use. See that you despise not him who speaks from heaven: for if they escaped not, which refused him that spoke on earth; much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven, Heb. 12:25.

Object. If Christ would speak from heaven, we would come and hear, and flock together, as these multitudes did. But now we cannot hear Christ's voice. *Answ.* Christ himself has said, *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*, Mat. 10:40. Joh. 13:20, Malice

Be diligent to hear the Word

Reasons for diligence in hearing.

Joh. 8:47

Heb. 10:39

Often those who cannot abide the Word, "go out" from the church in doctrine or altogether: 1 Joh. 1:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." (H&F)

a. Archaic: to press. (H&F)

b. That is, not to hear often or frequently. (H&F)

against the servant, proceeds from malice against the Master, and so the Lord accounts it, Act. 7:51-52. The Holy Spirit is resisted, when his messengers are resisted. *Object.* But we have other business to do, our trades to follow, etc. *Answer.* 1. *One thing is necessary:* godliness is the greatest trade, and the greatest revenue. 2. This people left their trades and businesses, and flocked after Christ. *Object.* Then should we incur slander, reproach, disgrace. *Answer.* 1. Your praise shall be of God, if you are a good hearer. 2. These feared not the breath of men, or the magistrates censure, or sentence, as against innovation, though after a most unusual manner they flocked by multitudes out of all the cities. *Object.* But they were but a few poor mean^a men that flock to sermons. *Answer.* 1. Here is Christ's word true, *The poor receive the Gospel*, Mat. 11:5. 2. Neither Christ, nor his Word accepts persons, but gladly teaches and encourages such.

Luke 10:42

So of the former point.

Be forward
in hearing
the Word

II. In that the people came flocking together, with zeal and forwardness, we learn this much: That *we ought cheerfully and diligently to come together to hear the Word, and be ready beforehand when Christ is to speak.* These were present before he began to speak.

Reasons.

Reasons. 1. This was prophesied of believers, Isa. 2:3, *Many shall go up to the mountains of the Lord, and shall say, Come let us go up.* Psal. 122:1, *I rejoiced when they said, Let us go up to the house of the Lord.* Isa. 60:8, *Who are these that fly like a cloud, and as doves to the windows?* 2. God looks not only that the substance and matter of an action be good, but the manner must be suitable. He cares for no careless service. 3. A good heart finds nothing so sweet as God and his presence: and this is promised to true seekers. *David*, in many wants, desires but *one thing*, and that is, *to dwell in the house of God all his days, to see the beauty of his face;* and, *Oh how amiable are thy tabernacles! my soul longeth after the living God: when shall I appear before him?* 4. These Jews perceiving some temporal good from Christ, who filled their bellies, healed their bodies, raised

Psal. 27:4

Psal. 84:1

a. Or, low persons. (H&F)

their dead, etc., did thus flock after him, sea and land could not separate them. But he that finds the sweetness of the Son of God, bringing down the bread and water of life to eternal life, healing all diseases of the soul, which no herb or plaster could do, but one made of his own heart-blood, raising the dead and rotten in their sins, stinking in the grave, to a new and eternal life, must needs flock after him, and follow him as cheerfully as ever did this people.

Use. Let this shame our dulness, who are so slack and heavy in the service of our God. If Christ will wait upon us and our leisure, we will sometimes hear him a piece of an hour. It is an unconscionable sin of this place, that though you come at length, you come not flocking, or together, as this people, nor go out together. *Cornelius* (a great man) and his company were ready against the time of *Peter's* coming. *We are all now here before God* (said he) *to hear the things that are commanded thee of God.* Not that his attendance is due to the *persons* of your ministers, but to their *work* and *office*. But you cannot say when your preacher comes, *We are all here present*; nay, scarce a few of so great a congregation. Take heed; if you do anything for God, do it cheerfully, do it freely: Let your prayers, and praises, and obedience wait upon God in Sion. A reverent heart, affected with love of the things of God, will *prevent^a the watches* in God's worship; that is, no watch shall quicken^b it, but it will be beforehand: And as the two disciples, having a desire to see Christ, did outrun one another toward the grave, striving to come first; so the true followers of Christ, creep not like snails to church, or strive not who shall come last in, (as many slip in, in the middle of the sermon, some almost at the end, most after the beginning:) but run and strive who shall come foremost. Oh that the warm affection of our congregation would afford us this cheerful expectance!

Now out of the example of our Savior Christ, who seeing the diligence and confluence of the people, took occasion by that, their thirst and desire to hear the Word, to teach them,

Act. 10:33

Psal. 119:14

Joh. 20:4

Apprehend good opportunities within your calling.

a. That is, precede. (H&F)

b. That is, enliven or awaken it. (H&F)

we learn a special Christian duty; namely, to *take all occasions of doing good*, within the compass of our callings; especially where we may receive or impart the greatest good. If the minister sees his people about him ready to hear the Word of God, let him imitate his Lord and Master. Now he has a large field, and thereby strong hopes not to lose all his seed. Now he has before him an object of pity and compassion. What pity to see a flock *without a shepherd* to feed and fold them? This Christ mourned for, Mat. 9:36. What pity to see a whole field of corn white for the harvest, but rotting on the earth for want of a man to gather it ?

So if the Word of God is to be heard, beware of allowing that opportunity to slip. You cannot absent yourself from the Word preached, no net once, but to your own great loss and damage. Joh. 20:24, *Thomas* was absent from the disciples, when Christ came and showed himself to the rest. He was absent but once, and (perhaps) upon some weighty cause. It may be, he lurked and kept himself close for fear of danger by the malice of the Jews: or (it may be) he might be providing and settling his own private affairs, now his Master was apprehended and slain, and taken from him. But, whatever the cause was, the effect was grievous: for he was not only deprived of the comfortable presence of his Lord, not only of that grace which the rest, met together, had and were confirmed in: but, when his fellow disciples were willing to communicate unto him the grace of the Lord's resurrection, he not only believed not their report and made slight of such a cloud of most faithful and eyewitnesses, but resolves not to believe them. To incredulity, he joins a wilfulness and obstinacy: nay, he is so far from believing them, that if Christ himself should show himself in person unto him, and would not suffer him to see the prints of the nails, and to put his finger into the prints of his wounds, he would not believe.

So, however men make it not a rush-matter^a to absent themselves from the Word preached, once and again; yet be assured, you slip such an opportunity of your own good,

a. Or, a pressing matter. (H&F)

as (perhaps) you shall never have offered again. If you absent yourself of *negligence*, you deprive yourself of some grace and comfort, which the presence of the Lord amongst the people makes offer of. If of *worldliness*, and to gather a little profit in that time, all your gain will not countervail your loss. But if of wilfulness and *contempt*, (as many) you not only thrust away grace and comfort offered, but pull on yourself the wrath of God for contemning his gracious ordinances, and the blessed means of your salvation.

We see the occasion of our Savior's sermon.

Now of the kind of his doctrine; *He spoke by a Parable.*

A parable in the scripture signifies two things: 1. Some serious matter, and of great moment: Psal. 49:4, *I will incline mine ear to a parable, and utter my grave matter upon my harp.* Thus the grave and wise speeches of *Solomon*, are called the *parables of Solomon*, Prov. 1:1, or, proverbial sentences of *Solomon*. 2. Some dark or obscure speech, when a truth is wrapped up either in some similitude and comparison, or in some hard and obscure words. Joh. 16:29, *Now speakest thou in plain words, and no parable.* Ezek. 24:3, *Therefore speak a parable to the rebellious house, and say, Prepare a pot, and pour water into it, etc.*, in which obscure type is largely declared both the sin and the judgement of the city Jerusalem. And thus it is taken here, for an obscure manner of propounding the truth, under a continued similitude or allegory. And this is the most proper acceptation of the word *parable*, taken from the Greek παραβαλλειν, *assimilare*, and most frequently used in the New Testament: as Luke 21:29, *And he said a parable, Behold the fig tree, and all trees;* that is, he propounded to them a similitude. And a number of parables begin in these words. *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, leaven, a merchant-man, etc.* Mat 13:24, 31, 33, 44-45, 47.

Quest. Why does our Savior Christ speak in parables, and dark comparisons? It seems neither so fitted for the profit of his hearers, nor to his own office and function, who came from the bosom of his Father to reveal the mysteries

2
The kind of
doctrine.

Distinction
of parables.

1.

2.

Christ
spoke in
parables for
four reasons.

of the kingdom.

1. *Ans.w.* 1. This he did for the accomplishment of prophecies of scripture: for Christ did nothing which was not foretold, Isa. 6:9, Mat. 13:13-14,34, *Therefore do I speak to them in Parables: for in them is fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah, who saith, By hearing, ye shall hear, but not understand.*

2. In respect of the manner of teaching: which being once understood, does delight the understanding, help the memory, move and strike the will, by collating spiritual things with sensible, and wind themselves secretly into the heart to convince modestly, but strongly, and to draw confession from evildoers against themselves; as *David* was convinced by *Nathan* in that parable, 2 Sam. 12. And Mat. 21:40, our Savior asks *what the Lord of the vineyard will do to the ungracious husbandmen: they say, He will cruelly destroy them, and let out the vineyard to others: then he infers in the 43 verse, Therefore I say, unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you.*

3. *Difficilia in Scripturis, magna ingenia exercent, Aug. in Psal. 140.*

3. In respect of the elect, 1. To stir up in them humility: for they, seeing how parables contain many difficulties above their understanding, are forced to conceive lowly and submissively of themselves. 2. To work in them diligence in the means of knowledge and profiting, and to go both to God in prayer, and to others whom God has made more skilful than themselves, to get the understanding of it. For the kernel is in the reddition^a of a parable, which lay hid till it be explained. Therefore the disciples ever came to Christ, and questioned, and asked him the meaning of the parables; as vers. 9, the disciples asked him, demanding what parable that was. 3. To work in them care of keeping that, which by so much study and labor they have attained. Hardly come by, highly set by.

4. In respect of wicked men: that the pearl of the kingdom should not be cast to swine, nor the Children's bread to dogs: for they must not partake in the chief prerogative of the godly; which is, to *know the mysteries of the kingdom*, Mat. 13:10, When Christ had uttered this parable, the disciples asked, Master, why speakest thou in

a. From the Latin reddere: the heart or kernel of the parable is rendered in the translation or interpretation of the parable. (H&F)

parables? and our Lord gives this answer, Because to you it is given to know the mysteries, *to them it is not given*. And why to them, not to others? *Answ. To them*, out of divine grace and love, especially, who were disposed by that grace to give assent and affection to the truth; yea, with hungering souls, and thirsty desires, drank in those holy and mystical doctrines. *Not to others*: not because God does not truly offer the same grace, but because of their own incredulity and indisposition, who resist and oppose the grace offered, and wilfully put from themselves, and leave to others the doctrine of eternal salvation.

Use. 1. Note a manifest difference between a godly man and the ungodly. *The former* will search out the truth of God's Word, and will profit by any kind of teaching. The Spirit of God, wheresoever he is, is heroic. Obscurity and darkness in some points tires him not, but only awakes drowsiness, and whets diligence: Something he will get out of the darkest kind of teaching. *The latter* bewray^a their negligence, will be at no pains in beating out holy mysteries, that all may see they have no part in them: And yet are they made without all excuse, in that they may see as others do, but shut their eyes, and will not: and by contemning this kind of teaching, make themselves unworthy of any other.

2. Note what a price God sets on his Word: he thinks it too good for a wicked man to understand or know. For, will God give such a pearl to him that wants desire of it, endeavor after it, a right use of it if he had it, and a care of increase, yea, or of keeping it; whose sloth and idleness would only extinguish the spark, and never blow it up to be comforted or directed by it? Was it fit Christ should speak otherwise to scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, who came only to carp?

3. Note who it is that only can open the mysteries of scripture: the disciples ever had recourse to Christ: he is the only Master and chief Doctor of his church. Mat. 23:8, he is that *true light* that enlighteneth every man, Joh. 1:9, Rev. 5:56. No man was found worthy to open and read the book, except

Difference between the godly and others.

Price set on the Word.

God only can open divine mysteries.

a. That is, to disclose or betray, as that done unintentionally. (H&F)

only the lion of the tribe of *Judah*: Therefore come to Christ as the two blind men, and say, O Lord, we desire our eyes may be opened. Come to the Word, to be θεοδιδακτοι, *taught of the Lord*, Isa. 54:13. Never rest in the teaching of man. Come not without prayer, that God would open your eyes.

An heavy judgement not to understand them.

4. Note a brand of God's judgement upon that man, who hears plain doctrines as parables: *If our Gospel be now hid* (said Paul) *it is hid to them that perish*, 2 Cor. 4:3. If in such a light a man be ignorant of the principles and mysteries of religion: If old men be as yet babes in knowledge, and understanding of the things of God, their case is lamentable. A more fearful sentence cannot be uttered in this life against a man, than to be said as Christ said of some, *Omnia ipsis in Parabolis fieri*, All is spoken to them in parables: He that sees not the light of the sun when it shines, is a blind man; and so is he, who sees not the shining brightness of Christ in such glorious means.

The misery of a senseless hearer, in five things.

See more fully the misery of this man, who sits as a sot under the Word.

1. He rejects and despises the goodness of God in the gracious offer of means of salvation. He is an unhappy condemned man, that refuses a pardon: As if the blind man, having received sight, should revile Christ for it: or the dead being raised, should storm at him for offering to raise him.

Act. 13: 46

2. He is made inexcusable, and his mouth shut: He is prepared for judgement, and judges himself *unworthy of eternal life*: He may see, but will not: He may live, but would rather choose death.

3. By the just judgement of God, the unworthy or unfruitful hearer is more blinded, further hardened, and made more obstinate: He is filthy in himself, but more filthy by the Word; yet the Word no cause hereof, but his own malice against it, and the dunghill that is in him. For Christ came to judgement into this world, that they which see, might be blind; He is blind in himself, but the Word is a light that more blinds him, as the sun to bleary-eyes, in them only is

the fault. He is a dead man in himself, but more deadly^a by the Gospel; which in itself is *a savor of life*, and to others; but *the savor of death* unto him : God as a just judge punishing sin with sin. Satan blinds primarily and by himself, instilling malice. Wicked *Pharaoh* blinded himself yielding to Satan, by rejecting the motions of the Spirit, and holy counsels, Exod. 8:15. And God blinds, not infusing evil, but subtracting^b his grace, and *delivering* men to Satan and themselves, 2 Thes. 2:10-11, most justly rejecting them that have rejected his grace. And the Gospel blinds, not as a cause, but as an occasion, stirring up their malice and corruption against it.

4. He is hereby branded *not to be of God*. Let him hear, and be ceremonially and formally as good as any, yea, outstrip others in semblance^c sanctity: yet if he be a fruitless hearer, and the Word be as a parable unto him, he is *not of God*, Joh. 8:47. So said Christ to the Pharisees, who externally were holy enough: they heard not while they did hear, because they were not of God: And not being of God, they are given into the hands of the devil, as God's executioner, to *blindfold them*, and lead them at his will to destruction, 2 Cor. 4:4.

5. This hardening, or execution by the preaching of the Word, is an infallible sign of future perdition even at the door. When Israel was extremely hardened by the prophets' ministry, they were carried into Assyria, and never returned. *Judah* and *Benjamin* were also extremely hardened, 2 Chron. 36:13,16, and were carried into Babylon. The Jews were hardened by Christ and his Apostles, Act. 13, and were delivered to the Romans. So of Eli's sons, 1 Sam. 2, *They heard not their father, for God would destroy them*. So now in the time of the Gospel, the axe is laid to the root of the tree, the next thing is the hewing down. What else can we fear of our Land, and many our Inhabitants, to whom God's Word is as a tale told to a dead man? no understanding of it, no reformation by it.

So much of the Preface. Now we come to the parable itself.

a. Made dead indeed or "twice dead" (Jud. 1:12) for their lack of fear toward God while they yet continue in the conversation and profession of Christ, by whose doctrine they are themselves "plucked up by the roots." (H&F)

b. God does not "subtract" grace from the unbelieving - for such do not have grace to subtract, but gives grace to whomever he wills; neither is he obligated to any man in this, for all have sinned. See Rom. 3 and 9. (H&F)

c. In a semblance of sanctity. (H&F)

2 Cor. 2:16

Nor impertiendo malitiam, sed non imper-siendo. Aug.

The parable
itself.

Behold, a sower went out to sow his seed.

To the right and true interpreting of a parable, a special help is, to consider attentively, and find out the proper scope and aim of our Lord Jesus Christ in propounding it: and not too curiously presle^a other things, lest instead of milk we presle out blood.

In this parable, both in the whole, and parts, we fear not to fail of the true and proper sense, because this, and one more of the tares of the field, (Mat. 13:36) at the request of the disciples, are privileged, and graced with Christ's own interpretation, who best knew his own meaning, and hath left the same as a sure direction to lead us, that we should not guess at uncertainties, or lose ourselves in fond conjectures, as many do in other parables; the exposition of which he pleased not to leave so assured from his own mouth, as this.

The scope of
the parable.

The scope hereof is apparently twofold; 1. Whereas our Savior saw a multitude of hearers, but not all coming with the same intent, nor all hearing with the same fruit and profit: he manifestly propounded this parable, to show the diversity of hearers. For the state of the church and visible congregation is mixed, resembling the ark which was full of creatures, of diverse kinds, but most kinds unclean. So Christ and his Apostles found it, and so do we after them. In the great concourse of people about us, the Word hath not the same success in all hearers, nor the best entertainment and welcome in the most that hear it. Some come to hear news, some to carp, some to scoff, some to run to the rulers, some to censure, some to correct, and sit as judges of the Word, which shall judge them: only a very few to hear aright, to faith and obedience. How plainly is all this set before us in these four sorts of hearers, of whom only one sort was good and approved in their hearing? 2. That every man might enquire and make trial of himself; in which form or rank of hearers, himself is; and so frame himself for time to come, that he maybe found in the number of them, in whom the word of God, as good seed cast into good ground, may bring forth plentiful and abundant

a. Obscure, could be presse; in any case, lest we seem to find or force out some other meaning than that intended of the Words of Christ. (H&F)

fruits of grace in his life and conversation.

Behold. This here is a note, 1. Of certainty: and so is usually set before promises and threats. 2. Of intention, or excitation, being set as a star before matters of weight, that is, Let him that hears, consider, remember, apply. 3. Of castigation, or check to our dulness in beholding such material things. Elsewhere it is a note of admiration, and great expectation.

Note. Orators use large prefaces to get attention, and win the minds of their hearers to that they would persuade. Christ ordinarily uses but one little note of attention, '*Behold.*' For, 1. The least word from him is enough to bind the conscience, and persuade the heart. 2. The less external rhetoric and pomp of words is used, the more it beseeemes^a and is answerable to the simplicity of the Gospel. 3. All that persuasion of words is supplied by the gift of the Spirit inwardly, who *openeth the ears of the heart* (as of *Lydia*) to believe the Gospel.

But what must we behold ?

A Sower went out. Our Savior borrowed his comparison from easy and familiar things, such as the sower, the seed, the ground, the growth, the withering, the answering or failing of the sower's expectation, all of them things well known: And by all these would teach us some spiritual instruction. For there is no earthly thing, which is not fitted to put us in mind of some heavenly. Christ cannot look upon the sun, the wind, fire, water, henne,^b a little grain of mustard seed, nor upon ordinary occasions, as the penny given for the day's work, the wedding garment, and ceremonies of the Jews about it, nor the waiting of servants at their Master's table, or children asking bread and fish at their fathers' table, etc., but he applies all to some special use of edification in grace.

Use. 1. We must not contest ourselves with the natural use of the creatures, without the spiritual: for then the beasts enjoy as much of them as we. But by them all, behold the Creator's wisdom, power, goodness, and mercy.

3. Let us take occasion to further our salvation by them, and

a. Or, the more it befits or is appropriate to, etc. (H&F)

b. Henne or henna: a bush. (H&F)

Behold,
what it
notes.

Act..16:14

Earthly
things must
put is in
mind of
heavenly
things.

Translate
the book of
nature into
the book
of grace.

not hinder it, nor hasten our perdition, as many do, by drunkenness, riot, or covetous holding them in our hearts and hands.

3. No man can excuse his ignorance of God, seeing no man wanteth^a teachers. The rudest husbandman has his seed, his earth, his seasons, as books to teach him. Even these books of the creatures leave not God *without witness*: even these books leave men *without excuse*. Every creature should lead us, and further us in the honoring of God. And therefore the gentiles that honored not God according to that natural knowledge, gotten by the book of the creatures, were given up to vile sins, and grievous punishments. How without excuse then must ignorant Christians be, to whom God's wisdom, power, and goodness, shines sevenfold brighter in the work of redemption, than of creation? to whom God is more clearly revealed in the book of the scriptures, than of the creatures? seeing the more excellent means of knowledge we have of him, the greater is our sin and punishment to be carelessly ignorant of him.

Now in the parable, are two things considerable in general: 1. The *sowing*. 2. The *success*, according to the several grounds^b on which the seed fell. These grounds, according to their condition, were either fruitless, or fruitful. The bad and fruitless grounds were of three kinds: 1. *Callosa*, paddled and highway ground: 2. *Lapidosa*, stony and rocky ground: 3. *Spinosa*, thorny and choaky ground. The good ground was the fertile and fruitful ground.

The sowing is in the first words: *A Sower went out to sow his seed.*]

And here are three things to be considered: 1. The agent, *A Sower*. 2. His action, *he went forth*. 3. His intention, or end, *to sow his seed*.

I. The sower is Christ himself, vers. 37, *He that sows the good seed, is the Son of man*. He is that good husbandman, without whose labor the field of the whole world would have lain in perpetual barrenness. The labor of this second *Adam* was notably typified in the first *Adam*, dressing the

a. Or, lacks. (H&F)

b. Or, types of ground. (H&F)

Act. 54: 17
Rom. 1:28

Two general
parts of the
parable.

The agent
or sower.

garden, resembling the church of God, dressed and brought to fruitfulness by the infinite labor of Jesus Christ. This husbandry Christ was also resembled in *Noah* the builder of the ark, who was an husbandman.

Quest. Are not ministers sowers?

Ans. Christ is the principal sower, and properly the sower: ministers are rather the sower's basket, than the sower: but yet they are taken in, as *coworkers* with Christ, and for their honor and encouragement called sowers: as, 1 Cor. 9:11, *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, etc.* But with these differences: 1. Christ sows his own field, which he hath dearly purchased with his precious blood: they sow not their own fields, but his, not being *Lords of the heritage of God*, 1 Pet. 5:3. 2. He sows his own seed: so in the text, the sower sowed *his seed*: they have no seed of their own, but fetched out of his garner. Pastors and teachers of the church, sow not their own seed, but his: nay, the Apostles themselves: have it in their apostolic commission, to teach men to observe no other things, but whatsoever Christ himself commanded them, Mat. 28:20. Hence Christ used to say, *Verily, verity, I say unto you*: but all other, whether prophets, or Apostles, or pastors, *Thus saith the Lord*. 3. They differ in the manner of sowing. He was the most skilful sower that ever was: he knew exactly what grain every ground was fitted for: with him were treasures of wisdom. We that have but drops from his fullness, are unskillful in comparison. He could speak to men's private and personal sins, as the woman at the well. He could answer to men's thoughts and reasonings: We not so. 4. We differ in efficacy. We may sow, and plant, and this is all: suppose it be *Paul*, or *Apollos* himself, we can give no increase, nor make anything to grow. But he can sow, and give increase at his pleasure. The sower can give the first and latter rain on his field, *Joel 2:23*, He can warm it with the beams of grace, streaming from his own brightness, *Mal.4:2*. He is *the Sun of Righteousness*. He can blow upon his field with the prosperous winds of his gracious and quickening Spirit, *Isa. 3:8*, *Cant. 4: 16^a*. He can fatten

2 Cor. 6:1

Difference between Christ, his sowing, and the sowing of his ministers, four.

Things make to fruitfulness: rain, sun beams, winds, application of all, to set and ripen the seed. All from Christ.

a. Song of Solomon 4:16. (H&F)

and fill it with all abundance of blessing, Psal. 65:10, *Thou blessest the bud of the earth, thou crownest the year with goodness, and thy steps drop fatness.*

II. His
action.
Christ goes
forth to sow
three ways.

II. His action. This sower goes forth.

Christ goeth forth to sow, three ways: in Spirit, person, ministry.

1. In Spirit, by inward inspirations, and heavenly motions: And thus he sowed in the heart of *Adam, Noah, Abraham*, and the prophets, who were, with other holy men, immediately inspired and acted by the Holy Spirit, 1 Pet. 1:21. So with the penmen of scriptures, and the Apostles.

2. In person: according to his humanity he comes out from the bosom of his Father, and comes into the field of the world by his happy incarnation; by which he was nearer unto us than before, and in our own self revealed unto us the counsel of his Father; unweariably preaching in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Judea, Galilee, in cities, fields, sea, and everywhere.

3. In the ministry of his servants he goes forth: both the prophets and teachers before him. 1 Pet. 3:19 - *by which Spirit he preached in Noah's time; namely, in Noah himself, to the spirits now in prison.* He said to prophets, as unto Jeremiah, chap. 1:10, *Behold, this day have I set thee over the Nations to pluck up, and root out; to destroy, and throw down; to build, and to plant.* And Ezek. 3:17, *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore hear the Word at my mouth, and warn them from me.* And since his own ascension, he went forth in the ministry of his Apostles, and still goes forth in the ministry of pastors and teachers *to the end of the world.* Mat. 28, *Behold, I am with you to the end of the world:* and, *He that heareth you heareth me,* Luk. 10:16.

But this parable seems to have special eye and reference to his own appearance, and labor in the days of his flesh, in the publishing of his holy doctrine through Judea and Jerusalem. Yet so, as look what success his own sowing found, the same might his servants expect even to the end: For the servant is not greater than his Master: and, if the

the Word in the mouth of his ministers prove fruitless, it is no marvel, seeing the fame befell our Lord himself.

III. The Intention is, *to sow his seed. To sow*: that is, to preach: for preaching resembles sowing, as we shall see through the parable. *His seed*: the seed is the Word of God contained in the writings of the prophets and Apostles, vers. 11, which by Christ and his ministers is cast into the furrows of the heart, as seed into the furrows of the earth by the husbandman.

It is true, that he cast some seed among the heathens: For the law of nature written in their hearts, (the sum of which is, that what we would not another should do to us, we should not do to them;) even this was the seed of this sower; for *he enlighteth*, even with natural light, *whosoever cometh into the world*, Joh. 1:9. But here is meant that seed, which he calls into the field of the church; which is partly the law moral, written with the finger of God, and delivered to the church by *Moses*, who was faithful in all his house, as a servant: but especially the doctrine of the Gospel, sowed in the hearts of believers, both by himself and his servants.

His seed. This seedsman sowed no fables, no traditions, no unwritten verities, no Canons of Councils, or Decretals of Popes; which are but chaff: nay, he often condemned the decree of the elders, and traditions of Pharisees, and all seed fetched out of men's granaries; Joh. 7:16, *My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me*: and, chap. 8:26, *The things that I have heard of him, these speak I to the world*.

Doctr. God's Word preached, is the sowing of God's seed into the earth of men's hearts: For six reasons, or resemblances:

1. As seed is a small and contemptible thing, altogether unlikely to bring such a return and increase: so the Word preached seems a weak and contemptible thing, 1 Cor. 1:23, *We preach Christ crucified, a scandal to the Jews, and foolishness to the gentiles*: Yet by the *foolishness* of preaching, God has ordained to save his, and not without it, as without seed, without harvest.

III. His intention.

The "seed" is Christ's and not man's. (H&F)

The Word preached resembled to seed, in six things.

2. As the seed in the barn or garner fructifies not, unless it be cast into the earth: so the Word, unless cast into the ears and hearts of men, is fruitless, regenerates not, produces no fruits of faith. Keep the Word in your Bible, or your Bible in your chest, and not in thy heart, covering and hiding it, you abide fruitless and barren, Rom. 10:14, How can they believe, unless they hear, or how can they hear without a preacher?

3. As the sower pricks not in his seed, nor sets it, but casts it all abroad, and knows not which of his seed will come up to increase, and which will rot and die under the clods, or coming up into the blade and ear, will wither away: so the minister (God's seedsman) speaks not to one or two, but casts his seed abroad to all in general; neither knows he which and where the Word shall thrive to increase, and where not, but, where it doth increase, it rises with great beauty and glory, as the grain of mustard seed becomes a tree in which the birds of heaven may build their nests.

4. As seed hath a natural heat, life, and virtue in it, by which it increases and begets more seeds like unto itself: so the Word cast into the good ground of a believing heart, hath a supernatural heat in it, being as fire, Jer. 5:14, and a lively power to frame men like itself, to make them of fleshly, spiritual; of blind, quick sighted; of dead in sin, alive in grace. And as one grain quickened,^a brings sundry tillowes^b, and many grains in each: so one Christian converted, and receiving this power in himself, gains many, unto God, desiring that everyone were as he is, except his bands and sins, *Philip* being called, finds *Nathaniel*, and brings him to Christ. And the woman at the well calls all the city, Joh. 4.

5. As seed cast into the ground lives not, unless it die first, 1 Cor. 15:26, so the Word preached brings no fruit or life, unless it kill first and work mortification; yea, and by continual sense of frailty, and acquaintance with the cross, it keeps under such natural pride and corruption as resist the work of it. Joh. 4, Christ brings the woman at the well to

a. Or, made alive. (H&F)

b. Obscure, but the meaning is clear enough: stalks or shoots in which is multiplied grain for the single grain that was sown. (H&F)

to know him, by bringing her to the knowledge of herself. And the converts, Act. 2:37, then bewrayed^a heavenly life, when being pricked at heart, they cried out, *Men and brethren, what may we do to be saved?*

6. As seed cast never so skillfully into the earth is not fruitful, unless God give it a body, 1 Cor. 15:38, so neither is the Word, unless God add his blessing. 1 Cor. 3:6, *I have planted, and Apollos watered, but God gives the increase:* vers. 7, *Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase.* What would plowing, sowing, harrowing, or any husbandry on the earth avail, if God should not by the rains, winds, and warmth from heaven prosper and cherish the seed?

Thus have we compared the Word of God to seed, and preaching to sowing. But still remember, that this seed of the Word is far more excellent than all other seed, in four respects: 1. That is from earth, this from heaven: My doctrine (said Christ) is from above. 2. That serves to preserve natural life received of God, this both to begin and maintain spiritual life. 3. That is mortal and corruptible seed, this *immortal*, 1 Pet. 1:23, *an eternal Gospel:* heaven and earth shall perish, but the Word of God abides forever. 4. The fruit is like the seed: All corruptible seed brings fruit corruptible like itself, but this brings immortality and life; it is a seed sown for continuance and eternity, so is not other.

Use. 1. This concerns ministers, in whole function there is both *honos* and *onus*, dignity and duty. For the first: The ministry, though despised in the world, is a most glorious office, and an honorable function, which Christ came from the glory of heaven to undertake. The Son of God himself undertook to be a sower of the Word: and shall great clerks and divines think it too base a thing to be diligent preachers? Or shall that which honored Christ, be a bar to preferment; namely, to be diligent sowers? Or shall any man think his son too good, and of too high birth for that office, which the Son of God himself despised not?

a. Archaic: manifested of themselves, naturally, as he who is of a new nature does manifest the same in his thoughts and speech. (H&F)

Seed of God's Word more excellent than all other seed, in four respects.

Rev. 14:6

The dignity of the ministry.

The duty
and charge,
in four
things.

Ministers
must go
forth to sow.

Motives.

Ministers
must sow
Christ's
seed, that is,
his Gospel
and no
other seed
or gospel.

For the second, the burden or charge. We read not that Christ said Masses, or anoyled,^a or sprinkled holy water, but was all in sowing. Popish Priests are quite contrary, all in these, and seldom or never do preach: As if our salvation consisted in ceremonies, or an harvest could be brought in by gestures without sowing. But cur charge stands in four things:

1. Learn we of our Lord Jesus Christ to go forth to sow: Christ went forth to labor; and he that goes into the Lord's field to loiter or stand idle, gets no thank from his Lord. What need is there of a loiterer in seedtime, or in harvest? And ministers must consider; 1. That they are compared to such persons, as in whom is required the greatest care and pains; sometime to shepherds: What a painful and careful life led *Jacob* while he was *Laban's* shepherd? what sorrows by day and night did he sustain and swallow? Sometimes to watchmen who must stand on the walls of the city of God night and day: Sometime today *laborers, and builders*: All of them works of extreme pains and industry. So as they mistake the matter, who undertake this function, to set up themselves in ease and idleness. 2. Let them set before their eyes this chief sower, who did wear out himself in labors and sufferings, *making him of no reputation*, Phil. 2:7, and as a good candle, consumed himself to enlighten others: Yea, he sweat at it that admirable sweat of water and blood, and sorrowed to the death, and all to sow the seed of grace and salvation in the hearts of men. 3. Remember that counsel of the Wiseman, Ecc. 11:6, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thine hand rest: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that.*

2. Ministers must sow *his seed*, not their own, but Christ's. Christ himself sowed only pure and precious seed: so must his Seedmen cleanse and pick their seed at home, that it be not blended with chaff and darnel of man's brain; much less with corrupt doctrine, and devices fetched everywhere but out of God's own garners. Remember that law, which holds here in force, Deut. 22:9, *Thou shall not sow*

a. Archaic: anoyled or anoyed, as to anoint with oil, as is done in various Catholic rites. (H&F)

thy vineyard with diverse kinds of seeds: much less may the minister of Christ sow his Lord's field with mixed seed, half doctrine with true, or men's inventions with God's pure Word and worship. As a man sows, so he reaps. If any man sow husks for seed, his harvest shall be husks. If any sow words and phrases, without matter and substance, he sows the wind, and shall reap nothing but wind and vanity. Accursed is that sower that sows any other seed, suppose he be an Angel,^a Gal. 1:8.

3. Ministers must sow all their Master's seed: so did the chief sower; *Whatsoever I received of my Father, I have delivered to the world*. A faithful seedsman leaves upon the ground all the seed his master allows. *Paul* was a good sower: Act. 20:26, *I have delivered the whole counsel of God, I have kept nothing back*. A good steward will deliver to the servants the whole allowance of his master. *Micha* was a faithful sower: who being entreated to speak to *Ahab*, as four hundred prophets had done before him, answered, *As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*.

4. Ministers must sow their Master's seed for their Master's advantage, propounding a pure end to themselves. Why goes the sower to sow his seed, but for fruits in the harvest? Why did Christ so painfully sow the seeds of salvation in the ears and hearts of men, but that such as believe in him, might have everlasting life? This then must be the end of our preaching, as of your hearing, that our seedtime may be returned with increase in the harvest. He that by preaching seeks the praise of men, ambitiously to climb up to preferments, or aims at his own private present ends, misses the mark and aim that the chief sower propounded unto himself, and every wise sower: besides, his own expectation and hope in the harvest is cut off; he has the praise of men and the pomp of the world, he found what he sought, and of him it is true as of hypocrites, *Verily they have their reward*.

Use 2. This concerns our hearers in sundry respects.

1. If the Word be seed, then must they *prepare* their ground

a. Or, although he be even an angel from heaven. (H&F)

Ministers must sow the Word that is Christ's and not their own.

1 King. 22:14

Ministers sow the Word to their Master's advantage.

Mat. 6:25

Prepare your ground for his seed.

ground for it. A field must be prepared, except a man will lose both his seed and his labour: so also must the heart be prepared. *Quest.* How may that be? *Answ.* The earth is prepared for seed by plowing and renting it up: so *rend your hearts*, says the Lord, Joel 2:13, *and plow up the fallow ground of your hearts, and sow not among thorns*, Jer. 4:3. Every man knows, that plowing must go before sowing: So before the seed of grace can be sown in the heart, the law must be urged, to break the clods, and uproot the weeds.

Receive
and retain
the seed of
the Word.

Col. 3:16

Luke 10:42

2. Hearers must receive this seed, and retain it: as the good earth receives into her furrows the seed, and covers it, and gives it rooting. But with this difference: that the earth receives seed but once a year, but the heart must receive the Word continually, 1 Joh. 3:9, It is a note of one born of God, that *the seed of God abides in him*. And the exhortation to every Christian is, that the Word of God *dwell plentifully* in him: that is, abide and continue to increase; else slender will the expectation be in harvest. What return expect they in the harvest, who affect the alehouse better than the house of God? Whose chief care and love being set upon the profits of the world, utterly neglect the *better part*, and the *one thing necessary*? God offers to cast this seed into their hearts, but they will reap the world, even for the present, and care not to receive such seed as brings not in a present harvest. And, as these *receive* not the seed of the Word, so others seem to receive it, but *retain* it not, afford it no rooting, but negligently lose it. This do idle and negligent hearers, who sleep in summer, are slack at seedtime, and interchange the seasons, not greatly caring, which end goes forward, so they may not be counted atheists. Let such consider, that God's Word will not stay where it is not highly esteemed, and heartily entertained. And can the great harvest of eternal life be so worthless, as to be cast upon him who so idly wastes his seedtime, and so meanly esteems the harvest?

Bring forth
answerable
fruits to the
seed sown.

3. Hearers must be careful to bring forth *fruit answerable to the seed*. As that grain which comes up of seed, is of

of the same kind, and resembles that which is sown; so also must hearers, as the seed of the Word is pure and holy, resemble it in purity and holiness: which is the Apostles reason, 1 Pet 1:22-23, and the same with that exhortation of *Paul*, Rom. 6:17, *Obey the form of doctrine, into which you were delivered*. But now the ministers, who sow good and wholesome seed, may complain as the servants in the parable, *Master, did not thou sow good seed? Whence then are these tares? Do not we set figs? Whence then are these thistles? Is not the seed which we cast, that is, the doctrine which we preach, pure and sound? Whence then are these tares? Whence is this general profaneness, this contempt of the Word, horrible oaths and swearing, impious and profane sabbath-breaking,^a foul and beastly drunkenness, promiscuity^b and wantonness, riot, gaming, and idleness, so contrary to the seed sow? Surely the envious man hath sown them: the devil that rules in the seed of the wicked, hath sown and husbanded these wicked seeds, which having found a fit and friendly soil, come up so fast. But the end of this blessed seed sown among us, is, that we might be set and grow up in that blessed seed, that we should become the seed of *Abraham*, and the seed of the blessed of the Lord.*

4. As a small seed increases, of small becomes great, of a little becomes more, the season cherishes it, time dilates it, and it grows stronger, firmer, and whiter to the harvest: so must hearers labor, that the Word rooted and quickened in their hearts, may prosper and ripen, and by the gracious season, may receive daily increase and strength, as the year and the harvest draws on: that is, they must grow higher toward heaven every day than other.

Use 3. See hereby the necessity of the Word and ministry; as of seed and husbandry for the harvest. 1. A madness it is to look for a harvest without a seedtime: so it is as great a folly to expect salvation without the ministry^c. As well may you expect an harvest without labourers, as a church without preachers. No seed, no harvest. For the harvest is *potentially* in the seed: so is eternal life *potentially* in

a. 'sabbath-breaking' is a strong term but the exhortation is to godliness, to growing in the knowledge of Christ, and to the society that moves to carefulness and obedience; it is not an exhortation to the performance of works for salvation, as is the doctrine of some. (H&F)

b. Rom. 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." (H&F)

c. That is, in the ministering or preaching of the Gospel. (H&F)

Mar. 13:27

Look to the daily growth of the seed.

The Word preached as necessary to salvation, even as seed is necessary to an harvest.

2 Cor. 9:6

the Word of God preached: Rom. 1:1, It is the *power of God to salvation*. 2. No care of seed, no care of harvest: so no care of God's Word, no care of salvation: except you will be so mad, as think to reap where you have not sown. 3. He that *sparingly sows his seed, must expect a sparing harvest*; so slack you your hand and care in the use of the means, you shall come short in the comfort and fruition of salvation. 4. He that refuses to be sowed upon, refuses to be found fruitful in the harvest: and seeing the heart yields no good fruits of itself, needs must that heart be an accursed ground, that refuses the seed of grace, faith, and goodness to be cast into it. An evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth evil things. 5. He that hinders the Word, or resists it either in himself, or others, withstands the Lord's husbandry in his own salvation, and in the salvation of his people: as those that hinder sowing, must needs hinder reaping and harvest.

And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden underfoot, and the fowls of heaven devoured it up.

The first
sort of
ground.

Observ.

Here begins the *event* following the former action. Where first note, that he said not, The sower sowed by the wayside: (for no sower would do so, because he knows it were but lost, labor and seed;) but, in sowing, some seed *fell* by the wayside, beside the intention of the sower, who desires to lose none of his seed. Secondly, the *same seed*, in itself as good as any, falls by the wayside; in itself as fit for fruitfulness as any, but altogether fruitless by the hardness of the soil it falls into. As the heart is, into which the Word comes, so is the fruit. Suppose Christ the seedsman, and his own Word from his gracious lips the seed, yet in many hearers it shall not profit; and yet neither the sower, nor seed is to be blamed, but the indisposition, or bad disposition of the heart.

The kinds of
this ground.

Let us therefore enquire, 1. What is the nature of this ground: 2. The reason of unfruitfulness: twofold: one inward, the seed was *trodden under foot*; the other outward, *the fowls came and devoured it up*.

For the kind of soil, it is the highway side. Our Savior plainly

interprets it vers. 12, *They that are besides the way, are they that hear, but the Devil comes and takes it away out of their hearts: Mat. 13:19, When a man hears the Word, and understands it not.* This first sort of hearers is compared to an highway, for these reasons.

1. As an highway lies without care, neglected, unbounded, common, not several, but is trodden and beaten with the feet of all sorts of passengers: so these hearers' hearts are not closed and made several for the seed of God's Word, and for heavenly things, but lie common and open to all temptations and suggestions of Satan, to the covetous and carnal desires of earthly things, which eat up heavenly; to vain, wandering, idle cogitations and thoughts; all which make a thoroughfare and beaten path in the heart.

2. As in an highway if any seed fall, no man looks to cover it, no man respects it, as looking for no good at all of it, but leaves it to be trodden of beasts, and eaten up of birds: so with these hearers: when the Word is preached, they hear it carelessly without all attention, or affection, they care not to understand it, never cover it by meditation, nor receive it further than by giving it the hearing; they expect no good from it; let errors and lusts come and tread it down, let the devil by suggestions and temptations devour it up, they care neither to understand, nor receive, nor remember it.

3. As highway ground can neither receive nor cover the seed; or if it should, it is so hard and padded, that it cannot afford it the least rooting, at least to come unto fruit; the crop will never fill a man's hand: even so these hearers, like hard and paved earth, continually trodden and trampled with wandering thoughts, and fruitless cogitations, and temptations of the devil, hear the Word sometimes, but without heart, mind, affection: a little seed may lie on the superficies^a or top of their brain, or tongue, or may make a little show on the outside, but nothing of it gets within them, nor takes any root, and consequently yields no fruit of faith, of God's fear, of piety or Christian conversation.

Some hearts and hearers compared to the highway for several reasons.

Seed fallen on a heart that is like a highway is not taken to heart, nor cared for, but is beaten underfoot.

Seed fallen on a heart that is like a highway is not covered over, not meditated upon, not received into the heart, and not remembered.

Seed fallen on a heart that is like a highway is not afforded a rooting into such an hard place.

a. superficies or ?????? (H&F)

The reason
of unfruit-
fulness.

Doctr.
Careless
hearers,
the worst
hearers.

Now for the causes of this unfruitfulness: The former is in their own disposition, *they tread the seed underfoot*; that is, despise and undervalue it. It is the careless hearer, who understands not, nor attends. *Doctr. The careless hearer is the worst hearer of all*: as this first ground is the worst ground of all. The other two are bad both, yet they give the seed some cover, and receive it in; but these hold it out, and leave it where they found it. Both the other, give some regard, and bestow some affection upon the Word: but this treads it under, as a most despised and disaffected thing. Both the other, while in some sort they affect the Word, are drawn aside by some profit, pleasure, fear, or persecution; but these by the immediate work and malice of the devil (at whose will they are given up to be ruled) are so robbed of the Word and means of grace, as they will neither make nor meddle with it further than the hearing. Lastly, the other bad grounds are far from salvation in the end; but the devil suffers not these so much as to set foot in the way; and therefore their case is most hopeless.

This careless hearer is he, that not only does not understand, but he that does not *attend*, or apply his mind so to understand: for so *Beza* translates the word *συνιεναι*, and proves both out of the Syriac, and out of the opposition of this ground to the next, which receives the Word with joy, that it were more conveniently read and translated, which *attend not*, than *understand not*.

Use 1. Lectio hac (said *Gregory*) *non indiget expositione, sed admonitione*. Christ has expounded this to our hand; and therefore this needs not an Interpreter, so much as practicer. Thus then I proceed: If the worst ground of all hears the Word, and those hearers, which shall be deepest in damnation, are hearers of the Word, what shall then become of them that will not hear? What harvest can they expect, who will suffer no seed to be sown in their fields? Or what earth is that, that is left lie unstirred and unsown, but some barren Common, or some dry heath and wilderness which brings nothing but thorns and briars, *whose end is to be burned?*

What shall we say to our Popish Recusants,^a who run from the church, and stop their ears against the Word; as if religion and devotion stood only in fleeing the scriptures, the rule of all religion? Were they here present to hear me, I would tell them, 1. That *if they were of God, they would hear his Word*; but (as Christ said to the Jews) *Ye are not of God, because ye hear not his Word*. 2. If they were *the sheep of Christ*, they would *hear his voice*, Joh. 10:27. But Christ's mark is worn off, and they bear the mark of Antichrist. 3. Were they of Christ's kindred and acquaintance, they would hear his Word, Luk. 8:20, *My mother and brethren are they, which hear the Word of God and keep it*. 4. Were they not wedded to *that man of sin*, they would not so sin against their own souls: Prov. 8:35, *He that sins against me (says Wisdom) hates his own soul, and all that hate me, love death*. 5. Were they heirs of blessing, they would not run from the blessing of them that are hearers of the Word, and doers of it, and so wrap themselves in that curse, Act. 3:23, *It shall be, that every person, who will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from his people*. 6. Were their religion of God, they would not thrust away his Word with both hands, contrary to the man of God, Psal. 119:48, *who lifted up both his hands to the Word of God*, as if he would pull it to him with both hands. Were their religion any other but a mystery of darkness, it would brook the light; which *whosoever fears or flees, he is an evildoer*. Were it any other but an heap or pack of Idolatry, it would abide the trial of the Word. But *Dagon* must down before the ark. Every contrary flees and expels the contrary. God's Word is the breath or Christ's mouth, which must blast and wither the kingdom of Antichrist: and therefore all the kingdom of Antichrist hates and shuns it, as the thief the gallows set up for his execution.

Against
Recusants,
six things.

Joh. 8:47

Joh. 3:10

1 Sam. 5:
the image of
Dagon fell
before the
ark of God.
(H&F)

Against
despisers of
the Word.

Again, what shall we say to the despisers of God's Word? Many there are who make light of a sermon: they would rather hear an interlude, than a sermon: A game at maw, or irish, is as good an employment. They can pass a day

a. Those, in 16th c. England, who refused to attend the new bible-centered service, as it was against the Catholic way. Let the modern reader understand that the people had been kept from the Bible, but were now free to read it and it was read to them in church, and this, for the good of the state by way of independence from Rome, and the good of society, not as if all might believe but that all might have opportunity to hear, and that even the remaining Catholics might shun the tyranny of conscience that previously immured all society in fear and in slavish tradition. The 'Recusants' were left undisturbed except upon rare occasion of such bold treason as that even an Elizabeth could not turn a blind eye to, as, for example, the treasonable plot lead by the Jesuits Pearson and Campion. (H&F)

day and a night at these sports, with far less tediousness than one hour at a sermon. To these I say, 1. You shall be arraigned at Christ's Bar, for despising the Lord Jesus himself: Luk. 10:16. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.* 2. You shall be cast and condemned to the most woeful damnation that ever befell the most notorious sinners in the world. Believe not me, but Jesus Christ himself, Mat. 10:14-15. *He that shall not hear the words of his messengers, it shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorra in that day of judgement, than for that man.* Oh woe worth thee, that you art a despiser! Christ has read the sentence of your damnation already; and unless you repent, he has with strong asseveration adjudged you to an heavier load of curses, than shall be laid on Sodom and Gomorra, those filthy sinners, which were burnt with fire and brimstone for their crying sins. See the greatness of your sin in this grievous punishment: and, if you will not be deeper in hell than filthy Sodom, beware of despising the Word, Heb. 12:25.

Object. If I escape so long; I shall care the less.

3. *Answw.* No, but for the present you are as a condemned man, bound and hampered with the plagues of God, and especially that great plague, that you see them not. Deut. 28:15, *If thou wilt not hear my voice, then cursed shall thou be in the city, and in the field, in the fruit of thy body, and of thy ground, in thy coming in, and thy going out.* These, and more than these await you in every corner. Again, God's curse is upon your soul evidently: you did never taste of the King's Supper; you never knew the felicity of God's people: you are a leading with a guard of devils to your execution; have your eyes covered as with a napkin of error and ignorance, as a felon ready to be turned off; and do you think yourself in good case all this while?

Lastly, what may we say to persecutors of the Word, and the preachers of it, such as would (if they could) with a sword slay those that seek to save them? Like the hearers at Nazareth, who would kill Christ himself, Luk. 4:28. *Elijah* shall be counted a troubler of the State. *Daniel* shall

Daniel 3:12
and Amo.
7:10 (H&F)

be watched and accused in the matter of his God. Amos, shall be accused to the King, as one whose words the whole land is not able to bear. 1. What need we say more, than they proclaimed against themselves? For who are they, that stand against the Gospel, and preachers of it, but swearers, libertines, gamesters, drunkards, ruffians, covetous, adulterous, and in their whole courses enemies to righteousness, that they must needs be good men, and dear to God, that are encountered with such adversaries? 2. That Word which you persecute, and would drive out of your conscience, or will not hear, the same shall pursue you, and follow you as an hue and cry, and you shall hear it, and condemn yourself, because you could not endure that it should condemn your sins. 3. The time comes, wherein (if you timely repent not) you; shall see and say you took the wrong end of the staff, and did kick against hard pricks: and your conscience shall convince you, that what you did against Christ's servants and Gospel, (whatsoever your pretence now is) you did it against Christ himself, who will pay you home with your own coin. *Julian* that cursed apostate, finding himself at last too weak, cried out, *Vicisti, Galilae, vicisti*. Christ was far enough out of his reach, he persecuted his servants and professors, but his conscience now tells him it was against Christ, who is too strong for him. Writing against Christians, he alleged many things, that they were enemies to magistracy, to judgement seats, to lawful wars, and that Christianity let in all confusion into the world: that their religion was against common sense, and cut the sinews of all humane society, and it was not fit they should live: whose calumnies *Athanasius* and *Cyrill* answered: But all these were as wind when God takes him in hand: none, nor all of these carry any weight in his own conscience, but he was θεομαχος, one that fought against God, and (as *Basill* speaks) χριστομαχος, a resister of Christ.

Use 2. If careless hearers be the worst hearers, then beware of careless and negligent hearing, without attention, affection, or understanding. The Apostle *James*, (chap. 1

Beware of
careless
hearing.

vers. 23) describes many of our hearers, to be like a man that looks his natural face in a glass, but goes away, and forgets immediately what a one he was. The Word is God's looking-glass, held before men in the ministry: this lets them see their faces, their blemishes and spots; but they (like fools) look upon the glass, to see themselves only, not to reform anything. Others fitly compare many of our hearers to idols, that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not; for they want the seeing eye, and the hearing ear; no more profiting, than the very images on the wall; as unmovable by the promises or terrors of God, as the pillars in the church, and as senseless as the seats they sit on: mere idols, have their bodies present, not their souls, neither is the breath of the Spirit in them.

Let such be requested to consider a little these ensuing motives.

1. What a great *deceiving* of men's selves this is: Jam. 1:22, Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, *deceiving your own selves*. What a delusion is it, to think it enough to see a sermon, or be at a sermon, without attending, or marking any matter delivered; or to hear words, but no more conceive the sense and meaning, than children that are brought in their laps? You deceive yourself in a vain persuasion, that you do an acceptable service, when indeed you further enthrall yourself to Satan, and procure a more just and fearful condemnation.

2. It is a mark of a disciple of Christ, to understand the Word, Luk. 8:10, *To you it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, to others in Parables*. Call yourself a Christian while you will, you are indeed no disciple, that attend not the Word, but a stranger to the Word, a stranger to the life of God through the *ignorance* that is in thee, Eph. 4:18.

3. It is one of the severest plagues, to hear and not understand, Mat. 13:15, For the Lord usually gives up such, 1. To strong delusions in matter of doctrine and judgement, to receive anything but truth, 2 Thes. 2:10. 2. To vile affections, and outrageous lusts in conversation, Rom. 1:16.

Motives to careful hearing, four.

Plagues of them that hear and understand not.

To a just damnation, for receiving the grace of God in vain, and for neglecting so great salvation, Hcb. 2:3.

4. Consider we what it is we are called unto; namely, *to hear and understand*, as our Savior exhorts, Mat. 15:10. *Understand what is the good and acceptable will of God*, Rom. 12:2. Else all our and your labor is lost: as Neh. 8:8, It had been vain for *Nehemiah* to read in the book of the law distinctly, and give the sense, unless he make the people *understand the reading*.

Objet. 1. But I am a simple man, and want^a that capacity that other men have: I am not book-learned; but I mean well, and have a good heart, and I hope God will accept my good meaning.

Ans^w. 1. This is certain, that *without understanding the mind is not good*, Prov. 19:2. God accounts not the man or mind good, that cares not to understand his Word. 2. Simplicity gives no dispensation to be the worst hearer, or destitute of desire after knowledge: And remember one thing, that if you be too simple in some good measure to know and understand the Word of God, you are too simple to get to heaven: the God of light cannot accept an ignorant and blind meaning for a goad mind and meaning. 3. See whether you be not more heedless than simple, and so your simplicity be willful: None so blind, as he that will not see. Do you shut your eyes, and then say you cannot see; or stop your ears, and say you cannot hear with understanding? Do you indeed attend as you would to your learned Counsel, when your free-hold is calling into question? 4. Try yourself, whether your conceit fails you more in the things of God, than in the matters of the world. Perhaps you shall find your wit quick and nimble enough at a good and safe bargain. You have reach enough to fetch in the profits of the world, are subtle enough to circumvent your brother, and wise enough to do evil. Now must you blame yourself for want of attention, and affection, not for want of capacity. 5. Suppose you be very simple, behold, God has given his Word, to the end that *simple men might understand*, Psal. 119:130. And if

Simplicity
no excuse
for bad
hearing for
5 reasons.

a. Or, lack. (H&F)

you are not book-learned, lo, he has given store of learned men, and teachers, and appointed them to teach you; and the more simple you are, the more are you bound to follow the means, and not to flatter yourself in your negligence.

Object. 2. But I have an ill memory, and cannot bring things away as many men can.

Answer. This is the common plea of our common Gospellers: they are most careless hearers, without all attention, and all is perfectly forgotten, and then they accuse God for giving them an ill memory. But, 1. Consider, O Man, how you do affect that you hear.^a Many come to hear, because they dare not open their Shops. Others, because they have nothing else to do, will go to church with their neighbors; but have no affection to that heavenly business. And now (say I) you would remember if you were affected by the Word. Your memory is sure enough at a Play. In any worldly matter you can carry away, and repeat long discourses from point to point: only here is a short memory, because of short affection. 2. Consider how you bend your wits, and attended to that which you say you cannot remember. Do you not think these are matters not so nearly concerning you to know?

Worldly matters which concern your calling, you can remember: for you think them nearly belonging unto you, and are content to be taken up wholly in them. 3. How do you attend? You sit down, sometimes hear, sometimes sleep, sometimes talk, sometimes read; and now, while you do everything but the *one thing necessary*, do you complain of an ill memory? No, it is an ill heart and disposition, a sure note of a carnal man, who yet think himself sure to be saved.

4. How do you prepare your ground? Do you pray to God to *open thine eyes*, that you may see the mysteries of his law? You say, you lack wisdom: do you ask it of God? Do you *minge the Word with faith*, without which it cannot profit? Do you attend your thoughts in hearing, that your mind be not taken up with other

a. Or, how you do love or imitate that which you hear. (H&F)

Nor a bad memory can excuse hearing.

Psal. 119:18

Heb. 4:2

matters, and by-thoughts? Alas! How can you keep that in your memory, which never comes in thy head? Lastly, do you meditate on that you have heard? How can you that neglect these means, complain for want of memory, and not of conscience?

Quest. But how shall I know that I understand the Word and am not the worst ground?

Answ. 1. In true understanding many good motions are stirred up: as 1 Cor. 14:23 when secrets of his heart are discovered, *he falls on his face, and saith, God is in you indeed.* This is one fruit of understanding. 2. A rejoicing that we have heard and understood: Neh. 8:12, *All the people rejoiced when they understood things taught.* And this joy is joined with an enquiry after that which we understand not ourselves, as in the disciples, Mat. 15:15. 3. A more cheerful assembling to the place of God's worship. Act. 3:34, *The next Sabbath all the people came to hear the Word.* 4. *A good understanding have all they that do thereafter,* Psal. 111:10, and this doing of that we know, is a special means to increase good knowledge and understanding: Joh. 7:17, *If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be from God or no.*

And the fowls of heaven devoured it up.

Here is the second, the outward cause of fruitlessness in this highway ground, arising out of the malice of the devil: so vers. 12. *Then comes the devil, and takes the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe, and be saved.* Where are three things to be considered: 1. The description of this malicious person, both by his name, and by a similitude. 2. The exercise of his malice: *he cometh.* 3. The end of his coming; threefold: 1. to steal the Word, 2. to hinder faith, 3. to bereave men of salvation.

In the person so malicious, we have 1. his name: 2. the similitude.

His *names* are three in the three Evangelists. *Matthew* calls him *the evil one*, chap. 13:19. *Mark* calls him *Satan, or the enemy*, chap. 4:15, and our Evangelist calls him *a devil*; that is, an accuser of the brethren. Lay these together, and

Four notes
of true un-
derstanding
the Word.

The latter
cause of un-
fruitfulness.

Parts, 3.

Names of
him that
spoil his
seed.

then observe, 1. That being *an evil one*, he is full of evil in himself, the author, of much evil in others, and one that delights himself in the evil, both of sin and punishment, in others. 2. In that he is *an enemy* to us, he must needs intercept all the means of our good, and tempt us to fruitless hearing, by which he hinders us of the greatest good that God offers unto us. 3. In that he is a *devil*, that when he has prevailed against us, and made us careless hearers, he will then accuse us for such hearing: A just recompense of him who while he pretends a service to God, yet performs it to the devil.

The *similitude*, whereby he is described, will acquaint us yet further with our danger: being called *the fowls of heaven*; that is, of the air, the lowest of the *three heavens*. In these respects: 1. They are many, and seek to overthrow us by multitude: there be not so many birds flying in the air, as wicked spirits: the prince that bears rule *in the air*, has his troops and *legions* to command into one man, if God permit him: as in that example, Mark 5:9, Luk. 8:30. 2. They be *fowls of heaven*; that is, of the air, above us, have advantage of the place: Eph. 6:12, spiritual wickedness *in high places*. We can no more hinder them from us, than we can the birds from flying in the heavens above us. 3. As the fowls or birds are swift and nimble, and naturally in the element lighter and of more agility than other creatures: So the wicked spirits are more quick, and most swift and speedy in their mischievous motions against us: they fly swifter than Eagles from place to place, to prevent us everywhere in the means of our good. Their subtle, sly, and invisible natures can easily over-match our gross, heavy, and earthly mold; who can no way make party good against them, but by incessant watch against them. 4. They are as the birds, greedy and devouring: that look as hungry birds sometimes by whole flights^a follow the Seeds-man, and except great care be taken, will pick up and devour his seed well-near so fast as he can sow it; even so a whole flight of devils follow God's seedsman, and frequent the ministry, that where the Word is sown, it shall presently

Reasons
why wicked
spirits are
compared
to fowls of
heaven, 4.
2 Cor. 12:2

a. Or, flocks. (H&F)

presently be picked up, if present care be not had to cover it: Not a seed shall lie uncovered, but one of these hellish birds or other presently devours it.

We have decried the malicious person: Now for the exercise of his malice, it is said, he comes: which is observed by all the Evangelists, and therefore by us.

In this coming of Satan, consider, 1. Whither, 2. When, 3. How he comes.

1. Whither comes he? *Answ.* He comes to church, he is no Recusant himself, though he make a number. He comes to church diligently. He fears not the holiness of the place. He fears not the consecration of it to the worship of God. He fear no ringing of bells, no holy water, no kind of crosses in the place, or in the face: Nay, he fear not the consecrated Host, nor Crucifix, no nor if Christ's own blessed presence were there. He presumes into the *holy city*. He glides into paradise. Nay, while our Savior is now preaching this parable to this multitude, he comes with his whole train and flight of devils. Let us therefore expect and prepare to meet with foulest spirits in the holiest places. Fowls flock not so fast after the sower, as Satan to the place of the ministry.

2. When comes he? *Answ.* *Whensoever any man hears the Word of the Kingdom.* Mat. 13:19. 1. *When any man.* He fears no person, nor spares him. He comes to *Adam* and *Eve* in innocency, when they had heard the Word of the Lord. He comes and stands *among the children of God*; that is, the holy Angels. None so good, but Satan may hope to win him to hear unprofitably. None so bad, but Satan thinks him good enough to wait on: for if he comes to the Word, he fears he may lose him: for he knows, that as bad have been won by it.^a 2. He comes then when the *Word of the Kingdom is preached*; that is, such doctrines as tend to bring men to the kingdom of God: Oh this touches his free-hold, and makes him bestir himself where God's Word is soundly and sincerely preached. Let a man deliver corrupt, erroneous, or frivolous doctrine, the devil makes not such hast, unless to make way for it: But, come

a. Or, that persons, whatever their state, have been won to repentance by the hearing of the Word; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom 10:17 (H&F)

Satan comes to church though he makes others stay at home.

Mat. 4:5

Satan comes for several reasons when men hear the Word.

Job 1:6

to a conscionable and fruitful ministry, be sure to find him there, or he will be sure to find you. 3. Satan highes^a him to these places at this time, because he knows, now being at so good an exercise, men least fear him, and think him farther off, but indeed now he is nearest: for he knows, that then is the time for an enemy to work his greatest stratagem, when he finds his adversary most secure, and least expecting it. Therefore our text says, *Whensoever a man*, that is, *any man heareth*, then comes Satan: he is busy with everyone, but lo, as you may not conceive him so busy with others, as that he will pass over you.

Use. Take notice hereby of his diligence and vigilance, who is not only busy and stirring in evil and wicked actions, to thrust them forward, but even in the best actions; which if he cannot hinder, he will corrupt and deprave, if it may be. Most will confess, being detected of some evil action, Oh it was the devil who was busy with me, he owed me a spite: but few discern how busy and spiteful he is in good actions, to hinder God of so much glory, and the godly of much comfort in such actions as he cannot hinder.

3. How comes Satan to take away the Word? *Answ.* The Word shows, that Satan is not always present, nor always tempting. Not because he wants will, but because God suffers him not always. But howsoever, he will sure be with us in the hearing of the Word, above all other times. And so he comes, sometimes inwardly, sometimes outwardly.

Inwardly: 1. In many roving by-thoughts, which filling the phantasy, turn the mind quite from the business in hand. He calls into the mind some thoughts of profit, some of pleasure, or some vain and idle cogitations, that run up and down the mind, and all to draw the heart away from the Word. Now is the devil come, and has catcht^b the Word from you: A just recompense of him that in God's service will not give God his heart and mind, the devil mast have them.

2. In drowsiness, sleep, and heaviness, which steal away

Satan comes inwardly in several ways.

a. 'highes' - ????

b. Or, snatched. (H&F)

the mind from attention: A fearful snare of the devil, in which he hath taken many, who scarce sit down to hear, but presently are cast on a dead sleep, and we may as well speak to dead men, or the pillars they sit by, as to them; and say as the Apostle does in another abuse in the church of Corinth, *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?* So, *Have ye not beds at home to sleep in?* See you not how the devil has cast you into a nap, lest you should hear, and believe, and be saved? or that you have taken some grains too many of that hellish *opium*, which makes you sleep unto death.

1 Cor. 11:22

Object. But do you think the devil casts me asleep? I am heavy by nature, and cannot help it, and I sleep not long. *Answer.* If you were at some other exercise, as a play, or a game at cards or tables, or perhaps in your counting-house, you could wake well enough, or not be half so heavy: or if you were in the King's presence, to receive a charge from his mouth, though you were very heavy naturally. Assure yourself therefore, that Satan adds his weight, and works with your corruption: And it is not the sleep of thy body he intends, but the sleep of your mind, and of your soul unto death.

Sleepiness at church, sinful.

3. He comes in many inward suggestions, which stir up natural corruption against the Word; that if it must be heard, it may not be believed: as, 1. It is but a man that speaks; a simple, ordinary, weak, and poor man: and, if he speaks well, I can speak well too, says one. 2. You know as much as you need: and, what can he teach me which I know not? Am I not as able to judge what is fit, as he? Nay, I doubt not but I am as good as all the sermons in the world can make me. Now the devil is come apparently: for God's Spirit ever lets a man see his ignorance, his nothing. 3. What good is gotten by all this Preaching? My father lived honestly without it: And what care many of our Noblemen, and men of great account for it? And if I go to Service, and obey the King's law, and do as my neighbors do, and as my forefathers did, what more preciseness? Here now the devil is come: For no

Satanical suggestions.

Micah 2:7

suggestion of God's Spirit can extenuate the Word of God. 4. But this man (says *Ahab*) never speaks good to me, I would hear any man but this *Micah*, 1 King. 22:8. But here the devil is come; he that sent four hundred false prophets to deceive *Ahab*, would have him hear any, believe any but *Micah*, lest he should be saved. If thy heart were upright, the words of God would be *good* unto you. But you have a pathway of lusts, and you will walk to the end of them, you must swear and blaspheme, must drink and swagger, must profane the sabbath, must be an usurer, must use deceit in trading, lies in selling, must scorn zeal and grace, and run in the excess of sin, after the fashion of the world, and the devil within tells you, Why may you not? Who shall hinder you? 5. But I know many good preachers, and good men of another mind, of another practise; and though this man be earnest against it, they would not do thus, if it were so bad. Here the devil is come, who out of the opposition of corrupt teachers, and libertine doctrines, which he by them broached, would falsify the truth in your mind: dealing as a cunning fisher, who by one fish will catch another, that he may feed upon both. And he would bring you from a strait rule, to a crooked example.

Satan comes outwardly, in several ways.

Thus the devil comes *inwardly*. *Outwardly* he comes three ways.

Luke 4:20

1. By drawing the senses to outward objects; as the eye on this or that person, or object, or divert the mind from the one thing necessary: which we must watch against, and (as Christ's hearers) *fix our eyes* upon our Teacher, which greatly helps attention.

2. By the evil counsel of carnal politicians: you are a man whose conversation will be observed, you are rich, you have an office, you have respect; If you should be led away by sermons, you will be noted for a Puritan, and a favorer of such as will make little for your credit. But here the devil is come in one of his own children: Act. 13:7, *Sergius Paulus* called *Paul* and *Barnabas* to him, and desired to hear the Word of God: but *Elymas* fought to ~ turn the Deputy

from the faith. *Paul* spied the devil now come, and said, O full of all subtlety and mischief, *the child of the devil*, and enemy of all righteousness, that ceases not to pervert the strait ways of God!

3. By scoffs and reproaches of wretched men, who scorn the Word and ways of God: What, will you believe all that he says? Nay, we must not let him make fools of us. What has he to do with such and such points, our government, our callings? Let him meddle with his text, and net with us. Just like the Epicureans and Stoics, Act. 17:18, who said of *Paul*, *What will this babbler say?* He will teach us some strange things today. And by such scoffs, Satan comes to many, and hinders their faith and salvation. For as those heathen Stoics and Epicureans counted that the strangest doctrine, which taught Jesus Christ: so do Christian Epicureans that, which most directly leads unto Christ.

The third general thing proposed, is, the end of Satan's coming: which (as we heard) is three-fold: 1. To steal the Word out of the heart: 2. To hinder the hearer's faith. 3. To rob him of salvation.

For the first. As birds follow the sower, to pick up the seeds and grains that lie uncovered: so the devil haunts the assemblies of saints, to steal away the Word preached, where it is carelessly heard. The action of Satan is, to *steal* and *carry away* the Word, which is not his, but belongs to others. But not as other thieves, to convert it to his own use, but only that the right owners should not enjoy it: not to profit himself, but to dis-profit others. As for the *manner* of his action, he *steals*, that is, closely and secretly takes it away. He is a sly and privy thief. As a thief only fears to be seen and discovered: so Satan is loth to be seen, and therefore takes advantage, when we can least espy him. *He that stealeth, stealeth in the night*, as they that are drunk, are drunk in the night, 1 Thes. 5:7. He takes us in the night of our ignorance, and in the sleep of security, and spoils us most, when we can least discern it. But whence does he steal the Word? *Answ. Out of the heart.* Because of his sly and subtle nature: who being a spirit,

σπερ-
μολογος
Seed picker,
as a bird;
empty talk-
er. (H&F)

1st End:
Satan would
steal away
the Word.

Satan steals
the Word
not for his
own good
but for
our hurt.

can easily and nimbly enter into the most secret Closet of our breast. And although he cannot directly know our hearts and thoughts, which is God's privilege, yet by outward means he can give a great guess at the temper of them, and as birds can easily find when seed is uncovered, and as easily pick it up: so Satan can easily see, where men's care is not to cover and hide the Word in their hearts, when they have heard it. And, if he cannot by himself, and by violence take the Word away, if the owners will hold it: yet he can, and does take it away^a by themselves, and with their own consent and good liking: who neither were willing to give it room, or sink it deep into their hearts, nor to cover it with gracious affections; nor had any great love to it to look after it, as thinking themselves not a grain the worse, when all this seed is gone.

Why out of the heart.

And why *out of the heart*? *Ans.* 1. Because he knows, that the heart is the right furrow, in which the Word can become fruitful, therefore he uses all his skill to keep it from there, or fetch it from there. He cares not how much of the seed lie in the head, or on the tongue, so he can keep it out of the heart. For as we say, *The mind is the man*, so the heart leads the whole man, and is the lodge either of God, or the devil. 2. Because nothing but the Word puts him out of possession of the heart. The strong man holds the hold, till a stronger come. If the Word as good seed once rooted in the heart, he must away.^b Where Christ by his Word takes the heart, the prince of this World is cast out. The disciples by their powerful preaching saw Satan *fall down* like lightning from heaven. It stands him therefore in hand to bestir him, and to turn himself to all his stratagems: One principle whereof is, that if he cannot hinder you from the Word, he may hinder the Word from you: or, if he cannot hinder it from the ear, he may from the heart: or, if he cannot intercept it from the heart by catching it^c, he may defeat you of it by stealing. Note this stratagem, and do your best to prevent it.

Luke 10:18

2nd End:
Satan would
coming to
hinder faith.

His *second* end is, to hinder faith: *lest they should believe*. And why? First, he knows the Word is the parent of faith: Joh.

a. Or, cause it to be taken away by the disposition or action of the person himself. (H&F)

b. He has lost his hold upon the man, according to the word: God, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. 1:12-13. (H&F)

c. Or, snatching it away. (H&F)

17:20, Christ prays for the elect, that they might *believe through the Word of his disciples*. And the jailor and all his house believed by hearing *Paul*, Act. 16:31. Secondly, he cannot but be an enemy to our faith, and therefore winnows us as the disciples, that our faith may fail; because faith 1. Makes us the sons of God, Gal. 3:26, 2. Marries us to Jesus Christ, Hosea 2:20. 3. Makes our hearts temples of the Spirit, *purifying the heart*, Act. 15:9. 4. Makes us free entrance to God by prayer, to ask what we will, and we shall obtain, Eph. 3:12. And 5. It is our shield to resist all the darts of the devil: the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. Thirdly, if he can keep us from faith, the Word (he knows) shall be altogether *unprofitable*, Heb. 4:2, and, if he can keep this weapon from us, he easily foils us; and makes God also our adversary; because *without faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb.11:6. Hence he lays all his engines against our faith, and seeks by all means to root it out of the heart, and out of the world, if God would give him leave.

His third end is, to rob men of salvation, *lest they should be saved*.

First, Satan knows, that the *end of faith is salvation*, 1 Pet. 1:9, and that *by preaching, God saves them that believe*, 1 Cor. 1:21, if he can keep you from faith, he has robbed you of salvation. Therefore if he cannot hinder the Word, he will (if he can possibly) hinder faith. Secondly, Satan is a deadly enemy to every man's salvation: 1. Out of hatred: for the evil angels by their fall lost the love of God, of his glory, and of his image, and now hate whatsoever belongs to God. 2. Out of envy: therefore he is called in the parable, *the envious man*: He repines and envies, that man should stand in innocency which he lost; and therefore set upon *Adam* and drove him by his temptation out of paradise. And he envies more, that any man should enjoy the glory of heaven, which himself can never recover; and therefore he lays all the blocks in their way that he can devise. And as when God's people were going to *Canaan*, he stirred up many armies of the heathen against them, to make them

3rd End:
Satan would
rob men
of their
salvation.

Satan know
that the end
of faith is
salvation.

Satan why
an enemy
of man's
salvation.

fall short of that good Land; So now he raises armies of temptations, and impediments, to make us fall short of that heavenly *Canaan*, which he knows to be a good Land, and thinks too good for us. 3. Out of his contrariety to God himself. He sees God careful of his church and children, that (as a good shepherd) he uses all means to save and preserve them: therefore he clean contrarily seeks to kill and destroy them, and defeat them of that salvation which the Lord has prepared for them. And this seems to be the Apostles aim, 1 Pet. 5:7-8. *He cares for you: but watch for the devil, who as a roaring Lion seeketh to devour.*

Come to the Word with good ends and purposes.

Use 1. In that the devil comes, learn not to content yourself with coming to church, but see your end be better than his, yea, contrary to his. He comes with a purpose to hinder the power of the Word in your heart, to hinder your faith and salvation. Come thou with a purpose to set forward the power of the Word in your heart, to set forward your faith and salvation.

That the Word has been fruitful, four notes.

Quest. How may I know that the work of faith and salvation is set forward in me by the Word?

Gal. 3:24

Ans. 1. If it has brought you to the fight of your sin^a, and the sense of your danger by it. This is the first effectual work of the Word: as Christ first convinced the woman of Samaria of her adultery: and *Peter* tells the *Jews*, Act. 2, that they had slain Jesus Christ. 2. If the law being a *school-master to Christ*, has sent you out of yourself, to apprehend the remedy of the Gospel: as the jailor being cast down, said, *Oh what shall I do to be saved?* Believe in the Lord Jesus (said the Apostle) and thou shall be saved, Act. 16:30-31. This is the method of sound ministry, first, truly to humble, then to raise again. 3. If you find it a ministry of the Spirit, conveying the Spirit into your heart for the consumption of corruption, and repairing you to a new life of grace. Gal. 3:2, *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing of faith preached?* 4. If you carry it into your souls as *light into a dark place*, 2 Pet. 1:19, to follow the directions of it, and to guide your ways

a. That is, to combat the sin within your own self. (H&F)

ways according to every precept of it. If not you intend, when you come, to be led further into the fight of your sin, led nearer to Jesus Christ, to draw of his fullness, led further into the sanctification of the Spirit, and led as a blind man by the Word, certainly the Word is of power to set forward your faith and salvation, notwithstanding all Satan's malice.

Use 2. The devil knows, that faith is by hearing, and salvation by faith: 1. I would our Popish Recusants knew so much, so they would make a better use of this knowledge than to withstand both faith and hearing. 2. I wish our formal Protestants knew it, who will fear step out of doors to hear, but in policy will hear so much as they may counted no atheists, or Papists, but indifferent men, as they be too indifferent whether they hear or no. 3. I wish they knew it, who by reading at home will believe and be saved by their eyes; which are insufficient to breed faith. For God has given the sense of hearing this preeminence, Rom. 10:14, *How can they believe, unless they hear?* The sight is a sense of discipline, but hearing, the sense of faith.^a 4. I wish our atheistical scorers, who think they know so much, as they contemn the ministry, that they knew as much as the devil: then would they not bar and excommunicate themselves so wilfully from the means of faith and salvation: they would not turn away the ear, if they knew that faith were dropped in by the ear. 5. I would our careless and sleepy hearers knew it, who shut the door of faith, lest they should be saved. Neither will God open their hearts as *Lydia* by the Word, who shut their ears. 6. I wish they also would learn a lesson from the devil, who content themselves to live in dry and barren places, destitute of the means of faith and salvation; as Lot, who chose Sodom, for the fruitlessness of the ground, before Canaan; and delight in the hills of Samaria among Idolatrous Papists, rather than in Sion Hill among true worshippers. I am sure thou would choose to dwell with the Lord hereafter; than choose to dwell now where the Lord dwells. In a word:

Let us all persuade ourselves of that, whereof the devil himself

a. This is, of course, an unwarrantably strict sense of the text and of the English law that instituted the preaching of the Gospel in the churches. The law was intended for society, for knowledge, and for the expelling of the darkness of medieval superstition, but never for enslavement. The statement is contemptible for the excess by which the ministry is exalted above the Word itself. We have in all scripture an absolute equality of the faith that comes by hearing or reading (ex.: Isa. 34:16; Mat. 13:13; 22:31; 2 Thes. 2:15; Heb. 8:11), for all is by "the Word" and the understanding is of God. Faith itself is the gift of God; neither are the deaf or the unborn excluded from faith, as if faith failed upon the actual hearing of "the Word." (H&F)

Joh. 1:16.
(H&F)

Many think not so well of the Word, as do the devil.

1.
2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

The sentiment herein expressed is only a proof against itself; let it be an exhortation to Christians who read it, that it is the Word that we should run to to verify with our eyes what the preacher or minister has spoken into our ears!
(H&F)

himself doubts not: 1. That God hath appointed hearing for the engendering of Faith: For as by hearing the devil's voice, we lost our faith and happiness; so the Lord has appointed by hearing his voice again, as the most convenient means, to recover faith and salvation.^a 1 Cor. 1:21, *It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* And he has tied faith and salvation to preaching, both by precept and promise, and tied us to them, though himself be free. We have no other ordinary means. 2. We would rate ourselves, if we should carelessly or wilfully loss our money or gold, or flip the means of getting or increasing them: but behold, faith is much more precious than gold, 1 Pet. 1:7, and salvation far more precious than faith. If it were a small thing to lose faith, yet it is something to lose salvation, and more, to lose it so wilfully.

Use 3. Seeing Satan comes to church to steal the Word, know, that you never come to church, but Satan an enemy, a thief, comes with you, to rob you of the Word, of the treasure of faith, and bereave you of life everlasting: Therefore deal with him as with a thief. 1. Suspect him, trust him not; only a watchful eye prevents an untrusty fellow. 2. Lock that you hear, from him: keep the Word in a safe place, under lock and key, hide it in the midst of your heart, Psal. 119.11, cover this heavenly seed.

Motives, 1. Thus we do for our money: we are careful of our Evidences, Jewels, Plate, and things of worth: let us also esteem the Word (as *David*) *above thousands of gold and silver.* 3. Natural wisdom teaches a man, if he have some special Jewels, and knows he has thieves about him, not to leave them abroad, or lay them in the way of a cunning thief, from whom he can scarce, by all his care, keep them. 3. Satan cannot steal, if you have not your wealth abroad: Therefore do for the Word, as for your seed in thy field: the husbandman, so soon as he has cast it, covers it with the plough or harrow, and so prevents the picking up of birds: so must you cover the seed of the Word in the furrows of your affections, and lay it deep in the ground of your heart, by furious attention, meditation, conference,

a. We must remember that God appointed our salvation before man existed, before the world was created, and before the devil took in hand to destroy God's creation through lies (1Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit 1:2, 1Pet. 1:20, etc.). (H&F)

Thou never comes to church, but Satan comes with thee.

Motives to watch against him, three.

practice: Else if the seed lie on the ground, uncovered, uncared for, these birds presently pick up all to your loss and sin.

3. If thou perceive that this thief has stolen away the Word from you, follow him with hue and cry, repent your sin, lament your loss, complain to God, pray you may recover the loss, and prevent the like for time to come.

Quest. How may I know the devil has robbed me of the Word?

Ans. 1. If after much plain and powerful preaching and hearing you have learned little. Many will commend sermons, where the devil gets all from them. Many commend the preacher, he is a good man, never man spoke so, etc., bless God for him, and bless the time he ever came among them: But what have you learned? Here they have nothing to say, but they hope they take good, because he is a good man. Now we have found an highway ground: hellish birds have picked up all.

2. If you are capable in other things, and incapable here; as many are quick in all their business, and can carry away difficult discourses of worldly matters, which they are affectionate and attentive unto; but cannot carry away, either in their understanding or memory, a point of necessary doctrine, because they have no pleasure in it, the devil keeps them from profit by it.

3. If being incapable and silly in other things, they are witty and subtle for maintaining of sins and lusts. A plain case, the devil is their teacher, and will not permit them any other Master. Many come to church, and after twenty years hearing are very blocks,^a having got nothing but some texts of scripture, wrested to maintain their sins.

Use 4. Seeing Satan lays all his plots to get the Word, or keep it *out of the heart*, we in coming to hear, must especially labor to get and keep it in our hearts. Prov. 3: 3, *Write my words on the table of thine heart.* And chap. 4, 4. *Let thy heart hold fast my words.* And vers. 21, *Keep them in the midst of thy heart.* As *Mary* pondered Christ's speeches in her heart.

a. That is, they are no more profiteth by it, like dull, insensible or empty persons. (H&F)

3.

3. Notes to know that the devil has robbed you of the Word.
1.

2.

3.

Six Motives
to lay the
Word upon
and in our
hearts.

Jam. 1:21

Why
most men
continue
brutishly
ignorant
after long
hearing.

Now that we may thus lay the Word to our hearts, and apply our hearts to it, 1. Consider and meditate on the great Majesty of God, whose Word it is: that we may hear it not as the word of man, but of God, 1 Thes. 2:13, spiritual, and binding the conscience, and one word or tittle whereof can never fail. 2. Consider the matter it, Jesus Christ, and salvation by him. In the Word preached, behold Christ crucified. Gal. 3:1. 3. Consider the power, use, and end of it; that it is the power of God to salvation, and *able to save our souls*, if it be ingrafted. 4. Consider that it is the same Word which binds or looses us for the present, and shall *judge* us at the last day, Joh.12:48. 5. Make room in the heart be forehand, by bewailing those sins which may keep back God's blessing, or stuff^a the heart. Thrust out all sin, and all purpose of sinning. Put not sweet liquor into susty^b vessels. 6. Apply we all to ourselves in particular, not to others, as *Adam* posts it to *Eve*, and she to the Serpent. And so long apply, till it be fastened in the heart. And then it is fastened, when the promises are believed, the threats feared, the precepts sincerely obeyed.

Use 5. This shows us what is the reason, why most men, after long hearing, continue ignorant and brutish as at first. They can give no answer to the articles of faith, can render no account of so many precepts delivered plainly and profitably, cannot remember of 500 sermons, scarce so many words. Is not now the Word of power to teach and instruct them? Yes; but 1. The heart is a barren and highway ground, paved by Satan: no seed can spear or sprout in it. Yet these most boast of the goodness of their hearts. 2. A flight of devils has lighted on our congregations, and almost picked up all. A man that having laid up money in a Chest, finds none when he comes again, will say, Surely the thief has been here. So we may say, The devil hash been here. 3. A just revenge of God it is on careless hearers, to set the devil in their necks, to steal and catch away all the Word that they set so lightly by, lest they should believe and be saved. Would you avoid this revenge of God? Then be advised: As Abraham drove away the birds that

a. ftuffe - ????

b. susty - ????

troubled him in his sacrificing, Gen. 15:11. So drive you away these hellish birds that trouble you in thy hearing; by preparation, attention, meditation, prayer, and practice. And thus, though you cannot hinder these birds from flying about your head, yet you shall give them no room to nest or rest in your heart.

So much of the first ground. Now to the second.

V E R S . 6 , *And some fell on stones, and when it sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

The second sort of ground.

Here consider three things: 1. The kind of soil; *some fell on stones*: 2. The success of the seed in it: In the beginning hopeful and commendable, *it sprung up*; In the end doleful and lamentable, *it withered away*. 3. The reason of that uncomfortable success, *it lacked moisture*.

The soil is *the stones*; or stony ground: vers. 13. *They which are on the stones, are such as hear the Word, etc.* A kind of bad hearers, compared to stones, or stony ground. 1. For their natural hardness, which cannot be broken, nor softened. 2. For their coldness: not warmed with the heat of the Sun of Righteousness, nor the Spirit of God, but abide cold as stones. 3. For their heaviness: A stone will not easily be removed out of his place: his proper Center the earth: Cast him by main strength as high as may be imagined, and let him alone, he will fall to the earth again. So these hearers are not easily moved out of their natural corruption; but move them, and lift them violently up by the ministry, log they stay not, but down they fall to the earth, and earthy things, which is their proper place and element. 4. For their unprofitableness and resistance of the fruits of the earth; for as stonyness of ground by the curse upon man's sin, became very noisome to the fruits of the earth; so the stonyness of the heart, apart of the curse, more hinders fruits of grace, than any stony ground can hinder seed cast into it. 5. As stony ground, and common

Bad hearers compared to stony ground in 5 things.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

stones are little esteemed, but rejected of men: so this stony ground is as little respected of God.

Yet herein our hard hearts are worse than stones: they increase not their hardness; but ours is daily increased by wilfulness and perverseness.

Stony
ground
commend-
able in four
things.

Now to the success of the seed in this stony ground: and first, the hopeful and commendable, in the beginning: *it sprung up*. Which implies that of *Matthew*, chap. 13:20. *He which heareth the Word, and incontinently with joy receiveth it*. Where we have four things considerable. 1. This bad ground *receiveth* the Word: wherein they go beyond the former hearers, who only heard the Word, but left it as soon as they heard it; let the devil, or any devouring bird eat it and take it from them, they care not. The former gave it hearing; but cared not to understand it: these receive it attentively, and seem greedily to digest it. They did not one whit affect it^a: these receive it into their affections. 2. This bad ground receives it *incontinently* (saith *Matthew*;) when God speaks, they will hear, and without delays or excuses, willingly receive when God proffers^b. They seem to know their season and seedtime: and is it not commendable in Christianity to know the day of visitation? Or how can he expect a crop in harvest, that sleeps and trifles away his seedtime? And surely we cannot but commend such as esteem the Word worthy of present entertainment, and in comparison of it, undervalue inferior things and occasions, which would put off the present receiving of it. Where note by the way, that *bad hearers may think the Word a matter of haste, and weight, and importance*. 3. These bad hearers and stony ground receive it *with joy*. They are no scorers, or railers on the preachers, but give their ministers great reverence; as *Herod* did *John Baptist*. They hate neither *Micah* nor his message, but hear gladly, and give the Word good words, and good welcome; they rejoice in the Word, and receive it with good hearts; confer of it willingly, rejoice in their travail and pains to hear the Word, conceive great joy in the remembrance of several points, as distinctly as they hear them, are exceeding

Note: Bad
hearers
think the
Word a
matter
of haste,
weight and
importance.

a. That is, to love or imitate it. (H&F)

b. That is, when God offers. (H&F)

glad and desirous of means of sound instruction. Alas that all this should be bad hearers, and never a whit nearer their salvation, but in the state of damnation. 4. This stony ground brings up the seed sown: *it sprung up*, says our text. This seed of the Word rises up, and appears, and seems to tend toward heaven, shooting up from earth.

1. It rises to external obedience, and reformation of many, (perhaps) most things; as *Herod* did many things for *John*. *Judas* received this seed, it sprung up in him, that he not only understood and preached the mystery of the Gospel, but carried himself in an honest and reformed conversation a long time, so as the other disciples could not detect him. 2. The seed springs up to an outward profession, as those that hope to be saved by it, and so to an outward fellowship and communion with the saints, in the Word, sacraments, and many other godly exercises, both public and private. 3. It springs up in the stony ground to a kind of faith, which has in it not an enlightening only, but a *taste of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come*, by which they are *partakers of the Holy Spirit*; that is, something they have so like true sanctification, that both themselves and others may think them truly sanctified. And yet these so bad hearers, as they may, so sometimes do fall into that irrecoverable sin against the Holy Spirit, Heb. 6:4-5, and as our text, yet *they withered away*: as some of the Israelites tasted of the fruits of the land of Canaan, and did thereby perceive what a good land it was, and desired part in it, and conceived good hope of enjoying and possessing it, yet never enjoyed it, but perished in the wilderness.

The seed springs up in stony ground to sundry degrees.

Heb. 6:4-5

A bad hearer may go far in Christianity

Learn hence, how far a bad hearer may go in Christianity. A man may hear the Word with diligence, receive it with joy, believe with some assurance, grow up to high places in the profession of religion, bring forth fruits of commendable obedience, and all this while be bad ground, and in damnable estate. See it more distinctly in these four degrees.

Doctr.
A bad hearer may go far in Christianity.

Four Degrees.

1. Reprobates may be forward hearers, hungry and desirous

hearers, so to glad hear, as, if they have not the Word at home, they will with zeal and forwardness seek it a broad, Joh. 6:34. The Jews hearing Christ speak of bread from heaven, and such as giveth life to the world, flocked after him everywhere, and with earnest desire say, *Lord, give us evermore this bread*, and yet many of them fell away from him, vers. 66.

2. They may be joyful hearers, *receive the Word with joy*, as our text has it. Act. 26:28, *Agrippa* having heard *Paul* delivering the sum of the Gospel, and of the strange manner both of his own conversation, and of man's salvation, by Christ's humility and glory, ravished with the excellency of it, cries, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*. And of *John's* hearers, our Savior says, *Ye rejoiced in his light for a season*, Joh. 5:35.

3. They may be believing hearers for a time: so says the text, *which fir a while believe*, and according to *Matthew*, *endure as believers for a time*. They are verily persuaded of the truth of the whole doctrine of salvation, that every word shall be accomplished in the salvation of believers, and just condemnation of unbelievers. They believe, it alone teaches the right way to heaven. Of *Simon Magus* it is said, Act. 8:13, that *he believed*, and was baptized: not that he had true faith, (for even then *Peter* saw him in the gall of bitterness, and band of iniquity:) but he yielded to the doctrine of Christ which *Philip* taught, and behaved himself as if he had believe indeed, and had been a disciple of Christ.

4.
The growth
of bad
hearers.

1.
Num. 23:10

4. They may be growing hearers: 1. To a great measure of illumination: *Balaam*, a wretched sorcerer,^a was enlightened so far as to see the blessed estate of God's people, and desirous to partake of their happiness, he cried out in great passion, *Oh that mysoul might die the death of the righteous!* *Judas*, a wretched Traitor, and son of perdition, could never have preached the Gospel, without a great measure of the illumination in himself. 2. They may grow to a great place in the profession; as *Judas* to follow Christ himself at the heels, and call him Master. 3. To a great

2.

3.

a. Balaam was not a sorcerer but a prophet; but, as prophets are subject to "like passions as we," (Jam 5:17), so he was overcome of that he loved most, as it is said of him: "who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity" 2 Pet. 2:16. The reader can examine the state of Balaam in Num. 22-24. (H&F)

measure of reformation of life, and obedience to the Gospel: being in the same pastures with the sheep of Christ, he is taken for a sheep, when indeed he is a goat for a time in the same fold with sheep.

Reasons. 1. Men may be drawn to hear gladly; where faith is not, for illumination sake, or enlightening sake. *It is a pleasant thing* (says Solomon) *to behold the light of the sun.* There is a great force and power in the light, to draw all men's eyes after it: So is there power and force in the Word soundly taught, to draw men's affections of joy and delight, at least for a time. And even natural men also, who are of quick apprehension, can rejoice to hear deep points learnedly and soundly opened, and cases of conscience, or questions of religion soundly discussed, Mat. 12:37, When our Savior disputed with the scribes and Pharisees, and *put them to silence*, it is said, *much people heard him gladly.* No marvel then is it, if supernatural illumination, (although a common gift) bring men with much joy to here the Word: for, is it not a joyful thing to hear of the way of salvation, and of so many promises, and eternal happiness after this life? Who would not come running, as gladly as the young man, to hear he should be saved, who not liking the conditions, went away as heavily? So, who will not throng and thrust after a pleasing preacher, or so long as he dwells in promises? If a preacher pipe, the profanest will dance. But if he come to the law, oh they cannot abide to hear of damnation, and, he has nothing but damnation in his mouth, I will not hear him.

Eccles. 11:7

2. A man may go thus far in Christian duties, and be bad ground, by a delusion, and mistaking his own estate: namely, by a false conception of faith, or an unsound apprehension of the excellency of Jesus Christ, and the blessed estate of believers united unto him. An hypocrite may see what is the comfort of remission of sins: what a tranquility and heaven in earth it is, to have a good conscience, washed and sprinkled in the blood of the Lamb: what an happiness to have free access to God in prayer, to live with God, and enjoy him here below. But he sees it in others not

in himself: and he will go a great way to have part in them, and lay out something for them: but he will not be at so much either cost or pains for them as they are worth, and as he must pay before he has them.

Temporary
faith raised
on tempo-
rary causes.

3. A man may be carried a great way in temporary faith, for temporary causes, and self-respects; which respects as they fail, so also must his faith and hopes.

1.

One is curiosity and novelty. A new preacher, or some new strange matter, never heard of before, draws a number of men to hear gladly: And how they profess they will keep their church, and not misle^a: For they never go, but they know that they never knew before. So the Athenians (Act. 17:20) will hear *Paul* preach, and enquire the meaning of his doctrine, because they say, *he brought strange things to their ears*, and their life was to *hear and tell news*. But Athenians grow weary both of that matter and man, who ceases to be new. And unthankful Israelites, when manna first comes, admire it, rejoice in it, feed upon it, grow strong by it: Why? Because it is a strange kind of meat. But afterward they murmur, and loath it, because not new, tho it was every day new.

2.

A second self-respect, that may make a man diligent in the means, is pride and conceit. They desire knowledge, and rejoice to get it, not to edify themselves (which were wisdom:) nor to edify others (which were charity:) but that themselves may be known to be somebody, (which is mere vanity). If the world honor the profession of the Gospel, they will share in that honor. If it will credit them amongst men to profess the Gospel, and live according to it outwardly, they will do it. *Judas* himself can fashion himself outwardly to the holiest disciples. A Pharisee can fast and pray, and give alms, to be seen and praised of men. Many Pharisaical Protestants can play on both hands, or (as we say) fast and loose: In some company can speak good words, commend good men, speak of some good notes of sermons, confess ad condemn many of his own courses, and take hold on the better end of the staff; the same man (as it not the same man) in another

a. Archaic: misle or drizzle, perhaps, as to fall off in force. (H&F)

company can be as loose, as scornful, and apparently hateful of goodness as ever before.

A third self-respect is worldly profit. So long as men may hope to be gainers by Christ, so long they will follow joyfully: as the Jews after that Christ had fed them with bread, he could never be rid of them, but they followed him from place to place, but neither for his doctrine nor miracles, nor for himself, *because of the loaves*, Joh. 6:26. Profit and preferment will make a man hear diligently, profess openly, preach painfully, at least till the preferments or profits choke both preachers and professors. But Christ, if he bring no loaves, shall fail of much of his company. How far did *Demas* go in his profession, that the Apostle *Paul* reckons him among the saints who saluted the Colossians, chap. 4:14? but all this was for some preferment, which when he got, *Paul* changed his note, *Demas hath forsaken me, and embraced the present world*. If ever the complaint was just, it is now of Christians. *All men seek their own*: and as *Augustine* in his time complained, *Vix quaritur Iesus, proper Iesum, Scarce any seek Christ for Christ his sake*. But our wisdom will be to seek Iesus for Iesus, that is, salvation. Seek him for that end he came into the world; not to make you rich in the world, or heir of the earth, but to enrich you with grace, of justification, and of sanctification, and make you heir of eternal life.

So much of the third Reason.

4. God sees it fit, that hypocrites should go thus far in the way of salvation, and yet fall short: 1. Because he will have his own ways justified, and allowed by his very enemies: Even they shall give him witness, both by word and deed, that it is the best way, though they cannot hold it. 2. Hereby he cuts off all cause of judging others before the time. You cannot judge between a sheep and a goat: only the chief Shepherd can. 3. Seeing it befalls reprobates to be esteemed and go for good Christians, and be so like none can discern them, he will have us hereby take occasion to judge ourselves, what ground we are, and go to the balance of his Word, and make just trial

3.

2 Tim. 4:20

Phil. 2:21

3 Reasons why hypocrites go so far.

1.

2.

3.

whether we hold weight or no, whether we be found, and differenced by true marks of Christianity from apparent Christians.

Use. How may this doctrine daunt and terrific many of us, who take ourselves to be in good estate, when yet we are not comparable to this bad ground? whom yet if we come short of, we must needs come short of salvation. If the ground that goes thus far, shall be damned, what damnation abides such as come not half way with them? More especially:

Numbers
come short
of many
that come
short of sal-
vation, as in
4 instances.

1. Do we see a stony heart receive the Word speedily and hungrily? See we here a graceless ground and heart swift to hear, and painful in travail to get the Word soundly taught? What then shall become of us, that are in no readiness, make no haste to receive? to whom the small time of an hour in a week is tedious, while we sit at our ease. Shall forward hearers be condemned, and the backward in hearing approved?
2. If we see some that attend the Word, love it, and find sweetness in it, yet shall be kept out of heaven; how can contemners, railers, persecutors, (notwithstanding they hear) hope to get in, where many that have attended, remembered, and marked, yea, and come to a great measure of knowledge by it, shall be shut out?
3. If we see in our text, that many who are much affected with the Word, who have received the same with joy, and delighted many times to confer of it by day, and meditate of it by night: (for who will not speak and think often on that which joys his heart?) if (I say) we see here a rocky heart, relenting and rejoicing at the Word, yet shut out of heaven; what may we think of many of our drowsy hearers, who are no more moved, almost, than the seats they sit on, or the stones in the pavement? They are not terrified by denunciation of all the judgements of God, which are their own portion: not comforted with promises though they falsely conceive them their own: but as the froward Jews, Mat. 11:17, are like froward children: whether they be piped or mourned unto, they be all one, moved with neither.

4.

4. See we in our text a great many, who grow up by the Word, and by their delight and diligence are furnished with a great measure of knowledge (that they can fruitfully confer of the scriptures, they can try doctrines by scripture, and judge between truth and falsehood, yea they are grown up to a glorious profession, with much zeal and forwardness: and not only so, but to such a reformation as they seem thoroughly sanctified, make much of ministers, and be at coft^a to any good purpose, and as forward as any:) and yet with more than all this be bad ground, and reprobate? Alas! what then shall become of a multitude of our careless and forgetful hearers, of our brutish and senseless hearers, who are resolved to remain so? What of these barren hearts, whose fallow grounds the Lord hath plowed up, sowed on them the seeds of eternal life, watered them with continual dews of heaven, and looks for the fruit of obedience, but reaps only tares and cursed fruits of ignorance, wilfulness, opposition of sincerity, scorn of his faithful ministers, and contemning of his grace offered unto them.

Oh my brethren, if ever you were furious in any thing concerning your good, think furiously of this one point. And if God ever made me able to speak to your hearts, Oh that I could carry this point in, and reach the hearts of you all! Or rather let the Lord, who made your hearts, take this his own honor, and speak so as they may hear: That numbers of you come short of these bad hearers, and that multitudes of reprobates in the day of the Lord, shall rise up in judgement to condemn many of us, who never receive the Word so readily, so hungrily, so painfully, so joyfully, so fruitfully as they have done. That numbers of cursed caitiffs shall be able to say more for their own salvation, than numbers of us: They shall be able to say, *Lord, we have stepped many a mile to hear thy Word; we have carefully attended, marked, remembered, meditated, conferred, and applied it: It was our joy and delight to gain the knowledge of holy things, and to our knowledge we joined zeal, forwardness and reformation: We professed they name, suffered*

a. coft - ?????

many things for our profession, loved thy house, revered thy ministers, and would have parted with our eyes to have done them good: Also we were liberal to the poor saints, and to other good purposes. Can you say thus much for yourself? If you cannot, you come behind a castaway: If you can, you are not yet before a reprobate: And, if he that cannot say more, shall never come to heaven, how shall he come there that cannot say half so much? Why should we not hence shame ourselves, that reprobates, and such as heaven shall be shut against, are so far before us? Can we have comfort or hope in such an estate as is outstripped by hopeless and damned hypocrites?

This doctrine freed from exception.

Object. What, do you mean to drive as all to despair? Is this the way to teach us the assurance of our salvation, to which you so often call us? Can we be assured by such a desperate and uncomfortable doctrine?

Luke 12:29

Answer. 1. This doctrine seems harsh and uncomfortable to such as fain would presume of a good estate, but have no good cause, or ground. Such as would hang like *meteors* in the air, between hope and doubt, leaving the assurance and good evidence to such as care for it, are by this doctrine discarded and disappointed: And yet not driven to despair by it, because God hath appointed a means to draw them out of the danger and despair of their perfect estate, by Jesus Christ, and the sincere embracing of the means of salvation and assurance.

2. This doctrine directly intends the most assured comfort and consolation of God's children, which will hold out in the day of trial, because it enforces the Christian to soundness in his course, and to run his race of Christianity *not as at uncertainty*, 1 Cor. 9:26, which is indeed most uncomfortable. It forces him to diligence in proving himself: and suffers him not to stay where bad hearers do, but to go further, even so far as they cannot come.

A furious examination whether we have gotten beyond hypocrites in four things.

Use 2. Seeing many shall seek so diligently to enter, and shall not be able, Luk.13:24, let us furiously examine ourselves, and prove, whether we go beyond the scantling^a of reprobates in hearing. We see how many great things they attain

a. scantling - ?????

unto, who by them never attain to eternal life; and many hope to attain eternal life, who never attain such gifts as many wicked men have. But for our assurance of salvation, let us sift our hearts to the bottom, and gage these hollow vessels, and not content ourselves in any of these gifts, till we can say in truth, *Herein I go beyond a reprobate, never could hypocrite attain this.*

Here for our better furtherance in so weighty a business, I will enter into a more special examination of these four things. 1. Of desires. 2. Of illumination. 3. Of joy. 4. Of growth by the Word. In trial whereof we shall the better judge of our own soundness.

I. Examine your desires after God and his Word, in these particulars:

1. In the *ground* of them: Then only are they gracious and acceptable, first, when you have proved and discerned that the doctrine is of God, and yield not to it in any other respect, but as to the authority of God: And secondly, when you have prized the thing desired, above all that may be compared with it, and so taking your heart from all other things, bestowed it only on it as the chief good. This an hypocrite cannot do. He may attain a desire, but it is altogether ungrounded. This stony ground desires, and receives the seed immediately, indeed too hastily, (the desire being *an heritage hastily gotten*;) either out of simpleness, and levity, and lightness in believing, as Prov. 14:5, *The fool believes everything*: and they yield presently, without any good warrant. Or out of policy and warmness, for indirect and present respects, they so consent to the truth, as that they are as ready to confess to error, if it be delivered with any shew, or urged on them by superiors. The wind drives not the clouds about more usually, then are these windy Professors with winds of doctrine.

This therefore you must do in the first place: Look that you desire be thus soundly grounded. It was the commendation of the Bereans, that they *received the Word with all readiness*, but so, as they *sought the scriptures*, and knew them to be so. And let us do in our way to heaven, as

I. In holy desires. For,

Their ground.

Two notes of soundness.

Prov. 20:21

Act. 17:11

Peter in his way to Macedonia, Act. 16:10. After he saw a vision, he immediately prepared to go into Macedonia, being *assured the Lord had called us* unto them .

Their matter: which is twofold.

2. Examine your desires in the *matter* of them: which is twofold: 1. In respect of God the chief good: 2. In respect of the Word, the means to it.

For the first. An hypocrite may desire happiness, as *Balaam*, for self-love; but properly desires not the love of God for itself. See therefore that your desire be rather of rather of *reconciliation* than *salvation*: rather to glorify God, than be glorified of him: esteeming the light of his countenance better than life itself. This is a pure and holy desire after grace and favor, above all things.

How the word ought to be desired.

For the second. 1. You must desire not the Word so much, as God in his Word: seek after the living God in his ordinances: love him in the Word, who there shows he loved you first. Many profess love to the Word, who love not God. 2. Desire the *Word of the Kingdom* for the kingdom's sake. For an hypocrite may desire the Word of the Kingdom for fear of hell. 3. Desire the whole Word. An hypocrite may desire some part of it: the promises affect and ravish him, but the conditions are distasteful. God's indulgences and recompenses please him wonderfully, but restraints and impositions are burdensome and tedious. Therefore see you desire the conditions as well as the promises, and love the work of the Word as well as the wages; yea, if there were no wages: so cannot he.

Their ends

3. Examine your desires in the *end* of them: thus: 1. An hypocrite may desire the Word for science sake, not for conscience; to puff himself up, not to humble himself; for discourse, not for direction. If you desire the Word to learn self-denial, to yield conscionable obedience in all things, and to take the constant direction of it, as Israel by the pillars in all their journeys, you are beyond any hypocrite. 2. Hypocrites may desire the Word to be like the children of God in happiness, but not in sincere obedience; to meet them at the end; and be saved, but not to join with them in the means; or, if they do join in the means, it

is by starts and fits for the most part, and unconstantly. See your desire be to keep the way, as well, as the end of it, though it be all strewed with crosses: and be as desirous of the means of the end: Especially desire the Word as a constant light, direction, comfort, and strength: For such are the groans and desires of the Spirit. An hypocrite likes heaven well, but not the way to heaven.

4. Examine your desires in the *companions and qualities* of them. One is *sense* of want: They proceed from a bruised heart, as in the converts, Act. 2:37, and the Jailor, chap. 16:30. True desires are the breathings of a broken heart. Another undivided companion of them is the *Word*; they always set a man forward to the Word of the Apostles, to be instructed by them: as in the former examples: whereas an hypocrite will comfort himself, and rest satisfied without the Word, in blind ungrounded hopes. A third is vehemency and fervency: they must not be light or slight desires, but a vehement thirst, as Samson's, almost ready to die; as the hart chased pants for water: an hunger that would break stone walls, and contemn fire and water, even the utmost perils: more eager than any worldling can desire silver and gold. Hypocrites have desires, but faint, not so earnest within as they seem to be. A fourth is the good *affections* that attend it: as an earnest desire to repent, to reform both the heart and life, to abstain from lusts, to keep a good conscience before God and man in all things. A fifth is constancy; as a thirsty man desires drink till his thirst be quenched: as *Hannah's* desire for a child, till she had one: so is the Christians, till Christ be formed in him, and then to be still knit nearer unto him. An hypocrite may desire by starts and moods, as *Pilate* desires to know *what is truth*, Joh. 18:38, but stayed not to know it. He desires the good things of the kingdom, but they are held at such a rate as deadens his desires; as the young man: They are cooled and quenched before he attains the thing he seems so earnestly to desire. Do you see, that your desire be not satisfied before you get the thing desired, even Christ and his merits: The more true taste you get, the more earnestly you will desire

Their companions, six.

him; no rate will be too dear; all things will be dross and dung in comparison of him. The sixth, or last is, *growth in desires* and endeavors: spiritual life stays not in beginnings, but rises to a great measure of liveliness: as a grain of mustard-seed. 2 Pet. 3:18, Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 13:11, *Be perfect*, desire perfection. But an hypocrite hints in his desires: the labor of using means is soon (if not quite given over, yet) lessened and abated.

Get these desires of the Word, thus qualified, for the ground, matter, end, and companions of them, and then know to your comfort, that no reprobate ever came so far: no bad ground attains such desires. Thus of the first instance.

II. Illumination, for,

II. Do we hear, that hypocrites who shall never be saved, attain a great measure of illumination, and the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, whereby they discern and approve of the truth in Jesus Christ, refuse and reprove errors both in judgement and in practice, and having escaped such as were wrapped in errors, yet are entangled again, and overcome, *whose latter end is worse than the beginning?* Then be careful to try your knowledge and illumination, whether it be got beyond the illumination of hypocrites or no: In four particulars.

2 Pet.
3:18-20

The matter.

1. In the *matter* of it: thus: 1. An hypocrite may know the story of Christ's death and resurrection, and the merits of them: but never did any hypocrite know the virtue and *power* of his death and resurrection, as the Apostle *Paul* defined, Phil. 3:10. *Object.* Why, did he not know it, and preach it before that time? *Answer.* Yes, he knew well the death and resurrection of Christ, as also the virtue and power of them: but he would feel *in himself* that power, more and more, standing in the death of sin, and the life of righteousness. This experimental knowledge far passes the *theory*, and is the knowledge but of a few. 2. An hypocrite may know in general, that Christ is a Redeemer, and discourse excellently of the manner, means, and end: and this swims in the brain. But there is a particular knowledge, with application, to say with *Job*, I know *my* Redeemer lives:

and with Paul, - who gave himself *for me*. To this never reprobate came: If he could speak it, he knew not what he spoke; he knows and speaks only in grosle^a. Therefore see your knowledge be distinct. 3. An hypocrite may know Christ as God has described him in the scripture, but not as he is *made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*. He may know him by hearing and reading, as the Samaritans did Christ by the woman's relation; but not by his comfortable presence in his heart. Hypocrites may know him as he is in himself, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and as he is an head to others, but not to themselves an head or Savior. See your knowledge be not knowing only, and contemplative, but a knowledge passing knowledge, and proceeding to feeling; as that of the Samaritans, when themselves had seen and heard Christ.

Gal. 2:20

1 Cor. 1:30

2. Examine, your knowledge in the *end* of it; both in respect of yourself, and God, and your brethren. 1. An hypocrite may attain a great measure of knowledge, to inform his judgement, not reform his mind; to swim in his brain, not to season his heart. See that your knowledge be a *renewing of God's image in knowledge*. An hypocrite may know much of God and Christ, but little for God and Christ: and aim not at God's glory, or the honor of Christ, but to puff up himself, and swell against others: so as though it be a true knowledge of the true God, in respect of the object, it is false and unsound, in respect of the use and end: only knowing, to be known to know. 3. Hypocrites may know much in themselves, but a little for others: as many content themselves to be counted great learned men, but no man the better for all their profoundness; it is so far to the bottom, that it cannot be come by. Sound illumination edifies and is communicative. The light of grace is like the light of the sun, conspicuous and comfortable to all eyes. As Elihu speaks of himself: wine in vessels will have vent^b; so sound knowledge will vent to the family, friends, neighbors, and strangers.

The end.

Col. 3:10

Job 32:19

3. Examine your knowledge in the companions of it:

The companions, four.

a. Archaïs: grosle: ????????

b. It should be noted that Elihu was as a bag of wind, that is, his words were unsound; he was neither edifying nor upright in his judgment of that related to Job's case. Sound knowledge, however, is upright and does give vent by words, as opportunity and the Spirit move the upright man; and is incapable of being hid, for of the heart a man speaks through deeds, demeanor, judgment and by force of the heart, in the sayings of the mouth in instruction, advice, opinion, and all that proceeds of the man. (H&F)

Psal. 25:9

1. *Humility: God teacheth only the humble:* and swelling knowledge is carnal knowledge: None knows God aright but he that first knows himself: and he that knows himself aright, cannot but be humble. 2. *Love of the brethren:* 1 Joh. 4:7, *He that loveth not, knoweth not God;* that is powerfully and effectually: for, from love of God, flows love to his image. 3. *Constant hearing,* 1 Joh. 4:6, *He that knoweth God, heareth us.* And the spouse saith, *It is the voice of my beloved,* Cant. 2:8^a. Sheep will hear the voice of the shepherd. 4. *Practice:* 1 Joh. 2:3-4, *Here by are sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* An hypocrite may know idly and unfruitfully, but never produces his knowledge into sound practice, which is universal: Tit. 1:16, *They profess they know God, but in their deeds deny him:* Whereas all sound knowledge is practical. *If ye know these things* (says our Savior) *blessed are ye if ye do them.* And to such as know abundantly, so as they are able to preach powerfully, but join not practice to their knowledge, though they profess they know Christ, yet shall he profess he never knew them, Mat. 7:2-3, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* Therefore I say unto you, as David said to his son Solomon, 1 Chron. 28:9, *Know the God of thy father, and serve him.* Be not a follower of Christ, except you be a friend, Joh. 1: 15:14, *Ye are my friends if ye do what I command you.* And consider these two things: 1. Knowers and not doers shall be beaten with the more stripes, Luk. 12:47. 2. Only doers shall enter into heaven, Mat. 7:21.

Joh. 13:17

The growth.

4. Examine thy knowledge in the growth and continuance of it. First, see it grow: *Grow in grace and knowledge,* 2 Pet. 3:18. But this growing is not in the understanding only, but in feeling. And here an hypocrite fails. Secondly, see your knowledge continue. And hypocrite may know much, but it is as a lightning, a shaft that soon vanishes. His knowledge may light him a little way, but lasts not to set him thorow^b to the Bride-chamber. For hypocrites being children of darkness, as their light for the present is mingled

a. Song of Solomon 2:8. (H&F)

b. Archaic: thorow: ???????

with much confusion and darkness, so it ends in darkness. If your knowledge be sound, it is *like the light of the sun, that shines more and more till perfect day.*

Prov. 4:18

Look that your knowledge be thus qualified, for the matter, apprehending not the story, but the virtue of Christ; not in general, but with special application; not as Christ is in himself, but as he is to you: And for the end, that it be as well for God, as of God; that it renew the mind as well as the understanding; that it be for others as well as yourself: And for the companions, that it be attended with humility, love, hearing, and practice: And lastly, that it grow and continue. Now it is beyond all knowledge of hypocrites: and now you may comfort yourself in your illumination. So of the second instance.

III. Hear we from the text, that a man who shall never come to heaven, may receive the Word *with joy*, taste of the heavenly gift, have some apprehension of the excellency of Christ, some sight of God's favor, some sense of grace in his heart, some worthy gifts of the Holy Spirit, and an hope of enjoying everlasting glory, (all which makes up his joy?). Now let us not deceive ourselves, or trust in vain hopes and persuasions, as if we were good Christians, because we have either been stricken sometimes in hearing with sorrow and amazement for our sins; as *Felix* trembled^a, and *Ahab* was troubled at the word of *Elijah*^b: or because we have had sometimes in ourselves great joy in hearing. You may weep at a sermon, or rejoice at a sermon, yet be bad and barren ground: though we deny not these to be good motions.

III. In joy, for,

But let us examine both our joy, and the ground of it, which is our taste and apprehension of Christ, and see if we can find that in them, which is not, nor ever was in the joy and taste of the hypocrite.

1. Examine your joy in the *ground* of it, namely a taste and apprehension of Christ. An hypocrite's apprehension is but vain presumption, which makes him rejoice when he has no just cause. He mistakes himself, and overweens his estate. He thinks his faith unfeigned, his regeneration sound,

The ground.

a. Referring to Act. 24:25. (H&F)

b. Referring to 1King. 21:27 (H&F)

his repentance true, when all is otherwise: And, as beggar, dreams he is rich and full of gold, when all is a delusion. Besides, his apprehension is for measure a taste, not a feeding: as a cook, not as a guest. And what he does apprehend, he bestows not in the bottom of his heart, where some stone or other lies, and allows it not rooting.

The matter.

2. Examine your joy in the *matter* of it: 1. It must be heavenly things: as, 1. The favor of God, Psal. 4:6. 2. Our name written in the Book of life, Luk. 10:20. 3. A sweet taste of the Word, 1 Pet. 2:3. 4. Firm hope of a blessed resurrection, Psal. 16:9. 2. A pure and holy joy is more in God himself and Jesus Christ, than in all holy and heavenly things beside, and in all other things for them. Therefore the godly are said *to make the Almighty himself their delight*, Job 27:10, as the hypocrites do not, neither can do. It is a joy salvation, *but in the God of our salvation*, that has covered us with a robe of righteousness, Isa. 61:10. An hypocrite may delight in holy things, but for novelty, or vainglory, in uttering such knowledge as others have not, or self love, or the like. 3. Sound joy is more in the time and things to come, than for the present. And hypocrite's joy is for the present, and in the present: it is sudden, as the text says, *incontinently it receives the Word with joy*, and soon abates. And in present things, a conceit of a present good, at least in appearance; but in good things that are further off, v. c. in God's election, or eternal life, it rejoices not so much, because there is ever more sense than faith in it.

The measure.

3. Examine your joy in the *measure* and degree of it. The joy of the regenerate in holy things is the chief joy: Psal. 119:72, *Thy law is better unto me than thousands of gold*. And, Psal. 137:6, *- If I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief joy*. In hypocrites it never exceeds the joy in the world: the profits, and pleasures, and advancements of the world, do more comfort and affect their hearts, than the joy of the Word: and therefore they forsake the Gospel for them. The wise merchant sells all for the pearl, and goes away rejoicing, Mat. 13:46. The martyrs joyed more

in the Word, than in riches, honors, liberty, life, or all the world.

4. Examine your joy in the *companions* of it: which are of two sorts:

First, holy affections, three in number: 1. Fear and reverence: Sound joy is never disjoined from true fear of God, Psal. 2:11, *Rejoice before him with trembling*. Phil. 2:12, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*. 2. Love of grace above all things. *David* never danced so, as before the ark, because he loved God's presence. And *Simeon* was never so joyful, as when he had Christ in his arms, because he loved him. 3. Sorrow to see the Word not kept: Psal. 119:136, *Mine eyes gush out with rivers of water, because they keep not thy law*. And indeed sound joy comes out of sound sorrow for sin, Joh. 16:19, *Ye shall sorrow, and the world shall rejoice, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Lots righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites*, 2 Pet. 2:9.

Secondly, there are certain holy graces attending it: 1. *Humility*. It issues from true humiliation in the sense of his own infirmity. The joy of an hypocrite is proud, because he sees not sin, or not all sin: and promises, and assures that to itself which the Word doth not. 2. *Regeneration*: The joy of an hypocrite is a joy of illumination, not of regeneration; as a man rejoices in the sight and light of the sun, but not in the sense of comfortable heat, quickening, and reviving by it. The one rejoices to hear of a pearl, the other to have it. 3. *Faith* attends the joy of the regenerate: therefore it is called *the joy of faith*. The hypocrite's joy is a joy of affection, not of faith. He rejoices to conceive of rare novelties, and deep mysteries, but not as deeply rooted in himself. 4. *Righteousness* attends it. An hypocrite's joy is always joined with the reign and delight of some sin. See your joy take righteousness for his companion, and disjoin not them whom the Holy Spirit has joined, Rom. 14:7. Know, if the love of one sin reigns, if the joy mar not the taste of carnal joys, if it thrust not down the rule of the love of the world; yea, if

The companions.

Holy affections.

Holy graces, five.

it embitter not the relish of earthly delights, your joy is unsound. 5. The last grace is Constancy and continuance: it is an *everlasting consolation*, 2 Thes. 2:16. And of this joy Christ has said, You shall rejoice, and, *your joy shall none take from you*, Joh. 16:22. Yea, this joy increases according to the increase of grace, and continuance of means. It holds in adversity, in persecution, in life, in death, and is most *unspeakable and glorious* in heaven. But the joy of hypocrites is a blaze at first, and soon out; it is suddenly and irrecoverably lost: a little persecution or trial turns all into sorrow and heaviness: but at their death, and afterward, not a spark remains. So as *Job* said truly, *The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment*.

1 Pet. 1:8

Job. 20:5

Prov. 14:10

IV. In
growth, for,

If you find that your joy is thus qualified, no hypocrite falling from his joy, need dismay you; you are beyond his farthest reach: You have drunk of the Well of consolation, and shall never thirst again. *The stranger never enters into this joy*.

IV. Do you not hear from the text, that a wicked man may grow up, and rise up to a far degree of profession, and reformation? yea, that a hypocrite may outwardly perform all that true Christians can do, and lead his life so seemly, so innocently, as however he shall never come to heaven by it, yet his pains shall be left in hell, where it shall be easier for some than for others? Do you hear this? Then what great need is there, that every one of us, who would not at length prove reprobate ground, should try our growth in our profession and standing, not contenting ourselves with a form of godliness, (which now goes for good Christianity:) denying the power of it!

1. Examine your growth from what root it is; two ways.

First, an hypocrite springs from no root but only the old *Adam*, and *whatsoever is of flesh* (says Christ) *is flesh*. But sound growth in profession or reformation, is from a new creation, *a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord*, transplanted out of the old stock of old *Adam*, and new rooted into the second *Adam* by spiritual regeneration: and from

The root.

Joh. 3:6

Isa. 61:3

this Root all acceptable growth rises, according to our Savior's speech, *First make the tree good, and etc.* Secondly, all the growth of an hypocrite is from an heart which at best retains some evil, but never changed unto good. But sound growth is from an heart renewed, a soul mortified, *a pure heart, and good conscience*, 1 Tim. 1:5.

2. Examine yourself in what fruits you grow. The best fruit of an hypocrite is in external things, and by external things. As first, by education he may grow in civility, and in moral virtue, which many think religion enough. This was the righteousness of the heathens, of the scribes and Pharisees. Secondly, by the means of salvation he may grow to an external holiness, v. c. he may grow in knowledge, in hopes and confidence, in zeal, in many outward seemly duties, and rest in these, or in some other things, instead of some inward graces, which would better bestead^a him.

But a sound Christian, because he knows that *without faith nothing is pleasing to God*, looks especially to grow in faith. And knowing that pure love must flow from *faith unfeigned*, he seeks to grow up in fervent love of God, of his Word, of his image, of his children, and all holy things. And because humility is the foundation of all good graces, he lays a good ground there, and builds all upon it. And because he cannot be zealous as *Jehu*, who still followed the vile sins of *Jeroboam* his father, he grows most in most inward hatred of his most inward and secret corruptions. Thus whereas a barren tree stays in leaves and flowers; he, as a good tree, grows to bring the best fruit, even the best, and most sound, and shining graces.

3. Examine yourself in what measure you grow. A sound growth is *filled with fruits of righteousness*, laden with the fruits of the Spirit: Joh. 15:8, Herein is he Father glorified, that ye being much fruit. And sound growth is in every part, in every affection, and in every grace. But the growth of an hypocrite is two ways peccant^b: 1. It is delicate. 2. It is partial.

It is delicate. He will profess and reform so far as he list,

a. Archaic: serve. (H&F)

b. That is, blameworthy or sinful. (H&F)

The fruits.

Heb. 11:6

1 Tim. 1:5

The means.

Phil. 1:11

Psal. 119:6

but will keep a brother's wife, or spare some *Agag*, or hold some sweet morsel under his tongue. He may, and will amend many faults, but some one or other he reforms not, nor will reform. Whereas, were the growth sound, it would conscionably *respect all the commandments*: it would somewhat reform all sins: it would strive to be *unblameable in spirit, soul, and body*, 1 Thes. 5:23.

Act. 4:20

Again, it is partial, and so the hypocrite deceive himself two ways: 1. Sometimes he grows in the possession of faith, not in the grace of faith, as it is noted by Christ of certain disciples, that they *believe not*, Joh. 6:64. Many pretend faith, without feeling, without application. 2. Sometimes on the contrary, he rests in supposal of faith, without the profession of faith: Now his policy is religion, against both these deceits, see your faith and profession grow alike, and be able to say with the prophet, Psal. 119:10. *I believed, therefore I spoke*: and with the Apostle, *We cannot chose but speak what we have heard*.

The affection.

Indeed sometime the child of God may have faith in the heart, and nor profession in the mouth, but that is either in the beginning of grace, as *Nicodemus*, or in temptation, as *Peter* for fear, or God's desertion, till Christ look back again.

4. Examine your affection in growth. Growth in grace is unlike the growth of nature. In nature, the more a things grows, the higher it is; in grace, the lower; the further you grow, the more humble you are. And why? 1. Because no grace outgrows humility, which is planted before any other. 2. He that is more grown, sees more clearly his want of growth, and is humbled in his want, as the poor man, Mar. 9:24, *I believe, Lord help my unbelief*: and as the Apostles, Luk. 17:5. *Lord, increase our faith*. 3. This spiritual poverty keeps him hungry, and he will grow still till he be best at last.

Contrariwise, unsound growth sees not his unproficiency in growth, and so is proud of that he has, and quickly grows to satiety and security, and thinks himself grown far enough.

5. Do you continue in growth, even in opposition, and to the conclusion? As, I. Does grace grow against nature, when nature pleads peace and profit, and persuades it is no wisdom to be meddling, when flesh and blood say, *Master, pity thyself?* This is a sign of soundness, when nature takes one part, and the Word another: now the commandment prevails: for an hypocrite abides no thorough mortification. 2. Does your faith grow against your feeling? An hypocrite may be persuaded of God's favor for the present, while he feels a flash and sudden cleame^a: but if that flash be gone, his faith is gone, because his feeling is. But faith is sometimes at defiance with feeling: *It is the evidence of things not seen*: and will hold his persuasion against sense. If *Job* feel God killing him, yet his faith will trust in him: And Abraham will hope against hope, Rom. 4:18. 3. Do you grow in this frozen and winterous time, so stormy and blustering against sincerity? Do you flourish like a green bay-tree, in the winter of this age, in want of encouragements and example? This is necessary. For an hypocrite may seem to grow in the sun, and peace of the Gospel, but hardly shares in the scorn and contempt of it. Some self-respect may hold him in a while, but he hardly grows in want of discipline, and in terms of liberty. Lastly, do you continue in growth and fruits? A whistling wind makes rotten fruits come tumbling down, though they seem beautiful: so is tribulation to glorious Christians, it makes all the fruits of hypocrites fall off and come to nothing. But in sound growth of grace, not so much as the *leaves wither* or fall off, Psal. 1:3, because there is a continual supply of moisture of grace, a Well flows in his belly to eternal life. *Job* for all his trials will persevere in his uprightness. And if Satan shall winnow as wheat, Christ shall pray that your faith and fruits fail not.

These are sure notes of trial, whether our growth be sound and gotten beyond that of hypocrites noted in the text. It stands us all in hand to try ourselves, whether we be sound in faith; and not to content ourselves with profession, or outward reformation. If reprobates be before us, where is

a. cleame - ????????

The con-
tinuance.

Heb. 11:1

our comfort? what our portion? If *Herod* hear, and be damned; if he do many things, reverence *John*, and the like; and you hear not, reform little or nothing, contemn the means, etc., what can you think will become of you? Lastly, what comfort can it be to come behind the devil, who believes and trembles; or *Judas*, who confesses his sin, makes restitution, and seems to be gracious?

Doleful
success, with
the cause.

It withered away, because it lacked moisture.

Having spoken of the success of this seed cast into the stony ground, in the *commendable* hopes it gave in the beginning: Now we proceed to the *lamentable* and doleful success in the conclusion, with the reason of it; both in the words now read unto you, 1. *It withered away.* 2. *Because it lacked moisture.* But that which our Evangelist here shortly sets down as the reason of this withering, we have more at large in the other Evangelists, who being laid together, afford us the causes in this order:

Some are	{	Inward:	{	1. Positive: hardness, stoniness,
		Outward:	{	1. <i>Moisture</i> : in text.
			{	2. <i>Earth</i> , Mark 4:5.
			{	3. <i>Roots</i> , vers. 6, <i>ibid</i> .
			{	Persecution, Mat. 13:21.
			{	Temptation, Luk. 8:13.

First, of the withering of these glorious professors, these of the causes.

This withering is a falling away, but not all at once, but by little and little, as a leaf loses his greenness and flourish.

What
withering is.

and withers by degrees. For the word implies the manner of their falling. Neither is it a falling away in part, or for a time, as the disciples, and *Peter* in the time of Christ's passion: but *a final falling away from all their graces; from which falls is no rising*. And therefore neither, is this a withering of persons truly justified, or a fall from justifying faith, which they never had, (as Papists would have us believe) but from temporary faith of hypocrites, as the text is most plain, calling them *προσκαιροί*.

Here consider four things: 1. How men wither away in grace. 2. The danger of withering. 3. Notes of a man withering. 4. The Use and Application of all.

Even great professors in the church, wither:

For answer to the first: Men, even great professors in the church, wither four ways: 1. In judgement. 2. In affection. 3. In practice. 4. In the use of the means.

In *judgement*: when they fall off the grounds of sincerity and truth, whereof they were once persuaded: as many who decline, and for by-respects are carried from the truth which they once embraced: such as *Demas*, who forsook the truth, to embrace the present world. Thus did the Galatians wither, and by little and little *fell to another Gospel*: at first in part, and through weakness, afterward in whole, and by obstinacy. Such were *Hymenaeus* and *Philetus*, who once held the truth concerning the doctrine of resurrection, but in short time *erred concerning the faith*, saying that the resurrection was already past, and destroyed the faith of many, 2 Tim. 2:18.

As this was prophesied of these latter ages, so our eyes have seen the same abundantly verified in numbers, who in these latter times have departed from the faith, and given heed to spirits of errors, and doctrines of devils, 1 Tim. 4:1.

I will not speak of such learned men, as in Queen Mary's days fell from the truth of the Gospel, which themselves had professed and defended; such as Bonner, Gardiner, etc. But numbers now in this light are declines, and darkened in comparison of their own light. As for example: 1. Our doctrine a long time has been, that our justification

Men wither in the church in four ways.

In judgement.

Gal. 1:6

Instances of Apostasy, or withering in sound judgment.

Operatincta
sanguine
Christi.

is by faith, only, without works natural, moral, yea or of grace; according to the scripture, Rom. 3:28. But how have many withered in this main article, who now will have works *dipped in the blood of Christ*, come into the matter of justification? so that Christ is but half a Jesus, half a Savior. 2. The common judgement was, that God's election and reprobation are absolute, depending only upon God's will and pleasure; according to the scripture, Eph. 1:4-5. But how generally are men withered, and gone from this truth, as if their wits were now to be refined by *Arminius*? concluding them to be conditional, depending upon man's willing or nilling to receive the grace of God. How does the doctrine of universal redemption and grace creep abroad everywhere as a gangrene? teaching, that effectual and sufficient grace is offered to all and every one, by which they may repent and believe if they will? 3. The received truth was wont to be, that the Pope is *that Antichrist*, and Rome *that Babylon*, (as the Jesuits themselves confess:) and therefore we have done well to separate from them. How many are withered from this truth, and are loth the Pope should be *that notorious Antichrist*, but the Turk rather, (who never yet sat in the temple of God?) and have devised a new Rome or See for him, only discovered by Popish geographers. 4. The common judgement heretofore was, that Christ is present in the supper sacramentally to the faith of the receiver. But now many are withered, and now Christ must be present there, after a manner not to be questioned or disputed. 5. The common judgement of Protestant divines was, that our religion differed from Popery in substantial and essential points. But many are gone from that, and now we differ but in circumstances, and there needs but a small modification in most points between us: An English, yea, or a Popish *Cassander* might bring us together; though heaven and earth shall come as soon together, as these two religions agree in the fundamentals.

Time would fail to speak of the general withering in judgement, in the doctrine concerning the strict observation of the sabbath, which some think alterable and observable

at the will and pleasure of the Christian prince; though it were written by God's own finger in Tables of stone, as no alterable law was.^a So concerning Christ's local descending into hell, in his soul. Concerning the restoring of *auricular confession*, with separating some abuses only in the manner. Concerning the needlessness of so much preaching: as if the honor of the ministry were, to thrust down the exercise of it. And lastly, concerning a man's falling wholly and finally from grace, who is truly justified and sanctified.

Thus are numbers of men tossed with the waves of contrary doctrines; of whom the truth is yea and nay, now this, now that, according to their occasions: now they are resolved, now unresolved.

2. Men wither in *affection*, falling from their first love, from the heat and zeal for God and goodness, which once they had: As old men that are withering, grow cold and chilly, abated of their heat and vigor, which they had in their state and strength. How have many, who seemed once fervent in spirit, and most forward maintainers of religion, now cooled their affection, and come to a state of indifferency, if not of neutrality; and framed themselves to such a moderation, as will just serve the scantling of the time, the law, their own profit, preferment, and reputation? Yea, some that are fearfully gone from their first love, commended their own wisdom in it: they were (they say) forward and foolish in the heat of youth, to speak against this, or that; but now they see their error, and admire their present stayedness, and the golden mean which they have attained: till all affection to goodness be expiring and gasping. Some that formerly were ζειντες πνευπατι, burning in spirit against superstition, profaneness, oaths, sabbath-breaking, etc., are grown key-cold: the sway of time has been as water cast upon the coals of their affections, or in some has been as bellows to blow up an aguish^b and distempered heat for the contrary. Some that have given the right hand of fellowship to godly brethren, and have taken them into their bosom, for the image of God and his graces, can

In affection.

Rom. 12:11
Or, fervent
in spirit.
(H&F)

a. Rather, we must fulfill daily and naturally, according to the Spirit that is in us, that which they were commanded to do weekly by letter of law: Isa. 58:13-14. For this cause Christ died, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," Col. 2:14. Either we fulfill this law not at all or we fulfillment it altogether in the inner man, so that the Apostle can say, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days," Col. 2:16. Also: Mar 2:27; Rom 14:1-6. (H&F)

b. Or, fever. (H&F)

now look askint on them, and disaffect them, as men too far on the right hand; whereas, they being in the same way they were, these be gone no further from them than from themselves.

In practice.

3. Great Professors wither in *practice*: as the Galatians, chap.5, vers. 7, did *run well*, but something letted^a them, and cast them back. Have not many made themselves trespassers, in destroying what they seemed to have built? How have our Schools, and Pulpits, yea, our own Injunctions rung out against non-residency, condemning it as *res in se foeda, Deo odiosa, Ecclesiae perniciosa*? But now who sees it not safer to be a Non-resident, than speak against one? Who sees not, that if we commend the conscience that brooks not prolygamie^b in Benefices, we are accounted enemies to the church? how have many begun in the spirit, but end in the flesh; who having escaped the filthiness of the world, are entangled again therein, as the dog returning to his vomit, and the Swine washed, to her wallowing in the mire? How many have we observed so strict in their course, that they could endure no sin, no nor the appearance of evil in themselves or others? They seemed to hate the very garment spotted by the flesh. Now they see many of the same things to be more indifferent, in which men may be more nice than wise. Nay they are grown so strong, as their stomachs (like ostriches) can digest oaths, plays, or profane and wanton speches, in themselves and others. Everyone sees them withering apace, but themselves see it not. Lastly, how many out of their love to religion, were formerly much and often in dear and costly duties for God, for his Gospel, and saints, as the Galatians, who would part with their eyes to do *Paul* good? But now they can slink away, except the duty be cheap and easy. If good countenance to religion, or good words (which are good cheap) will serve the turn, that they will afford; no more.

Gal. 4:15

In use of means.

4. Men wither *in respect of means*; which should preserve their gifts and greenness. Some have made conscience of the Word preached, and tasted the sweetness of it,

a. Or, hindered. (H&F)

b. prolygamie - ????????

so as nothing could hinder them from hearing all the sermons they could come to. But now the man is nothing so sharp set, every straw is a Lion in his way, he has not so much leisure as he had, or he has a greater charge: Whereas indeed he only has not the same thirst and desire after grace in the means of it, but rather (as an unthankful Israelite) loathes the sweet manna, which at first was so precious. Others were wont to pray much and often, and that with such earnestness, as if they had been right Israelites, who were resolved to wrestle it out with God: but now much of that labor is remitted, the hand grows so heavy and so ready to fall down, that *Aaron* and *Hur* have much ado to support them. Some were once diligent in instructing their families, in reading the scriptures with them, in careful watching over their behavior, as if they had meant to have gone thorow with *Joshua*, his resolution. But now more than half the allowance of the family is taken away.

Joh. 24:15

Thus as a man in decay casts off some of his train, and sets himself at a lower rate: So, he that is withering in grace, sets down himself in judgement, affection, practice, and diligence in the means.

And this is the first general thing proposed.

The second is the danger of such withering: which we shall clearly see in four particulars. 1. In respect of God, they are most hateful, seeing they can find nothing more worthy forsaking, than the good way, and esteem everything better worth keeping than God's image and graces. Therefore he stiles them *dogs and swine*, 2 Pet. 2:20, and most unclean beasts which his soul hateth: as in whom his Spirit ceases to work, by illumination, sanctification, consolation, and gives way to the devil.

The danger of this withering, in respect of God.

2. In respect of the church: they bring scandal to the weak, and the scorn of the wicked upon themselves and all Professors. They wound the hearts of God's children, who in them are made vile to the world. They open wicked mouths to speak evil of the way of God. Lastly, they confirm and harden many in their libertine and loose courses.

The danger of this withering, in respect of the church.

The sin
itself.

3. In respect of the sin itself: none more dangerous. For first, relapses (we say) are far more dangerous than first diseases. Secondly, Satan returning, comes with seven more wicked spirits than himself, and so he is forever held under the power of Satan. Thirdly, this sin is commonly punished with other sins; which is God's most fearful stroke: to which he seldom gives up his own. Fourthly, it is in the degrees of the sin against the Holy Spirit, and easily brings a man into that estate, that there may be left *no sacrifice for his sin*.

Heb. 10:26

The judge-
ment.

4. In respect of the judgement that awaits and overtakes this sin. First, *the house not founded on a rock, must fall, and the fall is great* and irreparable, Mat. 7:27. Secondly, the judgement is certain, as which is already in part inflicted: *The talent is already taken away*, and nothing remains but *casting the unprofitable servant into hell-fire*, Mat., chap. 25, vers. 28.

Six Notes
of a man
withering
in grace.

The third general thing proposed, is, notes of a man withering in grace. And these are six.

Lack of
desire to
certainty
and assur-
ances in
Christ.

1. A resting in a common and general hope of a good estate, without desire or endeavor to seek marks of certainty, or special assurance in himself: As a foolish tradesman hopes his estate is good enough, and bears his creditors in hand it is so; but he is loth to cast up his books, or come to a particular view of it. No surer argument of a man decaying.

Opinion
only of
sufficiency
and grace.

2. An opinion of sufficiency: that he has grace enough: He will seek no more, because he pleases himself in his present measure; and he that cares not to increase his stock, wastes of the principal. And not to go forward, is to go backward. Therefore always displease yourself in the measure of grace already received, says *Augustine*.

Comparison
to those
who are
inferior
in grace.

3. A comparing of a man's self with those that are of lower and inferior graces, or means. Our Fathers (say some) were saved with less ado; they heard but few sermons, and knew not what the precise fashion meant. But what saith our Savior, Luk. 12:48, Where men commit more, more

is expected? Others come to church as others do, and live civilly and soberly; yea, have as much knowledge as such and such of their rank, and they hope, as much conscience too; and are not very ambitious to step before others in this course. But for the patterns of scripture, and the example of saints (registred^a for our imitation) they think concerns not them, because they cannot be saints. Here is a mark of a man withering, and growing worse and worse; who will not be drawn beyond them that are but a step beyond the worst: because he scorns the best examples, as too singular.

4. A shunning or slighting of God's ordinances: a willing excommunicating of himself from the assemblies, when he list. That man's strength is abating, who falls from his meals. He must eat, that must live. And the plant that would not wither, must draw moisture daily. Or, if using public mean diligently, he neglect private, he is on the withering hand. We cannot have our ruinous hearts stand upright, further than we daily repair them. The Word and prayer daily used, are foreign means to heal daily infirmities. A sound believer, whose leaf shall not wither, is a tree standing by rivers of water.

Slight-
ing God's
ordinances.

5. Secret sins ordinarily committed, not bewailed, not reformed: and the same, of such as men count small sins, lesser oaths, idle speeches, roving thoughts, lashing out against professors of religion, expense of time in excessive gaming, company-keeping with naughty and scornful persons, idleness in the calling, or in the sabbath. If men can run over these, or any of them daily, and not humble themselves for them, yea, and reform them, they are withering apace: I fear, such a man will soon come to nothing.

Secret sins.

6. Hatred of God's children, and the way of just men, whether open or secret. How can they keep their greenness, who cannot abide the greenness and graces of others, but can be witty in privy girds^b and scorns of such as endeavour to preserve themselves from withering? That these are withering, see Psal. 129:6, *They that hate Sion, shall be*

Hatred
of God's
children.

a. registred - ???????

b. girds - ???????

as grass upon the house top, which withereth before it comes forth. And (whatsoever many conceive of themselves) this is certain, If you avoid society with God's people, and be ashamed of them, or fellowship with them in the Gospel, if more perilous times come, you will easily wither, and stand (as *Judas*) with them that apprehend Christ.

Take heed of withering.

Use. Seeing so many great professors wither away so dangerously, *let him that stands, take heed lest he fall*, 1 Cor. 10:12. See we men of so great illuminations, affection, and reformation (as in this stony ground) wither quite away? How necessary then is that exhortation of the Apostle, Heb. 12:13, *Take heed that no man fall away from the grace of God*, and chap. 3:12, *Take heed of the evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God*. A necessary exhortation far all: the hypocrite, because he is in danger of final withering, and shall perish in it; and the less he fear it, his danger is not the less: As also the sound Christian, who, though he cannot fall quite away, because the Lord puts under his hand, yet by fearing to fall, he avoids falling; and being fallen, recovers himself again.

Joh. 5:35

Let every godly man look he stand on firm ground: for reprobates may seem to stand, and be green for a while. Neither let any content himself, that he hears good sermons, or that he rejoices therein for the present. For as we read, Joh. 5:35, John's hearers esteemed him a burning and shining light, and rejoiced in his light, but it was but *for a season*. And this text of ours tells us, that many heard our Lord himself, and that with joy, yet withered away: and Joh. 6:66, Many that had heard Christ, and followed him for a time, as if they had been found disciples, (as the text called them) *went away from him, and walked no more with him*.

Object. There is no fear, so long as we be Protestants, and not Papists; so long as we profess the truth, and deny the gross points of Popery, which cut off men from Christ.

Diverse forms of withering.

Ans. There is a twofold withering: one in judgement, the other in practice. That in *judgement* is twofold: either total, or partial. *Total*: when a man departs from the

whole doctrine, as they that turn from the truth of Christ, and sup up the whole filth of Antichrist. *Partial*: when a man holds most truths, but departs from the sincerity of it. And this overturns many Protestants, who will neither be Papists nor yet sincere Protestants, but so far judge religion worth holding, as they can gain by it.

Withering in *practice*, is either in profession, or in action. You may hold the profession of religion and yet by persisting in wicked manners, manifest that you acknowledge not Christ as your Lord, and that you yourself are not of the truth. Do you think *Demas* cast off the whole profession of religion, when he forsook the truth, and exchanged it for the world? Or did the Galatians turn gentiles, and quite forsake the profession of Christ, when they turned to another Gospel? Or did the Pharisees, or such as sin the sin against the Holy Spirit, wholly renounce the profession of religion? Oh then never stand upon profession, but use the means to preserve you from withering in judgement or practice, in whole or in part.

Quest. What be the means to keep us from withering?

Ans^w. 1. Get sound judgement, to discern the truth from error. And this is obtained in the public ministry.^a If we would *not quench the Spirit*, we must *not despise prophesy*. If we would not fall, we must be grounded on the *foundation of the prophets and Apostles*: by private reading, meditating, and conferring of the scriptures, which notably begets and confirms soundness of judgement: And by prayer, which obtains the Spirit, who is called *the Spirit of judgment*. The lamps fail without oil: And they that forsake the assemblies, shall find their light of judgment and understanding to grow dimmer daily, till they be wholly put out.

2. Sound persuasion of the truth you profess: that you may not please yourself that you hear the truth from the mouth of the preacher, or have it in the Bible at home, nor content yourself that you have it in your mouth or discourse, but that you have the experience of it in your heart.

a. Again, we must interject a note regarding the exaltation of the “public ministry,” for, in an age when that ministry was the source of Bible reading and Gospel preaching, and fewer persons possessed the scriptures, the sense of the statement is not the same as if it were made today: God’s Word is above all, over all, and must be used to test every preacher, teacher, minister, or any other who propounds the truths of it, so that we are not made followers or disciples of men, but of Jesus Christ and of God. (H&F)

Six means to keep us from withering in grace.

1 Thes. 5:19-20
Eph. 2:20

Isa. 4:4

How does experimental knowledge fix itself in the soul? Let a man once taste the sweetness of Christ and his merits, he can never be a Papist in the point of merit, but he will detect his own works as dross and dung in comparison. Let a man once come to the experience of God's favor and love through his Christ, it will be stronger than death, no water can quench it: he shall not hang in doubtful suspense of his salvation, or fear final falling away; he shall be far from wavering, and much more from withering in these points. Let a man once get experience of the sweetness of a godly life, of God's blessing accompanying it, of inward peace and tranquility of mind, of safety under the wing of God, and the many privileges which go with the careful watch over the heart and life: This man shall not easily fall from his fruitfulness, nor be drawn to such sins as blast and overturn others by the roots, and that suddenly. Whereas he that holds his religion, because the prince holds it, will run with the time, and swim with the stream; the times and winds are not more mutable than he: let the times change but a little, his religion is withered and gone. Or if men hold holy doctrines only swimming in the brain, and attain understanding rather to furnish their discourse, than to guide their course^a; and want the experience of God, the sense of faith, the breath and motions of heavenly life, in the seat of life, that is, their hearts and souls; they shall easily bid truth farewell, if with convenience they cannot hold it in their judgement, or hold it forth in their practice.

3. Sound affection and love to the truth, upholds from withering in it: when the wise Christian esteems the pearl worth selling all to buy it. Love anything better than grace and you are gone. *Demas* loves the world better, and easily forsakes the truth. How many lights in the beginning of the profession, have been extinct by the world coming upon them! The profits, pleasures, and advancements of it, have made them idle, dissolute, almost profane. If you would avoid that fearful Apostasy threatened against the limmes^b of Antichrist, 2 Thes. 2:10-11, then you must receive the truth in the love of it.

a. course - ?????? (course?)

b. limmes - ??????

4. Sound conscience: To which is required {
1. Sincerity.
 2. Tenderness.

The former, when a man is inwardly a true Israelite, nourishing no guile, no deceit willingly. Never was there hypocrite, but became a withered revolter. *The latter* fears all sin, checks all sin, even in the leaf, the dearest, and closest bosom sin. Sound conscience allows not his Master the smallest sin, but deals faithfully with him, and gives him no rest, till he have rid it away: which is an excellent means of upholding in grace. Whereas an evil conscience makes *shipwreck of faith*; and this blasted and withered *Hymenaeus* and *Philetus*, 1 Tim. 1:19. And a sluggish conscience, which swallows small things, easily grows by degrees to digest greater, and at last falls from all, to recoil almost at nothing.

5. Sound conversation: fruitfulness in our life fashions our faith, and a barren life has little stability. Our Savior (Mat. 7:2-4) shows, that he is the stable Christian, built on a rock, that *heareth the Word of God and doeth it*. And God used to recompense practice of grace with increase of grace. No surer strengthening of faith, then by obedience to the faith, Joh. 7:17, *If ye do these things, ye shall know my doctrine*. Psal. 15. He that doth these things, shall never fall. The more you use your Talent, the more you shall gain: as the *woman's meal in a barrel*, the more they spent, the more it increases.

1 King.
17:16

6. Sound fellowship in the communion of saints: in receiving and communicating Christian admonition, reprehension, counsel, comfort. Every member is made for the good and strengthening of every one. And we are commanded to stir up the gift of God in any: 1 Thes. 5:11. *Exhort one another and edify one another*. Also to strengthen the weak knees, Heb. 12:12. Now that we may be the more effectually moved to use these means of not withering, let us consider, 1. That Popery increases daily, in all places, in all degrees, and our trial may be at hand, we know not how soon. 2. This withering is fatal to reprobates, befalls them only, and cannot happen to the elect of God, who cannot be deceived, Mat. 24:24. 3. Experience tells us, that we may truly

Motives to
beware of
withering.

Mat. 25:20

Mat. 20:19

Cause of
withering:
stoniness.Doctr.
Seed of the
Word not
fruitful to
salvation in
a bad heart.
Threefold
hardness
of heart.

Reasons.

Stone resist
even the
blow or
stroke.

say of some great Professors, as Christ said of the fig tree, *How soon are they withered*, and come to nothing! A manifest argument that the sentence of Christ is out against them, *Never fruit grow on thee anymore.*

Having spoken of the withering of the seed in this bad ground, we come now to the causes thereof, as they are set down by the Evangelists: and first to the inward, and positive cause, *stoniness* or *hardness*. It fell among stones.

Hence observe, that *the seed of God's Word brings forth no saving fruit out of an hard heart, or stony ground*. Now when I speak of a hard heart, I mean not every heart that has some hardness in it: for so has every man's heart even the most softened: but there is a threefold hardness of the heart: 1. Total and final, as in the wicked and reprobate. 2. Total and temporary, as in one cleft, but not yet called. 3. Partial and temporary as in all the elect, now converted. In the two former, because there is reigning hardness, the seed of God's Word is fruitless, unless by preparing one to condemnation, the other to conversion. In the last it is fruitful to salvation: where the work of it is, daily to abate and mollify the remaining hardness.

Now for proof of the point: Psal. 95:10, The Jews being hardened in heart, would not know his ways, Zach. 7:11, They refused to hearken, stopped their ear, pulled away the shoulder, and *made their heart as an adamant*, Jer. 7:25. The Lord complains that ever since the day he brought them out of Egypt, he sent all his prophets, rising early, but they would not hear, nor incline their ear, but *hardened their neck*, and did worse than their fathers. Ezek. 3:7, The house of Israel will not obey thee, for they will not obey me; the reason follows, The house of Israel are *impudent and stiff-hearted*.

The Reasons hereof arise out of the similitude.

1. Stones resist the stroke, and can endure a great strength of strokes before they will be broken: so the stony heart resists the stroke of the Word: the hammer of the law, with all the strength and terror of its judgements and curses.

do not a whit pierce it: as the *Leviathan* described by *Job*, chap. 41:13, *his heart is as the nether milestone*, and he accounts iron as straw: the stones of the sling are as stubble to him; he laughs at the shaking of the spear; he will not rise for the sword, or the spear, or the dart, vers. 17-18. A notable resemblance of a wicked hard-hearted man, as *Pharaoh* for example; he heard the Word, saw the miracles, and felt the mighty hand of God; but at the end of every plague, the foot^a was, *But Pharaoh hardened his heart, and would not let the people go*. Of the same invincible hardness were *Stephen's* adversaries, Act. 7:51, *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised of hearts and ears, ye have always resisted the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do you*.

2. To bring forth fruits of grace and salvation; the ground must be *soft*, and the soil must be mellow for the seed. But what way can you make a stone soft? Let the sun shine, or the rain fall on it, yea cast it into soil, it is a stone still. So the heart abiding hard, no means can mellow or soften it: the comfortable heat and light of God's gracious Spirit, which changes other hearts, changes not this: the rains of the Word, and dews from heaven continually distilled, soften it not: the oil of gladness, or of God's bountifulness, which leads others to repentance, mollifies it not.

3. Unto fruitfulness in grace is necessarily required a *change* and conversion in the ground of the heart. For all hearts naturally are stony, as no fruit can be expected, no more than from an unstirred ground. And therefore as the ground must first be rent up with the plough, to soften the earth, and then laid even by the harrow and rollers: so the ground of the heart must be rent up, and cut with the plough of God's law, and laid even again by the doctrine of the Gospel, before fruits of grace can be produced. Act. 2:37, *The first preparation to fruits in those converts, was the piercing and pricking of their hearts*. But can you cut a stone, what compunction can you work in it? how can you prick and piece it, while the native hardness remains? Hence the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah 5:3

Ground is soft and mellow for receiving of seed.

The heart must be converted; it must be turned from stone to softened ground.

a. foot or soot ??????/?

expressly makes this hardness of heart the main let^a and hinderer of this conversion and change, which is the first thing in this fruitfulness: *they have made their faces harder than a stone, and have refused to return.*

Grace must be working, for all fruits come by moisture and that, upon seed sown on good ground and not upon a stony heart.

4. Unto fruits of grace is necessarily required moisture of grace, as to the fruits of earth, moisture in the earth. But what moisture is in a stone? A stone indeed may be moist on the outside, in moist weather. The walls and marbles seem to weep, and drops stand on them in rainy seasons: not because moisture is in them, but moisture offers itself unto them, but they hold it not, so as they remain as hard and dry within as ever before. So with this stony heart, where hardness of heart reigns, no moisture of grace, no relenting, or giving within. Indeed in foul weather, when the storm of God is risen, an invincible hard heart, as hard as a marble, may seem soft: *Pharaoh* yields, and gives again on the outside. You may see drops of water standing in *Isaiab's* eyes, who wept when the blessing was gone. *Judas* seems moistened with repentance. *Balaam* melts a little, and wishes to die well. *Felix* moulders a little, and trembles.

Not all softening and moisture is grace.

But we must distinguish this from sound moisture of grace, 1. These be flashes, and sudden motions, and as seldom as the weeping of walls. 2. This moisture comes not from an heart softened, but from slavish fear, or present smart; even from the present disposition of the weather, from without. 3. So soon as fair weather comes again, the stones are as dry as ever they were: so these return to their former lusts so soon as the foul weather is over; as *Pharaoh*, *Felix*, etc.

Use 1. Do you hear the Word preached, without any great fruit? Then lay the blame where indeed it is. Some impute it to the difficulty of the Word. Others to the fault of the minister, who pleases them not, either in the matter or manner. But it were far more commendable for you to impute your unprofitableness to the hardness of your own heart, and so take your sin home to yourself; so did the Apostle *Paul*, Rom. 7:14, when he perceived that

a. 'let' is the same as 'hinderer.' (H&F)

the law of God was not so efficacious to him as he desired, he accused not the law, but maintained it to be *spiritual*, but himself as sold under sin: He condemned himself, not the Word: so do you also; for the Gospel is *the power of God* to salvation, *it is spirit and life*, and *mighty in operation*. If it work not so mightily on your heart, then see your hardness, bewail it, let godly sorrow and grief, daily dropping, make this stone hollow, till it have broken it.

Rom. 1:16
Heb. 4:12

Gutta cavat
lapidem,
non vi,
sed saepe
cadendo.

Use 2. That of the Apostle, Heb. 3:7. Today if you will hear his voice, *harden not your hearts*. All the seed cast upon an hard heart, is left, as if a man should sow on a rock, where is no place for root or moisture. Beware of an hard heart: there is no curse to that, almost no sin to that. Better that all your field were covered over with stones, than your heart should. Nay, it were better for you to be a dead stone, than a living stone.

The marks to know an hard heart by:

Now the marks to know an hard heart, are these:

Six marks
to know
an hard
heart by.

1. When God's Word makes no impression, or gets not within the heart, to renew or reform the man: though sometimes it may scratch the outside, and restrain him. When the law is threatened, he either blesses himself, or turns his ear from it, or applies it to others, not himself. And the Gospel enters not, because the law has not pierced, nor been as a needle to make way. Let all the mercies of the Gospel be showed to the wicked, he will not repent nor learn to do well.

The law
causes
the hard
heart to
either bless
himself,
turn away,
or apply its
sayings to
the deeds
of others.

2. Neglect, or light over-passing the works of God's mercy or justice, upon himself or others. For *mercies*: when the *goodness of God leads him not to repentance*, Rom. 2:4-5, Our Lord makes this a cause, even in his own disciples, in whom the sin reigned not, that they forgot the matter of the loaves, *because their hearts were hardened*, Mar. 6:52. For the *judgements* of God: his works of justice do move somewhat more than mercies, but nothing to amendment. *Pharaoh*, when judgement puts him to a plunge could say, *I have sinned*: here is a little scratch on his heart, as on a stone, but hardness recoils the stroke that should

The light-
ness by
which
both the
mercy and
judgement
of God are
passed over.

Exod. 9:27

They desire to sit quiet in sin, and nothing so offends them, as to hear their sin disgraced.

They most dislike those who have the Word on their side.

They fly from all occasion to hear that which might work on their conscience - no such string must be touched.

They sin by habit or custom so that their hearts smite them not in their sinning.

break the heart in pieces: so as after all the strokes of God, there is no reformation.

3. Unfeelingness of hardness, and unwillingness to feel it: no mislike of it, no desire to understand the danger of it. When men desire to sit quiet in sin, and nothing so offends them, as to hear their sin disgraced; when they *turn their backs, and stop their ears*, Zech. 7:11. Being as loath to be drawn to a sermon powerful against sin, as Israel to come near the mountain. Whereas a soft heart is most sensible of much *hardness in it*, and counts no burthen^a comparable thereto.

4. For the maintaining their estate, credit, and favor in the world, or their lusts and pleasures, to oppose and dislike such doctrines, courses, and persons as have the Word on their sides. Pharaoh must not seem to be overcome by such mean people: and therefore, seeing evidently the Lord stand for them, obdured^b himself. The scribes a Pharisees, convinced in their conscience of the truth Christ's doctrine, and the innocency of his person, did out of hardness of heart ever oppose both his doctrine a person; because they must maintain their credit in the world, and uphold their pomp and glory against him: though he had truth, and equity, and innocency on his side. The like of all hardened persecutors of the poor saints.

5. Out of resolution of following a man's own present course, whatsoever persuasion or doctrines he hear to the contrary, to fly from occasions and companies which might touch or work upon his conscience. Some cannot abide hear strict preachers that allow them no unlawful liberty no not afford them a look on the forbidden fruit. Others cannot endure the society of a faithful friend, that will truly tell them of themselves. No such string must be touched. This argues a soul or soil settled in hardness.

6. Habits, and customable^c sins, which make the heart as a pathway. A soft heart smites itself for once sinning, for small sinning. *David's* heart smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment: How would it have smote him for cutting

a. Archaic: burden. (H&F)

b. Or, hardened himself. (H&F)

c. That is, those things done out of custom or tradition, which are yet sinful. (H&F)

off his head? But custom of sin hardens exceedingly, Heb. 3:13. *Take heed lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And by hindering repentance, it holds men in the trade of sin; *Hardness*, and the heart that *cannot repent*, are joined together, Rom. 2:5.

Use 3. As ever you would hear the Word to salvation, labor for a soft and melting heart, such as good *Josiah* had whose soul melted to hear the words of the law read. The greatest blessing here below, is an heart flexible, and bowed to the obedience of God.

And hereunto consider these motives: 1. That it is a note of a child of God, to have his native hardness mollified, and his natural stubbornness corrected and altered by the Spirit of sanctification, 2 Thes. 2:13. 2. It is one branch of God's covenant, which he ratifies to the elect, and by which he begins his mercy, *I will put a new Spirit within their bowels, I will take away the stony heart, and give them an heart of flesh*, Eze. 36:26. 3. Never can you be framed to grace, no fashion of the Word can be seen on you, till you attain a soft heart. You cannot cast a stone in a mold as you can metal, because it cannot melt. 4. If you bring an hard heart, the very Word (a means of softening others) shall by your malice be perverted to your further hardening. The same sun that softens wax, hardens clay.

Therefore use all good means to get you a soft heart. One is, the Word of God: the law, which is as a plough to break up our fallow grounds; and the Gospel, which is as the warm sun to thaw our hard earth. Be diligent in hearing and reading: the continual drops of this rain, by often falling, pierce the stone of the heart, and break it. 2. Another means is, in outward prosperity to meditate much and often on our inward misery. For ease, plenty, and prosperity harden the heart: Deut. 32:15, and chap. 9:6-7, *Thou art a stiff-necked people: remember, and forget not, how thou provoked the Lord.* A third is, in time of affliction to set in furiously with God, who now intends the softening of our hearts. Wisely apply to yourself the afflictions not of your self only, but of others. See God's displeasure in the cause

Get you a soft heart.

2 King. 23

Motives to labor for soft hearts

The same sun that softens wax, hardens clay.

Means to get a soft heart.

Psal. 101:4

of them, which is your own sin. Be not as Esau that lifted up his voice and wept, but still kept revenge within, but put away a *froward heart*, give sin a bill of divorce; hate it, and put it away. Fourthly, look much and often upon the death of Jesus Christ, and apply it to your own soul. Goats blood warm (they say) softens the adamant, being put in it. Get this adamantine heart of yours broken, by furious application of Christ's death to your own souls. The Gospel shows sin in a more ugly face, than the law can: showing it to be the spear that went to Christ's heart: and that God is now offended by me, whom he vouchsafes in Christ to call a son^a. Lastly, pray often, yea continually, that the Lord would give you a soft heart, which may be fashioned by the Word, to his own liking and likeness. Depend upon the promise, Ezek. 36:26. And praise him, if you have received such a soft and sanctified heart, wherein the seed of God's Word shall rise up with abundant increase of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

Because they have no root.

HAVING spoken of the inward positive cause, why the seed (falling on this stony ground) withered, which was stoniness, or hardness: now we are to proceed to the inward privative^b causes, both here, and in the other Evangelists: namely,

Want of {
 1. Moistness
 2. Earth
 3. Roots

Now all these proceed from the former hardness. For the heart being rocky and stony underneath, it cannot afford either earth or roots, or moisture to the seed. Which we must not understand, as if there were no earth, or roots, or moisture: (For we have seen this ground bring forth much hopeful fruit, which without all these it could not.) But as *Mark* says, οὐκ εἰχε γῆν πολλήν, it had *not much earth*, but as a rock covered with a little crust of earth above, all stones below. It wanted *depth of earth*, Mark. 4:5. So it had

Mar. 4:5

a. Whoever is a son is disciplined as a son. What person will say that God approves all his acts and deeds, so that he is without chastening? But that is to be no son: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. 12:6. (H&F)

b. That is, essential qualities of which one is missing or deprived. (H&F)

no roots, that is, *no deep roots*, no roots to feed the stalk and blade that was come, no roots which could save it from withering in time of heat. This is implied by all the Evangelists, who say, *Because it wanted roots*, it lasted but a while. Again, for the same reason it *wanted moisture*, that is, sufficient moisture. For the property of stony ground is, 1. To be hot and dry, and to drink up moisture apace. 2. It suffers not the moisture to descend deep, so as the external heat soon draws it and licks it up.

Hence note what it is that makes many goodly professors fall short of salvation, after they have gone a long time in a glorious profession; to wit, want of sufficient earth, roots, and moisture.

By *sufficient earth*. I understand a particular and distinct knowledge of the Word, and of their own part in it. For they content themselves with a kind of general knowledge, and agree to it in their understanding, that it is the Word of the kingdom, that salvation is by these glad tidings, etc., and rejoice in the taste of some sweetness of it. But they give it not entrance enough, by applying their mind unto it, nor receive it as a distinct direction in all things, nor will trouble themselves with careful examination of their whole way by it, and much less with application of the signs of faith toward God, or of God's favor toward themselves: and so are justly guilty of their own withering for want of sufficient earth. All their graces at length become like seeds sown on the top of a rock, which sprout suddenly, but wanting *depth of earth* to feed them, wither as certainly.

By *rooting*. I here understand stability, certainty, and sincerity of faith and other graces, which these hearers want. For although there is some earth on the top, yet it is but shallow: and the shallower the root lies, though the blade may sprout more speedily, yet want of depth makes root and blade, and all fail together. So although there is some faith, and joy for a time, with some other comely graces, yet are they superficial, they give not their whole hearts to the Word, there is not sincerity in the bottom, and consequently

Doctr.
The cause
why many
goodly
professors
fall short of
salvation.

Reasons
why profes-
sors fall
short:

They do
not give the
Word the
application
of their
mind, nor
trouble
themselves
with careful
examina-
tion of
their whole
way by it.

Their faith
is superficial
and lacks
sincerity.

Their lack of rooting appears in their changeableness with the times and with every wind of doctrine.

Humor unctious, et compunctious.

Continued graces are shed on us which those hearers are wanting, though they receive much.

Psal. 6:6

Some sorrow for sin is present but they take not too much paines to trouble themselves with true humility.

no rooting, no stability. Their care is more for the blade, than for the root which bears it. Their unsettled faith is set, not in sound inward apprehension, but on outward causes, which being changeable, so is their faith, themselves also carried about with every wave of doctrine, and with wheeling^a of times, and at last led away with the sins of the times, of their callings, or of their own hearts.

By *moistness* here I understand both the *moistness* of *unction*, and of *compunction*.

The *former* is a sound supply of saving grace, which continually feeds and cherishes the root. For as the seed in the earth is brought to fruitfulness by continual showers: so is the seed of grace in the heart, by continued and renewed acts of the Spirit: whose graces are compared to water, and said to be shed on us, in regard 1. of mollification, 2. of ablution, 3. of refrigeration, and 4. of fructification. Now this sound supply of grace these hearers want, and justly, though they want not all moisture; because they go not to the fountain; they draw from some spouts, or some streams which are dried up in the summer heat: whereas, were they by faith carried to the fountain itself, Jesus Christ, their waters would be indeficient,^b and could not be exhausted; for these waters would be a fountain in the belly; still springing up to eternal life.

The latter, namely, the moisture of *compunction*, is sound sorrow for sin, and the sound exercise of mortification; the saints used to *water their couch* with these waters of tears and repentance. Now these hearers want not all sorrow for sin, nor want not something like it: but, they never carried this water nor admitted this moistness deep enough: the hardness of the rock, hindered the descent of these waters to the bottom: it was too much paines^c to afflict themselves seriously; their tears were soon dried up, their sorrow slight, and themselves never truly humbled: and therefore fail, and come to nothing.

Use. It is no certain mark of a child of God, willingly to hear sermons, nor to delight in the hearing, nor receive the doctrine with joy, no nor in many things commendably

a. wheeling of times, that is, ?????

b. That is, 'would not be deficient.' (H&F)

c. Or, effort. (H&F)

to practice for a time. All this is common to the reprobate with the elect. If *David* count the *testimonies of God the joy of his heart*, Psal. 119:111, so *Herod hears John gladly*, and this bad ground receives the seed with joy. If they that are new born again, *taste the graciousness of the Lord*, 1 Pet. 2:3, so also they that after enlightening, sin beyond possibility of repentance, *taste the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, Heb. 6:4-5. And therefore we may not rest in hearing, or in rejoicing, or commending, or obeying the Word, unless we shall find in ourselves that which shall make us able to hold out in all these; that we start not away or wither, as this bad ground, when trial comes.

Mar. 6:20

Quest. What is it that we must bring with out hearing, to make as hold out? By which we may have testimony, that we are the Lord's, and shall be found fruitful in the harvest?

Ans. This text warns us to provide and make sure of three things:

1. Saving and distinct knowledge to walk by.
2. Sound and stable rooting, in faith and grace to stand by.
3. Sufficient measure of grace, still to grow by.

Quest. What is this knowledge?

Ans. It is not only to know Christ a Savior, but to know your own salvation by him; and consequently you know, 1. The vileness of your sins, and your need of a Savior, 2. The pardon of your sins, and the comfort of salvation, 3. Your own change and conversion, and thereby the beginning of salvation, 4. The voice of Christ calling you, and the inhabitation of his Spirit, guiding you in all needful duties, to the end of he way, which is salvation.

Quest. How may I know I have this saving knowledge?

Ans. By these notes: 1. If you give yourself to be taught by the Spirit of God, and lean not to your own counsels. For, *flesh and blood cannot reveal this wisdom*, but the Spirit of God, Mat. 16:17. If you will not believe or

Three things must be prepared to make us hold out.

Saving and distinct knowledge.

Note or signs of sound knowledge.

receive a doctrine, or opinion, but what the Spirit out of the Word teaches, now you have saving knowledge. Carnal and deceitful knowledge is always measured by the scantling^a of reason, of human laws and wisdom, of praise and profit.

Knowledge must directive and not only speculative.

2. If your knowledge be not only speculative, but directive, leading not only to understand, but to undertake your own way: when it is not only a light in itself, but a lantern to your feet, and as a sun constantly shining for your direction. Now know the soundness of it, if you suffer it to lead you against sense, reason, custom, and allow it for your guide in the smallest things as well as in the great, in secret as well as open.

Knowledge must be deeper than the head or tongue, but in the heart.

3. If your knowledge lies deep, as having depth of earth, not only lying in the head, or on the tongue, but in the heart. And therefore (Jer. 31:34) it is said to be *written in thy heart and bowels*, Prov. 4:5, *Let thy heart hold fast my words*. And easily may a man know, if his heart hold this knowledge, by the change it will work there. And that is the fourth note: thus,

General and confused knowledge puffeth up and makes a man proud.

4. Know sound and saving knowledge by the effects, especially three: First, whereas a general and confused knowledge puffeth up, and makes a man proud, this makes him more humble, by leading into the further sight of God, and of himself. Secondly, whereas an hypocrite's knowledge leaves him as earthly as it found him, this changes the man into itself, and makes him heavenly minded, and to savor the things of God, as itself is from heaven, and from God; He is *transformed into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3:18, as meat is turned into the substance of him that eateth. Thirdly, whereas an hypocrite's knowledge may work some joy, it seldom works love of God, fear of God, or trust in him. But this changes all affections. It loves the Word as well as joy. *The fear of God is the beginning of this wisdom*. And this knowledge carries the heart beyond all hypocrites in the affection of joy in it, as the chiefest and most desirable good.

A hypocrite's knowledge leaves him as earthly as it found him.

Pro. 9:10

Now get this knowledge, and you have gotten depth of earth.

a. scantling, or ????????

This is constant, settled against all contrary blasts. This knowledge shall grow up, and have much assurance, when the frothy and superficial knowledge of hypocrites shall vanish as dew in the sun, or smoke in the wind. Get this light, and it shall be as the star to the wise men, to bring you to Christ: as the cloudy and fiery pillar to the Israelites, to bring you to Canaan: as the lightsome lamps to the wife virgins, to bring you into the bridegroom's chamber.

The knowledge of hypocrites shall vanish as smoke in the wind.

The second thing required, is, to look you are strongly *rooted and grounded in the faith, in love*, and all the graces, Eph. 3:17, Col. 1:23, If you continue *grounded and stablished in the faith*, not moved away from the hope of the Gospel: where the Apostle shows, that true justifying faith is the root of all virtues, and that it only keeps the heart unmovable in time of trial.

Deep rooting, in three things.

More specially, look to thy ground and rooting; 1. In the doctrine of faith: 2. In the grace of faith: 3. In the exercise and profession of faith. Believe God. Believe in God. Avouch both.

First, settle yourself in the doctrine of faith, as one that must be *built on the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles*, Eph. 2:20. Else you lay all the frame on a sandy foundation and lay yourself open to be a prey to seducers, papists and atheists. And what other is the end of many common Protestants and professors, who were never busy in the true understanding of their principles of religion? If they see alterations in state, and change of times: or if deceivers, as priests or Jesuits, or libertine teachers assail them by subtlety of wit, and cunning persuasion: or if they see men of great note fall to errors in judgement, or profaneness in life: if many fall from love of the truth, how can they now withstand the blasts of these winds? Being at best but shaking reeds, unstable in their grounds, how can they but fall as an house set on the sand, and the fall is great? How needful therefore is it for us to be fully settled and rooted in our grounds of religion?

Deep rooted in the doctrine of faith.

Quest. How shall I know I am thus rooted in the doctrines of faith.

Notes or
signs three.

Deep rooted
in the graces
of faith:

Faith
unfeigned.

Faith that
is a work of
the Spirit in
a new birth.

Heb. 11:1
ὑπόστα-
σις or
substance.

Because
they are not
so bad as
they were
wont to be,
they are as
good as they
need to be.

The notes
or signs:

Ans^w. By a spirit of discerning, which enlightens the mind, and supplies (even to simple ones) a sharp insight and clearness of judgement, through use of the Word, in all needful matters of salvation: for faith brings in the Spirit, which leads into all truth, and the eye salve still clearing the sight more and more. 2. By building our hearts on the foundation; and that is by believing it: for thus it is a foundation, not in itself only, but unto us, when by faith we are coupled and knit unto it. 3. By growing up on that foundation, and yielding obedience unto it. This note our Savior gives, Mat.7:24, He that heareth these words, and doth the same, is a wise builder that lays his house on a rock, etc.

Secondly, look well to your rooting in the grace or gift of faith. Content not yourself with anything, but only that faith which is called *unfeigned*, 1 Tim. 1:5 and *the faith of the elect*, Tit. 1:2. This is the faith by which the just shall live, Hab. 2:4.

Quest. What is the rooting in the grace of faith?

Ans^w. It is a sound work of God's Spirit, whereby the heart attains a true assurance and persuasion of remission of sins; and the favor of God in Christ. *A work of the Spirit:* because no man is born a believer, but new born. A sound work: for true faith is no empty or windy thing, but a *subsistence and ground*, without hollowness and deceit, as all the special works of God's Spirit in the hearts of the elect are. *A true assurance and persuasion:* because many are deceived by a temporary faith, by blind hopes of mercy at the last, colors either of civil honesty, or religious performance; are miffed^a with the example of such as they admire for wisdom, place, or power, and mistake a conceit for faith; that because they be not so ill as they were wont to be, they are good as they need be. But this man, out of good grounds, rises to good assurance.

Quest. How may I know myself soundly rooted in gift of faith?

Ans^w. By five notable effects of it.

1. Sound affection to Christ, prizing him above all the

a. miffed or missed or ????

the world, and counting all but dung in comparison: in so much as our life is not dear unto us, but (as *Paul*) we dare die for him. And this affection is always joined with affiance in Christ, or holding fast our assurance by him. For as God will still own his people, even *in the furnace*, in the deepest trouble, so must they own him, *Zech. 13*. Yea when Christ may seem to withdraw, and neglect them, as the woman of Canaan. *Abraham* rested in the naked promise, and believed *above hope*, *Rom. 4*, so must we; not hastening to evil means in the want of good, *Isa. 28:16*, *He that believeth, shall not make hast.*

It prizes
Christ
above all
the world.

2. If it purge and renew the heart from all kind of sins, especially secret and inward. Till faith come, the heart is full of reigning guile, and deceitfulness, and hollowness cannot hole out: but *faith purifieth* and garnisheth the heart as a Temple. So faith and inward purity grow together.

It purges
the heart
from all
kind of sin.

Act. 15:9

3. If it keep the heart humble, and hungering. For it is a light in the bowels, causing a man daily to see his sin more clearly, and to seek pardon for it in Christ, casting it out daily by confession and godly sorrow: and still it hungers after righteousness insatiably.

It keeps
the heart
humble.

4. If it be joined with good conscience. These two go undivided. Now a good conscience, being persuaded of God's love in Christ, first excuses the man, that his sins are pardoned; and then in way of thankfulness, has *respect to all the commandments*, and endeavors obedience to all; also it hates, fears, and avoids all sin, because it offends God.

It is joined
to a good
conscience.

Psal. 9:6

5. It is a shield enabling you to withstand the temptations of Satan, and such as run with your own natural inclinations, now it is well grounded. That faith which shall stoutly withstand all sin in time of prosperity, shall prevail mightily against all troubles in time of trial. But if your faith give you up to be led away to vanity, or any ordinary prevailing sin, now in the time of peace, suspect it, trust it not for time of trial. Such as fall from the religion of God, when time of change comes, being led away either by the seductions of deceivers, or persecution of tyrants, are such as shall

It with-
stands
temptations,
even those
that run
with your
own natural
inclinations.

find by examination, that the faith they pretended, was never of power against some known sin, and so was never strongly rooted in Christ.

Strong faith may be cast into the fire and will only come forth purer than gold.

This faith, thus qualified, is strongly rooted. Cast it into the fire, it will come forth purer than gold, 1 Pet. 1:7. And when the best faith of hypocrites (forsaken of carnal help on which it stays itself) shall prove dross, and be consumed, this faith shall set the Christian on a rock, safe in the midst off storms and waves of adversity.

Look to your rooting in the profession of faith.

Thirdly, look to your rooting in the profession and holding forth of your faith. For faith well rooted, will break forth in confession, profession, and defence of God's truth: 2 Cor. 4:13, *I believed, and therefore I spoke*, and Act. 4:20, *We cannot choose but speak*, say the Apostles.

Marks of a sound rooting:

Quest. How may I know I am soundly rooted in the profession of faith?

It is not persuaded by carnal reasons or friends.

Answ. 1. If policy or fear hinder you not from the profession of the truth by day. Many cast themselves into the night with Nicodemus, as if it were a work of darkness to profess the light. Common faith holds it no wisdom to be so forward: pulls in the tender horn, if any scorns, losses, or oppositions be abroad. Carnal reason sways against it, *Master, pity yourself, it shall not be so unto thee*. Carnal friends persuade a man not to be too busy. The fear of a chain, or the wrath of superiors, quite blast it. 2. If by these cold and pinching times you abate not your affection or love to God, his Word, and his children. 3. If you get courage, yea and advantage by opposition: as a strong tree is stronger rooted for shaking winds. Whereof we have an example, Jer. 36:32. When the profane King had burned the Book, *Jeremiah* caused the same to be written again with *many more words*. The more evil men oppose holy doctrine, concerning holy life, and the worship of God, for matter, manner, time, etc. the more godly men will justify and maintain it.

It gets courage and advantage by opposition.

This confession is an acceptable thing to Jesus Christ, and honourable; and Christ looks for it, Mat. 9:28, saying to the two blind men, *Do you believe that I can do it?* Not that he

was ignorant of their faith: but, for them that were present, he would have them confess him: plainly showing, that it is not enough to *believe with the heart*, but confession also must be made *with the mouth*, and practice in the life. This is the fruit, by which we know the roots of faith, though underground.

So much for sound *roots*, to stand by.

The *third* thing for continuance in fruits, is sound *moisture*.

First, that of compunction, or humiliation. Not a scratch of the heart as with a pin, but a thorough breaking of it with the hammer of the Law, and piercing it as with a sword. And good reason: for, 1. The deeper the well, the purer the water, and the more plentiful: so in deep sorrow for sin: whereas a slight sorrow, a sigh and away, is like an hasty rain, a little moistening the top, but soon dried away. 2. Deep sorrow sticks by the soul, and keeps it soft and supple, and in a continual fitness for the practice of piety: whereas a slight sorrow leaves it as dry, as hard, and as barren as before. 3. The water of true repentance is like a spring water that runs continually; not in public only, but in the private closet: the fountain issues still, and every godly man mourns *apart*.

This get unto thee, 1. To be a note^a of godliness. A godly man shall still find his heart a continual fountain of sin, and therefore cannot but with *Jeremiah*, with his *head fountain of tears*. 2. If you would lay up grace safe, lay it in a broken heart: a broken and humble heart will start back at the mention of trouble. One uses this comparison: lay an egg, or a chestnut whole in the fire, when the fire begins to seize on him, he flies and leaps back: but break them, or crack them before, they abide the fire till they be dressed. The same may be said of an heart not soundly broken, nor subdued by sound humiliation.

Now for your sound humbling, behold the issue of your

Rom.
10:9-10

Sound
moisture of
compunc-
tion or
humiliation.

Necessary
breaking of
the heart,
sorrow that
is deep and
continual
keeps the
soul soft.

Zech: 12:12

Motives to
labor for it:
the continu-
ation of sin
in the heart.

a. Or, sign of godliness. (H&F)

corruption ever running, and let the issues of godly grief run as fast, as often.

Sound moisture of unction that never dries up.

The second sort of moisture is that of unction, or sound regeneration: the graces whereof are compared in Scripture, to water, or moisture, Joh. 4:10. A springing or living water, which is never dried up, but is ever in motion, and lives in the issues of it. A godly man, whole leaf must not fade, must be *planted by the rivers of waters*, Psal. 1:3, and, as it is water of life, still moving, so it quicken the dead soul with new life, and brings the Christian at last to everlasting life; *In his belly rivers of water do flow, to lift everlasting.*

Joh. 7:38

Quest. How may I know I have this sound moisture?

Known marks, four:

Ans. By the sound effects of it. 1. Sound *ablution*: it washes the soul from the foul spots and issues of sin, 1 Cor. 6:11, Ye are washed and sanctified by the Spirit of our God. 2. Sound *refrigeration*, or refreshing: two ways; First, cooling and allaying the scorching heat of raging and accusing consciences, as a sweet shower the parching heat of the sun in the drought of summer; in which seasons the Lord calls the weary and thirsty traveller, Mat. 11:28. Secondly, by quenching all unnatural thirst: one drop of this water quenched all the thirst of the world in *Zacheus*; all the thirst of pride and malice against the saints, in *Paul*; all the thirst of wantonness and soul sins, in *Mary Magdalen*: of *Matthew* drinking it, it was said, *Qui priu rapiebat aliena, postmodum centempsit propria*: The horse-leach became a pelican.

One drop of this water quenches the thirst for the world, of pride, malice, and wantonness,.

3. Sound nutrition, or nourishment in grace: as the water is to the fruits and willow trees, to preserve in them life and greenness: so is the water of grace a continual torrent, preserving the life of grace, so as the leaf shall not fall, nor wither away. Hence it is called *milk*, for strength: and *wine*, for cheerfulness and comfort. But *how can a rash grow without mire, or grass without water?*

Job 8:11

4. Continual growth and fruitfulness. Valleys are most fruitful, because moisture stands on them; Egypt, because of the river Niles, and trees by the water bring forth fruit in

in due season, Pals. 1:3. Examine yourself: if you find fructification of faith in the works of faith and piety, and perseverance in grace in all estates, your moisture is found and indeficient.

Quest. What means may I use to attain this sound moisture?

Ans. 1. You must be transplanted out of the dry and barren heath and wilderness of this world, and become a member of the Church. For these waters run *from under the sanctuary*. The fountain is opened to the house of *Judah* and Jerasalem; which were types of the Church. This moisture is (as we heard) sometime called *milk*, feeding the babes of Christ that hang on the breasts of the Church: and sometimes wine, (*Come buy wine and milk*, saith our Savior, Isa. 55:1) which is only to be had in God's vineyard, not in the waste or forest of the world.

2. You shall not want moisture, if you want not thirst and desire. The woman at the well, (Joh. 4) wanted this water, because she had no knowledge of it, or desire after it. But the promise is, no sooner to thirst, than be refreshed and satisfied, Mat. 5:6.

3. You must have right to the fountain of the living water, which is Christ himself, in whom dwelleth all fullness, and *of his fullness thou must receive grace for grace*. Members can want no life or sense, so long as the head is living: neither can rivers be empty, if the fountain be not dry. He that drinks of this water, shall never thirst more.

4. You must provide a bucket to draw from this fountain. The well is deep; you must therefore provide the bucket of faith, which draws virtue daily from Christ. The poor woman that came behind Christ (because her faith durst not look him in the face) yet sucked from him virtue and grace sufficient for her cure.

5. Provide a clean vessel to put this water in, even the vessel of purified and regenerated heart, emptied first from all dregs and filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and washed clean by the *Spirit of sanctification*.

Means of this moisture are five:

Eze. 47:1

1 Pet. 2:2

Joh. 1:16

Rom 1:4

So much of the *inward* causes of unfruitfulness in this second ground, both positive and privative. Now to the outward.

Outward
cause of un-
fruitfulness.

But in time of temptation go away, vers. 13, and, when the sun arose, were parched. As soon as tribulation or perfection comes because of the Word, by and by he is offended, Mat. 13:6,21.

Here are two things to be considered:

1. That persecution comes because of the Word.

2. When it comes, a number of forward and zealous professors fall quite away.

Persecution:
what it is.

For the former. *Persecution properly is a part of the Churches affliction, because of the Word:* in which description we have it distinguished from other affliction and sufferings, 1. In the kind, 2. In the subject, 3. In the causes. For these are not common troubles with other men in the World, which attend common nature, or common occasions, as sickness, poverty, pain, reproach, or common corrections of sins: but proper and peculiar troubles, befalling only the members of the Church, either in truth, or in appearance: and that not for any other cause than *the Word*, as here our Savior expresses; or for *righteousness' sake*, or for the *name of Christ*, and well-doing: so as when either for profession of the Word of God (suppose, no more) or for confession and defence of it, and such courses agree to it, or for the practise of it in conversation, and keeping conscionably to the rules of it, a man is reproached, wronged, endures loss, poverty, restraint, etc. this is properly persecution.

Mat. 5:11
1 Pet. 4:14

Doctr.
Persecu-
tion and
God's Word
undivided.

Now this persecution is *as inseparable from the Word, and professors of it, as beams from the sun, or heat from the fire*, Mat. 16:24, If any will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross*, and follow me. 2 Tim. 3:12, All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, *must suffer persecution*: where the word *all* admits no exception, no exemption. And why?

Reasons:
Christ
foretold it.

1. Christ has foretold it, Mat. 10:2 2, Ye shall be hated of all

men for my name's sake: and, Joh. 16:33, *In the world ye shall have affliction*. So also did his Apostles, 1 Thes. 3:4, For verily when we were with you, *we told you before*, that we should suffer affliction, even as it came to pass, and ye know it.

The cross is inseparable from Christian profession.

The reason is of God's glory.

2. Christ and his cross are inseparable, in respect of God's glory. For now he is glorified, first, in his power and care, supporting, strengthening, and comforting his children, and in greatest trials giving the greatest victories. Secondly, in his wisdom, which brings good out of evil, and light out of darkness. Out of the eater he brings meat: as a skilful physician tempers poison, to a remedy. Out of the evil wills of men, he brings forth his own righteous will, and much good to his afflicted servants: awakens security, hammers pride, exercises patience, etc. Thirdly, God is glorified in the graces of his servants, which are kept on work, and walking: who if they were evil still, would as still bodies fill with bad humors, and grow as full of lusts, as unsteered ground of weeds, or standing waters of mud. They must bestirred our of the *dead sea* of prosperity, in which commonly no grace lives, to keep life and motion in their faith, fear, prayer, love, etc. A man that is fainting, the best way to fetch him, is, by pulling and wringing his parts: so does the Lord with his children, lest their graces should faint. Fourthly, he is glorified in his truth; for persecution draws out confession, and publishing of his truth: as *Paul's bonds were famous* in all the judgement-hall: and the persecution raised at *Jerusalem* against the disciples, dispersed them and the truth by them, Act. 8:1-2.

Phil. 1:13

This comes to pass by the inveterate hatred of Satan, and that irreconcilable malice of the world against the Word. Saul was quiet enough before his conversion, and so long as he carries the letters against the saints: but instead of those letters, let him once carry the name of Christ, now the devil buffets him, and raises up tumults in every place against him, and he is sure that now nothing but *afflictions and bonds abide him everywhere*: so the wicked of the world ever hated God himself, and whatsoever belongs unto

Act. 20:23

Luk. 2:34

Prov. 15:10

Gal. 1:13

Persecution
compared to
scorching
of the sun:

him, and most hates that which hath the most express image of God. Christ himself, because he is the express form of his Father's image, can never be held out, but he it presently a butt or *mark of contradiction*. The Word of Christ resembling the nature of God, they hate, because it is the sentence of condemnation against their sin: the Spirit of God, in his motions and graces, because he convicts them, and reproves them of sin: the profession and professors of the Word, because it is a light held out, reproving their darkness, and manifesting their deeds to be evil. Godly admonitions and counsel they hate, because they are in love with their evil. *Instruction is evil to him that forsakes the way. And they that do evil, hate the light, and will not come unto it, lest their deeds should be manifest to be evil*, Joh. 3:19. Let him be publicly taught, or privately admonished, so long as he is resolved to hold his sin, he makes no other or better use of it, than to raise up thence his distempered passions against the truth, both in the bringers and professors. Yea, sometime while such men think they stand for God's religion and truth, they are most desperate enemies and persecutors of it, through ignorant zeal and blind superstition, would set up that which pulls down truth: as *Paul* beyond measure wasted the Church, out of blind zeal for the traditions of the Elders: so do the most devout Papists at this day.

4. The similitude used by our Savior here, and by the Holy Spirit elsewhere, shows the same, comparing affliction and persecution to the scorching of the sun: Cant. 1:5^a, *The sun hath looked upon me*. Psal. 121:6, *The sun shall not smite thee by day*. For, 1. The sun does not more ordinarily or daily arise, than persecution ordinarily awaits the Word. 2. As the sunbeams diffuse and disperse themselves into every place; so the beams of this sun of perfection are darted in every place where the sun of righteousness shines in his Word. 3. *As no man can hide himself from the heat of the sun*, Psal. 19:6, So no godly man can hide himself from this heat, but one time or other it find him out. 4. The sun has not more beams to scorch and dry up.

a. Song of Solomon 1:5. (H&F)

the moisture of the earth, than Satan and this wicked world have to dry up the moisture of grace where it is not sound: sometimes by inward and spiritual temptation, sometimes by open tyranny, and hostility by foreign enemies; sometimes by secret delusions, and persuasions of heretics and deceivers; sometimes by false brethren and domestic enemies, who, the more inward they be, the more are they dangerous: all these raise up persecutions against the saints of the most High. And lest weapons should be wanting in this war against the godly, the world is the devil's armory, which by fair and foul, by promises and threats, love and hatred, and a thousand ways else, assaults the graces of the godly, so as (*if it were possible*) the very elect should be seduced.

Mat. 24:24

Prosperity is no note or sign of the Church. as Bellarmine and the Priests have it.

Use 1. This confutes plainly the error of *Bellarmino* and other Priests, whose proposition in the marks of the Church is, *Quicumque floret prosperis successibus, ij sunt vera Ecclesia*, Those that flourish and prosper in the world, they are the true Church. In the eighth chapter of *Daniel*, vers. 13, there is a prophecy of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, that *little horn*, who cast down some of the host of heaven, and the stars of heaven, and trod them under his feet, and extolled himself against the Prince of the Host, and took away the daily sacrifice, and cast down the place of his sanctuary, and cast the truth to the ground. The text adds, Thus shall he do and prosper. Lo, *Antiochus*, who is mad and furious against the Church, has prosperous success: does this agree with *Bellarmino*? And by this proposition *Cain* should have been the true Church, not *Abel*, whom he slew: and *Ishmael*, of whom were twelve dukes, Gen. 25:16, not *Isaac* whom he scoffed and persecuted: My Lord *Esau* that has four hundred men at his heels, Gen. 33:1, and not *Jacob*, who dares not look his Lord in the face, nor come near him till he had bowed seven times. What outward prosperity had the Church in Egypt, in Babylon, in the ten persecutions for 300 years together before *Constantine*? Or how stands that assertion with our Savior's prediction, that true Christians should be *appointed as sheep for the*

Mat. 10:16

slaughter? Yea, with our Savior's condition, who was the Head of the Church, to whom the members are conformable? He was born in an obscure place, lived despised among his own, a man of such sorrows as never was any sorrow like his; his poverty such, as he had not water to put in his head, not a cottage to put his head in; his death painful, shameful, accursed. And such is ordinarily the afflicted and despised estate of the Church on earth.

Expect trouble by true religiousness.

Use 2. Dream not of a religion pleasant to flesh, if we will be truly religious: for this is to deceive ourselves: but make account of hatred and trouble in the world, if you mean to keep the Word. For the Church being seated in the world, which is the kingdom of Satan, it cannot be other then a very Egypt or Edom to the Israel of God, where that hellish *Pharaoh* raises all his power to pursue us into the Red Sea of terrors, temptations, and a thousand deadly dangers on every side, if we indeed set forth to Canaan. Let us therefore wisely *cast our costs, and reckon our charges*, and weigh whether we can contentedly suffer so much loss for the Word as it may cost us.

Luk. 14:28

True cause of good men's troubles.

Use 3. This shows us the true cause, why the world hates and persecutes godly men. It will be ready to tell you they are pestilent fellows, and as seditious as *Paul* was; as great enemies to *Caesar* as Christ was, no good subjects; as factious and schismatical as *Micah*, who will not speak as the 400 false prophets. The wicked of the world clamor against them as evildoers: for so did they against their Head, *If he were not an evildoer, we would not have brought him to thee.* And what are they but a pack of dissemblers, and hypocrites, and never a good of them all?

Joh.18:30

But what? Can the world that lies in wickedness, hate and prosecute wickedness indeed? Why then does she not hunt out open and outrageous evils in any other sort of men? Or does she not love her lovers, and reward most bountifully most prodigious evil men?

True causes of the world's hatred of the godly.

But if we will believe our Lord, who was best acquainted with the world's hatred, he tells us here, that persecution is raised against him for the Word's sake: and that is the proper cause

whatsoever other colorable cause be pretended: for, 1. The Word has brought them to Christ, whom they hater and therefore his members. 2. The Word hath called them out of the world, which loves only her own, and hates them, Joh. 15:19. 3. The Word has freed them from the conformity and fashions of the world, that now they cannot run into the same excess of riot; therefore it speaks evil of them, 1 Pet. 4:4. Contrary coūrses cause contrary affections. 4. The wicked *Cain's* of this world see their own works evil, and their's to be good, and therefore hate them, 1 Joh. 3:12.

The thing then which is hated and persecuted in good men, is goodness, the name of Christ, the Word of God, soundly held out, and stuck unto.

And this must be so far from discouraging good men, whether preachers or professors, who are most extremely hated, as they must rather suspect themselves, that their hearts are not sound, or their courses not sincere, when all men speak well of them. Sound profession and persecution are inseparable: and, Luk. 5:26, *Woe to you, when all men speak well of you.*

Use 4. Not to condemn a religion, or refuse a doctrine, because it is persecuted and gainsaid by many, and by great ones: for this is a mark of true religion, and the condition of the Word of Christ; persecution (saith our text) comes *because of the Word*: so as neither is that religion which is so plausible to the world, to be therefore embraced; nor that which the world hates, to be refused: multitude being as false a note of the Church, as the former external prosperity. Straight is the way that leads unto life, and *few* there be that find it. Therefore *look not on the blackness* of the Church, though the sun look on her, Cant. 1:5^a, for within she is comely.

Use 5. To comfort those that are persecuted for the Word and well doing. First, that the cause is good, which the world persecutes so eagerly: 1 Pet. 4:14. If ye be railed on *for the name of Christ*, blessed are ye; for the Spirit of glory and

a. Song of Solomon. (H&F)

The thing hated in good men is goodness.

Comforts in persecution.

Heb. 13:13

of God rests on you, and is glorified by you. Secondly, behold Christ a partner and companion in your suffering. In all your troubles he is troubled. Hence it is called *the reproach of Christ*. You helps Christ to bear his cross; and he helps you, Col. 1:24. *I fulfill the sufferings of Christ*. And conformity with him in the cross, brings conformity in the crown. If we suffer with him, wee shall also reign with him. Thirdly, this fire of persecution may seem to burn you up, but shall not consume you, but only purge and perfect you. Every Christian resembles the bush, which *burned with fire but consumed not*, Exod. 2:3. Nay, wait with faith and patience, and according to *Moses* his prayer for *Joseph*, *The good will of him that dwelt in the bush, shall come on thy head*, Deut. 33:16.

So much of the first doctrine. I proceed to the second: namely, that -

Doctr.
Many
glorious
professors
fall off in
persecution.

When persecution for the Word cometh, many glorious professors, who joy in it in the time of peace, renounce and forsake it: so the text has it, In the time of temptation they go away: and Matthew, They are offended immediately; that is, even those hearers, which readily attended, joyfully received, willingly believed, and hopefully sprang up; these now go away. And whence go they? Answ. 1. From their affection and love of the Word in the heart: the root within is dried up with this heat of the sun. 2. From their profession, and confession of mouth: their leaf also falls. 3. From external reformation, many of them losing their greenness, and apparently withering, and falling to earthliness or profaneness, and some to distaste the good way known. 4. From their fellowship and communion of saints: for as they were never knit by faith unto the Head, so were they never by love to the members: nor are they further members of this body, than a wooden leg, which is no member but in appearance: for, Had they been of us (saith John) they would have continued with us, 1 Joh. 2:19. 5. From their faith, joy, zeal; in a word, from all they formerly tasted sweetness in: they utterly and wholly depart from their faith, comfort, etc. now blade and root and all is gone.

They fall
from several
things:

And why do they thus fall off from all goodness?

Ans. 1. Persecution is distasteful and contrary to nature, as where nothing is but nature, it shuns it *vijs et modis*, by all means whatsoever. Nature will suffer nothing for Christ or for salvation by him. And no marvel, seeing tribulation for the Gospel daunts many good hearers, who being converted, and having attained to a sound and saving faith, but having yet also flesh as well as spirit, and too much love of flesh, easily shrink from Christ and profession, at least for a time; as *Peter* did, till Christ looked graciously back upon him: and who can deny, but that the rest of the disciples were graced with a true faith? yet after many warnings, and much confirmation of their Lord, so soon as ever he was apprehended, before themselves were sought for, they all left him and fled, every one willing to shift for himself and save his skin. So as persecution makes sound and unsound fly off, but with great difference. For the sound Christian goes away as *Onesimus, for a season*, Phil. 15, that God his Master may receive him forever: the hypocrite in persecution utterly, and wholly, and forever departs from the faith, from the comfort and profession of it. One flies the field, and comes no more: the other returns, and is more valiant. In one word, the difference is, the faith of the one is temporary, in the other not his faith is temporary, but his failing^a.

2. These fair professors in persecution go away, because they never gave the Word sound rooting in them: and therefore as a blustering wind easily overturns the tree that is but shallowly rooted, so does the storm of persecution throw up him that wants firmness. Or to insist in our Savior's instance: as we see the scorching heat of the sun burn up and wither the corn that is not deeply rooted, though come up never so goodly in show: so the sun of persecution dries up the greenness of these shallow and unrooted professors. The same things our Savior expresses in a clean contrary metaphor, Luk. 6:48, comparing persecution or troubles for the Gospel, to water: when the water rise, and rain falls, and flood beat on the house, it

a. We must remember, we are told, "beware of men: for they will deliver you up," Mat 10:17, and, "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," Mat 10:23. Paul also escaped over the wall in a basket (Act. 9:25) lest he be killed. And who will accuse those who have acted upon the command, as if by weakness they would 'save their skin;' for we are warned, we are told, and we are allowed to escape. The discussion must resolve to such fear as causes a person to withdraw from the truth of Christ; but it must not resolve to accusation of 'failing' in any who is able to escape hazard or evil men, as if the opportunity and the success were not of God that they might go on in Christ and the Word of truth. (H&F)

Difference
of sight in
good men
and others.

falls by and by, *because it was not strongly founded on a rock.*

3. They are offended at the Word (saith the text) and it go away: Mat. 13:21, *by and by he is offended*: two ways: 1. When the Word puts them to this choice, whether they will leave Christ, or their temporals; whether they will forego their goods, liberty, friends, and life, or forego Christ. This choice offended the young man, who rather than he will part with his possessions, bids Christ farewell^a. This choice offended the false Apostles, Gal. 6:12, who would confound Law and Gospel together, because they would not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. This choice offended many forward professors it the days of King *Edward* the sixth, who in the days of Queen *Mary*, were *by and by offended*, and fell off. And if times should turn, and this choice should offer itself upon many forward ones, experience of former times shows plain enough what they would do. They that the day before, while Christ rides in triumph, cry *Hosanna, Hosanna*; the next day after, when he is apprehended, will cry, Crucify, crucify: so immediately are they offended. Persecution affliction (fliction for the Gospel, is like the worme that flieth foHtehls flourishing Gourd, and that fo iaddenly will put but a little time betweene their freshnesse a«d fading. 2. When the doctrine pursues them within, fblowes then* home to their consciences, • and f eekes to fet in the light their inward corruptions, presently these glorious Proref-forsare-sfended, Ioh.6.60. When Christ powerfully taught the Iewes⁵ that he was the Bread which came from heaven, and the Eathers ate of ,hims: and themselves muft feei?! on him to eternallife : this was an hard fay ing. What, are they all this while out of the way to heaven, unleffe he bring them in ? Now they marmare, frem thence goe to ©pposition, and from thence goe quite away, a,nd remfe to hear him longer. Even fb not a few, that boaft fometimes of their faith and love to Religion; of their fetledfsele and reloluti-on to dye with Christ, rather then deny him ; of their reverence and good afteclien to his Ministers : Let the Gospel be . . .

Mar 10:17-

Men of-
fended at
the Word in
two ways.

a. We do not know this: Jesus told him specifically to “go” and to “sell all, etc.” so that we know he went, we know he was sad at the prospect, but we know not the outcome; a good indication of it is the saying, “Jesus beholding him loved him” (Mar. 10:21) and said, “come follow me.” Many of us too may bloom late or after hard season of struggle, yet we may bloom indeed and gloriously, as this one did if he was worthy of love. (H&F)

more to come . . .