

Alexander Henderson's Sermons

Alexander Henderson

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At St. Andrews

On day of humiliation observed on the occasion of swearing the covenant, end of March or beginning of April

Fragment of Preface

The following Sermon, with the two addresses that precede it, were delivered, as appears from internal evidence, at St. Andrews, on a day of special humiliation observed there, prior to the swearing of the National Covenant, probably towards the end of March, or the beginning of April, 1638. The Covenant had already been sworn and subscribed at Edinburgh on the 28th of February of the same year. Copies of it were thereafter taken to all parts of the country, and solemnly sworn after due humiliation and fasting. St. Andrews was one of the three only burghs in Scotland, of which Aberdeen and Crail were the other two, from which Commissioners were not present at the first swearing

of the Covenant in Edinburgh; and Henderson, as being the fittest person for such a mission, was sent to that city and important seat of learning, to endeavour to gain it over to the Covenanted cause. We have here the Sermon and addresses he delivered on the occasion, by means of which, in part at least, the object of his mission was successfully achieved. The services of the day seem to have consisted (1) of what was called a “Preface”, only a fragment of which remains, the first page or two of the MS. being lost; (2) of the reading of Scripture, the portion read being Deuteronomy 28; (3) of a kind of running comment on the chapter read, with application to the particular business in hand; and (4) of a Sermon on Psalm 110:3

... of humiliation, it will not be easy for you to win [to it] now. And except that ye humble yourselves now when ye have health, wealth, and peace, the Lord sall cause you to humble yourselves under heavy and sore straits, when ye cannot get yourselves helped. There is no way for you to prevent the wrath of God, that has been masking (q. brewing) in a cloud above you this long time, but only by humbling of yourselves before God, and under his mighty hand. And because ye are out of use of humiliation, and it is long since ye had such a fast as this, and ye cannot tell how to perform it;¹ let us address ourselves to the Lord, and beseech him that he would teach us how we sall proceed in this work, in every point thereof; that so we go away with some sense of peace and reconciliation in our souls, through Jesus Christ. And because it is he who can humble thir haughty and proud hearts of ours, therefore let us address

¹Public fasts, which before had been very frequent in the church, were almost unknown during the domination of Episcopacy, being discountenanced and disallowed by the rulers both in Church and State, See Row, *passim*.

ourselves to him, to seek and to beg of him that he would humble them; that so this day's exercise may prove acceptable to him, and comfortable to our own souls.

Remarks on Deuteronomy 28

Here was read after prayer, Deuteronomy 28

It fears me that a great part of you knows not what you are doing now, or what you are about. It fears me that the Lord desert you, and leave you to yourselves, at this time: and it will be but idle pains for me to speak to you, if the Lord [leave you] to wrestle with your own ill hearts. Ay, we will have [all of] us just cause to fear that the Lord stake us with blindness of mind and hardness of heart, and dead and senseless souls. To have a blind mind and a hard heart, and a dead and senseless soul, in a day of a solemn humiliation, that is the most fearful judgment that can be. I think the very naked reading of thir same words should have moved you more than I can see any appearance amongst you. I perceived by many of your countenances and gestures that ye did not so much as to take heed what was reading; many of you would have heard ane idle tale better and would have bended your ears to it.

1. Ye may perceive here that all good things whilk are comforts and all evil things whilk are troubles, they come from the Lord. There is nothing that is comfortable to us but it is a blessing of God; and there is nothing that is hurtful to us but it is a curse of God; at least it tastes of a curse. Atheists, they cannot see that God is the sender of blessings and cursings, but ascribes them to natural reasons—to ane ill year and ane good year. Ane ill year that is dear, they say that it comes from the ill and unseasonable weather that has been before; or if a year be cheap, that has come from the good and

seasonable weather that has been before;¹ but they look not to that wherefra it is that those storms and that good weather comes. They may well look to the air, but that is the highest of it; they look not to the highest link that is in God's hand: they see not God's providence to be the highest link of that chain, and he has it into his own hand. Ilk ane acknowledges a providence of God, but ilk ane is not affected with that providence in everything. 2. Ye may perceive here, that all the ills that comes upon man, they come upon him for sin. Without we had sinned, we needed not to have feared any of these curses; but when we sin, we are liable to them all. "Because they hearkened not to the commandments of God; because they walked not in his ways; because they kepted not his statutes and judgments and testimonies", therefore did all those evils come upon them. 3. Do ye think, when ye hear of all these several curses, that they can come to pass, or that they could come to pass and be execute upon the people of God? Ay, indeed; for as terrible-like as ye think them, and as incredible-like, there was not one of them all but they came to pass, even that whilk would seem to be most strange. This same they did, for as cruel-like as ye think it; women did eat their own children. And therefore think not but God is a just God; and as he can perform his promises to his own, and will do it, so will he also perform these curses upon his enemies. And he will perform more than is here upon them—even all that is not written in this book; even all the plagues and judgments of God, both written and unwritten, sall come upon the hard-hearted sinner. They sall all rest upon him who says, I sall have peace, though I walk in the imagi-

¹For some years previous to 1638 there had been a succession of bad harvests, from which the country had suffered severely. "The 34 [1634] year of God was a very sore year to our labourers; but the 35 [1635] year was the worst that in this last age was seen." Baillie's Letters, Ban. ed. I. p. 5. We shall find the preacher often recurring to the subject.

nations of my own heart. I would have all of you to take notice of that general that is contained in the 26th verse of the former chapter, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” Now, beloved, I wish that every one of you but understood the meaning of this same; and so know that without repentance and faith, this is an iron chain tying you to the vengeance and curse of God. And the chain has sundry links in it. 1. It speaks of the curse of God. What is that? All miseries that can be in this life; then death at the end of it; and then an everlasting separation of soul and body from that living and life-giving presence of God. This is not like the railing of men, who rail against you, nor is it like the punishment of any prince upon earth; for who can curse if God bless, or who can bless if he curse? He has death, hell, etc., all of them are in his power: therefore, we should not fear him who can kill the body, but fear him who can cast both soul and body into hell-fire. Now, believes thou that this is the curse and the malediction of God, and yet trembles not at it? then it is a token that thou art near unto it. 2. He speaks here of “every one”, from him that sitteth upon the throne to him that sitteth behind the mill;¹ from him that heweth the wood to him that draweth the water,—every one, from the highest to the lowest. The highest is not exempted from this curse because of his greatness and majesty, nor is the meanest overseen because of his baseness. Whoever thou be, magistrate or subject, lord or laird, high or laigh, if thou endeavour not to obey the law of God, then the curse and malediction of God shall be upon thee. 3. He says—“That continues not in all that is written, in this law, for to do them.” That is, albeit it were possible for thee to keep some of these things that are commanded here, yet if thou keep not all of them, then thou art

¹This and the following proverbial expression are not taken from the passage commented on, but from other parts of Scripture, viz., Exodus 11:5, Deuteronomy 29:11

guilty of the breach of them all; and so the malediction of God is due to thee. And so, thou must either confess thy sins, and cry for mercy through Christ (and if thou beg it thou shall get it), or otherwise, the curse of God shall seize upon thee. 4. He says—“That continues not.” Even as the apostle, writing to the Galatians, says of this same—that is, although we should keep the whole commandments, being children, in our young years, and when we are come to men’s age, and yet transgress them when we are come to old age, then we are guilty of the breach of them, because we have not continued in the keeping of them: and so, without repentance, we cannot escape the wrath and malediction of God. Yea, cursed is every one. Then the sinner, till he repent him of his sin, he is cursed already: if he live in that estate he is born into, he is void of grace, repentance, and faith; and if he go on so, then he must perish in sin, and so he cannot escape the curse of God. And so evermore till we repent, the curse of God is on us, albeit we be not sensible of it. Cain, he was accursed of God—God’s malediction was on him; yet he forgets it, and takes him to building of cities: and yet, for all that, the curse of God seized upon him. Even so a man may be busied about his lawful negotiations, and yet the curse of God may be attending him all that time, and light upon him at last. Beloved, there is a time wherein, as it is Psalm 78, the Lord shews himself to be patient towards sinners, that he will not pour out his curse upon them; but think not, for all that, that it will be always so; but there is a time also when he will stir up all his indignation. And learn to understand this, and carry it evermore about with you into your hearts, that the malediction and curse of God is upon all who continues not in everything that is written in this book, to do them: there is no exception made at all, but only upon repentance for sin, and by faith in Christ. And, therefore, examine yourselves, and try your sins: we take few days or few hours to examine our sins, but we take many days to commit sin;

therefore examine and see that ye flatter not yourselves, but see what ye have done. See if ye have set up ane idol into your heart, whether it be the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life; see if that monster be lurking into any nuik (nook) of your heart. Or see if ye have any idol without you, that has got in God's place and room from you, so that ye cannot say, except ye be partial to yourselves, but ye have been more careful to please men than to please God; and so ye have made a god of them, albeit your conscience told you that ye did wrong in so doing. And ye of this same city, ye are guilty of this. Now, examine whether or not that whilk ye have done has been for satisfying of your own ambition, for fear of the world, and for preserving of your worldly porticns, more than any other thing; these has made you to do many things that ye have done. Consider, also, if ye have not been formal in the service and worship of God. I am not now to flatter you, and yet I am not to withhold that from you whilk is your due. Ever since I kent you, in this city, and while I was amongst you,¹ I ever kent you to be diligent observers of the Lord's Day. But I would have you to consider, if ye have rested only upon the outward part of God's worship, or if ye have laboured also to join the inward part with it, and have been labouring, in the use of the means, to get a grip (hold) of Christ; that as ye go beyond many others in the external part, so ye do also in the internal, and has been sorrowful when ye have not found power with the means ye had. I know many of you who has said, when ye came out from the preaching (and I have found it while I was amongst you²), that your souls

¹Henderson was matriculated in St Salvator's College, St Andrews, Dec. 19, 1599. Aiton, p. 88. He remained in St Andrews as a Regent till his settlement at Leuchars in 1614, and he continued, Leuchars being so near at hand, to speak of that city as his ordinary residence. See Report of the Assembly at Glasgow.

²"I have found it while I was amongst you." Is this to be understood as a confession of the preacher, that while living at St Andrews he had no sense of divine things? If so, it tends to confirm Dr M'Crie's opinion, that the change in

has been nothing bettered by it. And see if ye prepared yourselves, before yve went to the kirk, and begged a blessing from God to the work ye were to go about. And, indeed, ye cannot deny but ye have given over great place to the devices of men in the service of God; and almost ye are the last in revoking them again. Consider, also, how many oaths are to be heard in your streets. But, especially, consider the guiltiness of the breach of that oath that was made among you, not many years since, when ye did swear to this confession of faith.¹ And [for ?] the profanation of the Sabbath. I grant ye had bad example to that, but that will not excuse you.² Ye may say to us, “We had no wyte (blame) of it, but others had the wyte,” and so make that an excuse to us; but it will not excuse you before God. And what religion has been among you in private, and in your families? Any catechising of your families? How many families is there among you who has convened every day, morning and evening, to incall upon God together? It may be ye have come to the kirk, to God’s worship there, and some of you gone secretly to your cabinets; but that is not enough, unless ye use religious family exercises. And, indeed, there is matter of humiliation for this; for if every one

his sentiments, effected by the sermon of Mr Robert Bruce, went much deeper than a conversion to Presbyterianism.—*Sketches of Scottish Church History*, by Dr M’Crie, p. 225.

¹“The whole brethren of the Presbytery of St Andrews subscribed the Confession of Faith upon the Second of August 1604, as the Act following declareth.” Calderwood, p. 484. When Andrew Melville and his brethren were summoned to London in 1606, they carried with them a copy of this Act, because it bore, among the rest, the signature of M. George Gladstones.—See James Melville’s “Declining Age” etc.

²The Scottish Episcopal clergy of that day for the most part held and maintained the High Church opinions concerning the Fourth Commandment; and nothing had tended more to lower their character in public esteem than the lax manner in which they kept the Lord’s day. Spottiswood himself did not scruple to travel during the hours of divine service.

of you had taken pains upon your families, as ye should, there had not been so foul a defection as there is.

And then for the commandments of the second table, by experience I may speak of some of them. There are some of you so far on in drunkenness and excess that it is not counted a sin amongst you, nor is it counted shameful to be drunk; for that whilk we count not to be a sin, we will not be ashamed of it: and indeed, sin is then come to a great height, when men becomes impudent and shameless in it.¹ I will not say that every one of you has been thus ways set, but I know there are many among you who are not ashamed to be seen drunken upon the streets, nor are not ashamed to see others drunk, that they are even like beasts; not because beasts are subject to this intemperancy, but because it makes them beastly who are so: and, indeed, it is not so ill to be a beast as to be beastly. This mischievous sin it brings a man into all ill, and enables him for all ill. I must tell you, I think it expedient that this be mended among you, or otherwise ye cannot look for a blessing from God. And therefore ye who are magistrates would have a care to see order tane with it through the town; and ye who are masters of families would take care of yourselves and your families. And then for your dealing towards other men, and every one of you towards another, ye know I am but a stranger to you in these things. But I would have you not to think it enough to be Christians in your dealing, according to the Act of Parliament, but according to the word of God. Christ gives a very good rule for this in your dealing towards others; Whatsoever ye would that others did unto you, the same do ye unto them. Make this your rule and

¹“Tuesday, the 27th, we came to St Andrews. We found there in the people much profanity and ignorance, swearing, *drunkenness*, and the faults of the worst burghs.” Baillie’s *Narrative of the Assembly*, 1642. According to the same authority, the leading minister of the place, Archdean Gladstones, was a habitual and scandalous drunkard.

square in all your dealings towards others, and see wherein ye have transgressed that. But our hearts do deceive us, and ilk ane has a fault with their calling. There is no calling but it has a fault, through our corruption that is in us; and commonly the fault sticks as fast to us as the calling does: and therefore ye who would approve yourselves to God, strive to know the points and faults in your calling. And albeit ye be free of sins in your calling, yet strive against the sins of the time; for these sall bring wrath upon you, if ye follow them. It is not possible for any to overtake all their own faults; and many thinks that they are but strangers to themselves who speak this, and yet it is true. O but we be far from that soberness, righteousness, and holiness that the Lord requires of us, and that we are bound to aim at. And therefore, since that this is a time of solemn humiliation, remember that we humble ourselves indeed before God. Remember that God searches and sees what is in us; and let us search and see it also. And let us take no rest till we find out that whilk is our idol, and it be known to us to be a sin; and having found out the malefactor, bring him out and present him before Christ, the Judge of the world. And therefore let us beware of hypocrisy in this, but deal honestly; that so the Lord may send down a blessing upon this exercise, to his glory and our comfort. And therefore I remit, etc.

Sermon, Psalm 110:3

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.” The reader will remember that the sermon preached by Henderson at the Glasgow Assembly in the end of this year, on the occasion of the excommunication of the bishops, was from the 1st verse of this Psalm.

It is, beloved in the Lord, very expedient, and sometimes most necessar, that we turn away our eyes from kings and their greatness, from kirkmen and men of state, and that we turn them towards another object, and look only to Jesus Christ, who is the great king, priest, and prophet of his kirk. The godly in former times, who were kings, priests, and prophets themselves, used to do this, and that before Christ; and mickle more is it required of us now in thir days, seeing we live in troublesome times; for there is a comfort that comes to the children of God that way. The first part of this psalm it expresses to us the threefold office of Christ, and the second part of it expresses the valiant acts our Lord Jesus does by these his three offices, but especially by his princely office; whilk indeed is his worst studied office by many men in the world. We would, many of us, willingly take him for our prophet to teach us, and for our priest to intercede for us, and be a sacrifice for our sins, but when it comes to his princely office, to direct us what we should do, then we would be at that whilk seems best in our own eyes.

His princely office is described unto us here three ways. 1. In relation to God himself; “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand.” 2. In respect of his enemies; “The Lord sall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies.” Were his enemies never so many, and never so despiteful against him, yet he sall rule in the midst of them. And indeed this is a very admirable part of his kingly office, that even in the midst of his enemies he sall have a kingdom for himself, in despite of them, and all that they can do or say against it. 3. The third, wherein the glory of his kingly office consists, is in thir words that I have read to you: and that is in relation to, and in respect of the subjects of the kingdom of Christ. And they are described here to be a people belonging to Jesus Christ; to be a people on whom God manifests his power; and they are a most willing people, a people who counts

holiness to be their chiefest beauty. And they are so marvellously multiplied, that it is a wonder to consider of it: there is no moe drops of dew will fall, nor they will not fall any faster in a morning than the Lord will multiply them, when he is pleased to do so. And although the Lord sometimes multiply them in a secret manner, yet still the multitude stands to be true.

That the purposes may be the better tane up by you who will take heed to them, consider of these parts in the words. 1. The persons of whom the Psalmist speaks here. “Thy people”. 2. The properties of these people in this day: They sall be a willing people; a holy people; a people who sall be miraculously multiplied. And so their properties is willingness, holiness, and multiplication.

Many proofs has been of the truth of this prophecy since the beginning—that the Lord’s people sall be willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness; from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth. There were many evident proofs of the truth of this since the beginning of the plantation of the gospel into the world. And surely we know not a more evident and notable proof of it than this same that is presently into this land, nor think I that there be any who can show the parallel of it.¹ The Lord has made them willingly to offer up themselves, and all that they have, for him. And they are a people of holiness; albeit it is true, indeed, many has been brought to it from this quarter and that quarter of the land, since the beginning, to be more holy than they used to be. And if the multiplication of them be not wonderful, I cannot tell what ye will tell me of that is more wonderful; so that indeed it is a miracle to all who hear of it. In the time while Christ was upon the earth there were two sorts of miracles to be seen;—first, Christ made the dumb to speak, the blind to see, the lame to walk, etc.: this

¹The preacher alludes here, of course, to the remarkable unanimity with which the people of Scotland gave themselves to the covenanted cause.

indeed was a great miracle. The second sort of miracles was of him who did see these things wrought by Christ, and yet for all that, did not believe in him who did work them. Even so there are two sorts of wonders in this same time wherein we live;—first, how the Lord has multiplied his people, and made them to be so many, whereas, at the first, we thought them to be but very few; secondly, we cannot but wonder at these who observe not God’s hand into it; and indeed we cannot but wonder that any can be so blind that they observe not the very hand and finger of God in the work. Ay, we who have been witnesses to it, for the most part, we cannot but wonder at the work of God in it. It has not been man’s wit has done the work, and multiply so, but only God has done it; and we cannot tell how; but only we see that there are numbers continually multiplied.

I. “Thy people.” Here is a note of property, and a note of distinction. First, it is a note of property. They are God’s people—God has absolute right over a people, and there is none who has any right over them but he alone. It’s true all people are under him, but he calls not all his people after this manner. All things are for God, and subordinate to him; the absolute power to rule and to command these people is in God’s hand, and he will not give that power to any other over them: and he has good reason so to do. 1. Because he was thinking upon his people from all eternity; and there was none who did that but only he. 2. He made us and fashioned us in time; and neither any authority or magistrate did that¹ 3. Who is it that provides means for their sustenance daily, and makes these means effectual, but only the Lord? A man cannot make one pyle (blade) of grass, or one ear of corn, to grow for thy entertainment, but only the Lord: and when thou hast gotten these things, it is the blessing

¹The preacher has in his eye here the claim to lordship over the Church put forth by the bishops, and of supremacy over the Church put forth by the king, at this time.

of God that makes them effectual. For when ye say the grace to your meat, say ye it to man? No, ye say it only to God. So that every way ye are God's people. And then, whilk is more, and therefore we are bound to be his people, no man can redeem the life of his brother, nor give a price sufficient for his life, let be (let alone) for his soul, and yet the Lord, he has redeemed us from hell, and from the grave; and therefore we belong to him. Then is it not the Lord who enters in covenant with thee, and says, I will remember thy sins no more? Then albeit all the world should remember thy ill deeds, yet if the Lord remember them not, then thou art blessed. It is he who says, I will write my laws in your hearts, to lead you here: it is he who puts us in the estate of grace while we are here, and so puts us in hope of glory after this life. It is he who shall be our judge at that great day. And so ye are the Lord's people, by way of property.

And this was it that made the apostles so bold, when it was alleged that they had done that whilk was not right: they make the enemies themselves judges, and says, "Whether it be right in your sight to obey God rather than man, judge ye." As if they had said, it's true indeed we are mickle obliged to man, but we are more obliged to God than to all men; for what is it that man can do to us, either good or ill, but God can do that als (also) and more? And upon this ground, in the next chapter, they draw this conclusion,—It becometh us rather to obey God than man. And so, first, they reason with the adversars themselves upon it; and seeing that they could not deny it, upon that they draw up their conclusion. I mark this for this end, that whenever ye are enjoined to do anything by any man, that then ye would not forget this dignity and power that God has over you, and that ye are the people of Jesus Christ; and therefore no man ought to enjoin anything to be done by you, but that for the whilk he has a warrant from God. There is a great controversy now about disobedience to superiors, and the contempt of those who are in au-

thority; but there is not a word of that, whether God be obeyed or not, or if he be disobeyed by any. Fy, that people should sell themselves over to the slavery of man, when the Lord has only sovereign power over them! I would not have you to think that a whole country of people are appointed only to uphold the grandeur of five or six men. No, they are ordained to be magistrates for your good.¹ And sall we think that a ministry shines into a land for the upholding of the grandeur of some few persons?² No, all these things are ordained for the good of God's people; and seeing that it is so, sall ye then make yourselves like to asses and slaves, to be subject to all that men pleases to impose upon you? No, no; try anything that they impose upon you, before ye obey it, if it is warranted by God or not; because God is the only superior over you.

2. Secondly. "Thy people." This also is a note of distinction; for every people are God's people, but there is a distinction among them. All people, it's true, are God's people by right of creation: why therefore says he, *thy* people, and not *all* people? Because all people belongs not to Christ. God has authority over all indeed, but in a special manner he enters in covenant with some. All people who are subject to him in his providence are not his peculiar people, his royal nation, his holy priesthood, his chosen generation, but only these of them who belongs to Christ; those are properly termed to

¹The clear and unembarrassed expression of such rational opinions on the subject of civil rule, considering the time and place in which they were uttered, would appear more extraordinary to us, if we did not recollect from whose teaching they were derived. "The ministers of Scotland," says Dr M'Crie in his *Life of Melville*, "were the first to avow them, at the expense of being denounced and punished as traitors; and in this respect complete justice has not been done to their memory." The first principle of government, here stated in such unqualified terms, is more fully expounded in the author's "Instructions for Defensive Arms", and is there used as the main ground of his argument.

²i.e., Prelates and other dignitaries.

be his people. And we should remember of this, that those who are the people of God, they have notable privileges; they have all things that any people should have, and whatever we should be, they have that. Where any are the people of God, there there is blessedness indeed, for they have his truth for their security, they have his love for their comfort, his power for their defence, etc. The Lord God, he takes his people into his bosom, and with every soul he does so, and says, "I the Lord thy God enters in covenant with thee, and renews the covenant that before I made with thee." And then he lays a necessity upon thee, by his providence, that thou must enter in covenant with him; and then he says to thee, "I will not remember thy sins any more; I know they are heinous, great, and many, but because thou desires that they should not be remembered, therefore I will not remember them. And because when ye have renewed your covenant with me, ye will be aye in a fear to break it again, therefore I will write my law in your hearts. And so whatever I promise to you, I will perform it freely when ye are in covenant with me; and whatever ye promise to me, being in covenant with me, I shall perform it for you also, at least I shall give you strength to perform it." And therefore to the end that ye may be perfectly blessed, enter in a covenant with God; and without ye be in covenant with him, ye shall be in nothing but perpetual misery. I would have all of you to think this to be your only health, wealth, and peace, and your only glory in the world, to be in covenant with God: and so that ye are the people of God, I would not have you to count men to be rich and glorious men by their estates in the world—that he can spend so many chalders of victual yearly, or so many thousand merks. O, a silly beggarly glory is this! Naked thou came into the world, and naked thou must go out of it again. But see how mickle thou has of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, how far thou art forward in the work of repentance, faith, etc., and such good actions. Learn to set your

affections on things that are above, and testify it by your actions.

II. “In the day of thy power.” This is the time when the people of God shall be willing, even in the day of his power; that is, in the day of the power of Jesus Christ. The day of his own resurrection from the dead was one day of his power: he says, “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again;” “Destroy this temple, and I will build it up again in three days;” he meant of the temple of his body: and indeed there was none who could raise his dead body out of the grave, but only himself. A second day of his power shall be the day of the resurrection of our bodies out of the dust. But there is another day that is meant of here than any of these, and that is the day of our first resurrection out of the grave of sin, by the preaching of the gospel. And there is good reason for it, why this should be called a day of his power. First, because it is the power of Jesus Christ that brings the purity of the gospel into a land; and we may indeed say that it was only his power that brought the gospel into this land. It had not authority then to countenance it, for all those that were in authority were against it; and counsel and policy, and all the clergy, and the multitude, all of them, were against it; and yet, for all that, the Lord brought in the purity of the gospel into this land, and established it here against all these. Secondly, when the purity of the gospel is into a land, it is only the power of God that makes it effectual for turning of souls unto himself, and raising them out of the grave of sin, wherein they are so fast buried. So when the Lord first sends the gospel, we are lying into the grave of sin; and the devil, and the world, and all these enemies they are watching the grave, to see that we rise not out of it; and when we are beginning to rise they are busy to hold us down. And think not that we can rise, and lift up ourselves from so base to so high an estate, without the power of God. No, no. Third. When the gospel is into a land, it is only the power of Jesus Christ that makes it to continue, for if

the Lord make not the gospel to continue into a land, it will not stay there. And there is no less power required either to bring the gospel into a land, or to make it effectual, or to make it to continue, than was required to raise the dead body of Christ out of the grave, or will be required to raise ours.

I would have you to consider here, that all times are not alike, but there is a time of the Lord's power; that all days are not alike, but there is a day of the Lord's power; a time when the saints of God shall be weak, a time when they shall be strong; a time when some shall rise up to persecute the saints, a time when others shall rise up to help them; a time when the Lord withholds his power, and a time when he kythes (shews it); a time when the people draws back from the Lord, and a time when they turn to him again. There has been a day of defection in this land¹ this time past, and now there is a time of the Lord's power in bringing back this defection again: and indeed this very instant time that now is is an hour of that day of the Lord's power, and I will shew you two or three reasons for it. 1. The Lord did arise and manifested his power when the enemies were become insolent, and when they had determined that they would set up such a [mode] of worship as they thought meet, and noways according to the pattern shown upon the mount. And indeed the Lord, he uses ordinarily to do this, that even when the enemies of his people are become insolent, and they have determined that they will do such a thing instantly, then he takes them in their own snare. 2. To show that it is the Lord's power only that works a work, he uses to begin at very small beginnings; and so the Lord did in this same work;—he began at first with some few, and these not honourable, and yet now he has made it to cover the whole land through all the quarters

¹From 1596 to the present year 1638, there had been a sad falling away from the attainments of the First Reformation. Popery was in the fair way to be re-established in the land.

thereof.¹ 3. This is also a note of the power of God, that he has touched the hearts of people, that there was never such a howling and a weeping heard amongst them this long time as there is now; and yet it is not a weeping for sorrow, but a weeping for joy. How oft has there been preachings in the most part of the congregations of this land this long time past, and yet people have never found the power of it in working upon their hearts; and yet within this short space, when the Lord has renewed his covenant with them, and they with him, he has displayed his banner, and made his power known in working upon the hearts of people. 4. In this the power of God is manifestly to be seen in this work, that the Lord has made all the devices and plots of the adversars, that they have devised to further their own ends, to work contrair to these ends, and to work for the good of his own work. And, indeed, we may say that it has not been so mickle the courage and wisdom of these, that has been for this cause, that has brought it so far on, but the very plots and devices of the adversars that they have devised for their own good. This [also] is an evident token of the Lord's power.²

¹“Nevertheless, before the end of April, every parish throughout Scotland, where the minister was friendly to the reformation then sought, (and the number was inconsiderable who at that time durst profess otherwise,) having observed a fast to humble themselves for the former defection and breach of the covenant, did renew the same with great solemnity, scarce a person opposing themselves, but every one, women as well as men, concurring, and publicly avouching the Lord to be their God, with their right hand lifted up,” etc.—*Stevenson's History of the Church of Scotland*, p 209. Ed. 1844.

²In an important paper of Baillie of date 1640, entitled “Grounds of God's aim and call to this voyage, etc.,” an abstract of which has been given by Stevenson, the author makes use of these same words, and in a succinct and lucid manner, shows at length how the various measures adopted by the government, at the suggestion of the prelates, had all led directly to the advancement and confirmation of the reforming cause.—“Our prelates have thus become our reformers, and their own overthrowers.”

And [now] since the Lord did arise when the enemies were become insolent, since he began at so small beginnings and has brought it so far, since the Lord has wrought so on the hearts of people now, and since he has made all the plots of the enemies to work against themselves, and for his people, let us give this glory to God, and reverence him, and say that it is only by his power that the work is done, and that he has been pleased to manifest himself into the work. Beloved, we may comfort ourselves in this, if all this has been done by the power of God, then we need not to fear the power of men; men can do nothing against God. The Lord may indeed put his kirk to a trial, but he will not suffer her to be overthrown by any. And indeed, any who hears and knows what the enemies are doing here may see that they are not fighting against men, but against God, and that they are kicking against the pricks.

III. Now, for the properties of thir people. The first of them is *willing*. The Lord's people are a people of willingness in the day of his power: and indeed thir three go very well together, the people of God, the power of God, and a willing people. When the power of God works upon his people then he makes them to be a willing people. And indeed, it is no small matter to see a people willing in a good cause, for by nature we are unwilling, and naturally we are not set to affect anything that is right, except it be through hypocrisy. Our hearts they are contrary to God; they are proud, disobedient, rebellious, and he who sees and knows his own heart sees all this to be in it; and he knows that it is the Lord who cries upon him, in the day of his own power, and frames his heart in a new mould, and makes it to be so nimble and cheerful in any good work,—that albeit they had been before running with all their speed to the devil, yet he makes them to stand still in the way and look about them, and consider what they have been doing, and then to turn about again. Albeit thou were like to Paul, persecuting the Church, yet he can

then make a preacher of thee, and so affright thee that thou shall not know where thou art, but say, "Here am I, Lord:" and albeit thou were als unwilling to go as the prophet or Moses, yet he will make thee to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me," and be as Elisha, when Elias cuist (cast) his mantle about him, then he could not stay any longer. And when Christ comes to Peter, and calls upon them, they cannot stay any longer, but incontinent they leave all and follows him. I will not now begin to make any large discourse of the invincible power of God; I say no more of it now but only this for your use, If ye kent this power of God, it would make you ready and willing to give a confession to him this day, and even to confess him before men, and to forsake all and follow him. Ye who are ignorant of the power of God, take heed to this,—it is the Lord who commanded light to come out of darkness, who must make you to see Christ; he who takes his rod in his hand to beat down the hard and humble the haughty heart, he must do this also. O if ye felt this power of God, ye would think nothing to forsake all and to follow him. He has suffered more for us nor we can suffer for him; and if we suffered anything for him, he would not suffer any of us yet to be a loser at his hand: but we cannot put him to a trial.

Now for this willingness of these people, it is well expressed here. They are called a people of willingness. And yet he thinks not this satisfactory, to call them a willing people, but he calls them a people of willingnesses, a noble, generous, high-minded people. And all this is to shew that when the people of God is wakened up in the day of his power, there is none who is able to express their willingness. They are so willing that if they had a thousand minds they would employ them all for him, and if they had a thousand faces, they would not let one of them look down, but they would hold them all up for the Lord; if every hair in their head were a man, they would employ them all in his service. Their willingness, indeed, it

cannot be expressed. They cry to the Lord, because they think they cannot run fast enough, "Draw me and I shall run after thee:" they are flying together, as the doves do to the holes of the rocks before a tempest come. In the Canticles Christ says, "My soul made me as the chariots of my noble people;" and, indeed, to see a people running through the land, to meet together to keep communion with the Lord, this is the best chariot that can be. And this willingness has been so great at some times in the children of God that they have fallen in a paroxysm, or like the fit of a fever, with it: as it is Acts 17. Paul's spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the City of Athens given to so much base idolatry as to worship the "Unknown God". And Lot, also, he had such a fit as this; he vexed his righteous soul with the iniquities of Sodom, that is, he tortured his soul with their sins, he never saw them committing sin but it was a grief to him. And, indeed, the children of God this while past have been grieved and vexed to behold the sins that has been committed into this same land. I insist upon this the rather because I would wish from my heart that ye would be thus willing, and that ye would be as forward for the glory and honour of God as ever any was. And then, indeed, it should do good to others also, when they should hear tell that the people of St. Andrews were such a willing people. And, indeed, ye have just reason to be willing now.

1. Because it is God's cause ye have in hand, and it is no new cause to us. It is almost sixty years old; it is no less since this same Confession of Faith was first subscribed and sworn to.¹ And it has been still in use yearly to be subscribed and sworn to in some parts, among some in this land, to this day.² And I think it would have

¹The Covenant was first subscribed by the King and his household on the 28th of January 1580-81.

²So far as the Editor has yet ascertained, this is the only record of the notable fact here stated.

been so in all the parts of the land if men had dreamed of what was coming upon us. Whatever is added to it at this time, it is nothing but an interpretation of the former part; and if men will be willing to see the right, they may see that there is nothing in the latter part but that which may be deduced from the first.¹ And in the [keeping?] of a Covenant we are not bound to keep only these same words that were before, but we must renew it; and in the renewing thereof we must apply it to the present time when it is renewed, as we have done, renewed it against the present ills. For it is not necessary for us to abjure Turcism or Paganism, because we are not in fear to be troubled with that; but the thing that we are in danger of is Papistry, and therefore we must abjure that.

2. A second reason to make you willing is, because this matters concerns you in all things,—in your bodies, in your estates, in your lives, your liberties, in your souls. I may say, if in the Lord's providence this course had not been taken, ye would have found the thralldom whereinto that course, wherein ye were anes (once) going, would have brought you to or now, even ye who are most averse from it.

3. A third reason to make you willing is, ye have the precedency and testimony of the nobility in the land to it, and of all sorts of persons, noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses, ministers, and commons; and wherefore, then, should not ye be willing to follow their example? And then, I may say, ye have the prayers of all the reformed kirks in Europe for you, who have ever heard of the perturbations that has been, and yet are, into this land. And, moreover, beloved, whom have ye against you in this course? All the atheists, all the papists, and all the profane rogues in the country; they draw to that

¹Henderson himself was the author of the concluding part of the Covenant as renewed in 1638, beginning with the words,—“In obedience to the Commandment of God.”

side, and it is only they who hate this cause. And should not all these make you willing to [swear?] to it, and to hazard for it? And I may say, if ye be but willing to hazard all that ye have, that may be the heaviest distress that ever ye sall be put to. And if so be that ye had been willing at first, the Lord would have touched the king's heart, and made him willing also; but because he is informed by some that the most part are not willing, that is a great part of the cause why he is not willing.

The second property of God's people is holiness. "In the beauties of holiness;" a speech that is borrowed from the priest's garments under the law. Sometimes they were broidered with gold, sometimes they were all white, especially in the day of expiation. Not that ministers under the New Testament should have such garments as these, for these were representations to them, both of their inward holiness and of their outward holiness, by (beyond) others; but now all believers are priests as well as ministers are, and therefore such garments as these are not necessar. Indeed, if such garments as these had been necessar, then Christ and his apostles had done great wrong to themselves, who never used the like; and they had done great wrong to the kirk also in not appointing such garments to be worn by ministers.¹ There be garments of glory in heaven, and garments of grace in the earth; that party-coloured garment spoken of in the Colossians,² and this holiness whilk is spoken of here. Concerning whilk we will mark two things:—First, as people are a people of willingness in a good cause, so they must also be a people of

¹Both King James and his son Charles had busied themselves in a most absurd and preposterous manner about the ordinary dress of the clergy in Scotland. Charles was the first who enjoined the use of the surplice and other priestly vestments in the performance of divine worship. The surplice, or whites, was used at his coronation in Edinburgh for the first time since the Reformation.

²Colossians 3:12

holiness, or otherwise their willingness is only but for some worldly respects: therefore, I would have you with willingness to put on holiness. And, indeed, if we saw what holiness were, we needed not to be persuaded to put it on, we would do it willingly. For it has these parts in it—1. A purgation from former filthiness. 2. A separation from the world. If thou wilt be holy, then thou must be separate from the world; thou must strive to keep thyself from these whose garments are spotted with the flesh. 3. Holiness requires devotion or dedication to the Lord. Where there is purgation from filthiness, separation from the world, and dedication to the Lord, there there is holiness and nowhere else.

Now, is there any of you but ye are obleist (obliged) to be holy? Ye say that ye are the people of the Lord. It so be, then ye must have your inward man purged of sin, and ye must stand at the stave's end against the corruptions of the time, and ye must devote yourselves only to serve and honour God. And your Covenant, that ye are to swear to this day,¹ oblieth you to this; and it requires nothing of you but that whilk ye are bound to perform. And, therefore, seeing this is required of you, purge yourselves within, flee the corruptions of the time, eschew the society of those whom ye see to be corrupt, and devote yourselves only to the Lord. Yet this is not that we would obleish you to perform everything punctually that the Lord requires of you; there is none who can do that, but promise to the Lord to do so, tell him that ye have a desire to do so, and join a resolution and a purpose, and say to him, Lord, I sall prease (earnestly endeavour) to do als far as I can. And, indeed, there is no more in our covenant but this, that we sall endeavour to keep ourselves within the bounds of our Christian liberty; and, albeit, none of you would swear to this, ye are bound to it by your baptism. And, therefore, think not that

¹This determines the fact that this sermon was preached on the occasion of the Swearing of the Covenant at St Andrews.

we are precisians, (or these who has set down this covenant), seeing all of you are bound to do it.¹

Secondly, “The *beauties* of holiness.” Consider here that as holiness is necessar for the saints of God, so all God’s courtiers they are full of beauty. God himself is full of beauty, and we have no power, beauty, nor holiness but in his power, beauty, and holiness. Holiness, it is the beauty of the Son of God, Jesus Christ; and to him it is said in Esay, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty:”² and the Holy Ghost has this style to be called Holy. And the angels in heaven, they are clothed with holiness; and the saints who are in heaven, this is the long white robes wherewith they are clothed. And they who are begun to be sanctified here, they strive to be more and more clad with holiness. Beloved, I would have you to count this to be your beauty, even holiness; for if ye have not this beauty, then all your other beauty will degenerate in a bastard beauty.

Now follows the marvellous *multiplication* of thir people. “From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.” The words are somewhat obscure even to the learned ear, but look to the 133rd Psalm, and there ye will see a place to help to clear them. Always (however) observe here, “from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth,” that as in a May morning, when there is no extremity of heat, the dew falls so thick that all the fields are covered with it, and it falls in such a secret manner that none sees it fall, so the Lord, in the day of his power, he sall multiply his people, and he sall multiply them in a secret manner; so that it is marvellous to the world, that once there should seem to be so few or none of them, and then incontinent he should make them to be

¹The words in parenthesis, and similar self-corrections preserved in this volume, show very strikingly the sensitive modesty of the speaker. This was a distinguishing feature of his character, well known to his contemporaries.

²Isaiah 6:3

through all estates.¹

We have first to learn here, that the Kirk of God, she has a morning; and in the morning the dew falls, and not in the night, nor in the heat of the day. Soit is not in the night of defection, nor in the heat of the day of persecution, when the Lord's people are multiplied, but it is in the morning of the day. Beloved, I wish ye may be a discerning people, to know the Lord's seasons. Sall we be as those, of whom our Saviour complains, who can discern the face of the sky, but cannot discern the day of the Lord's merciful and gracious visitation towards them? Men indeed may be very learned and know things very well, and yet in the meantime be but ignorant of this; for there are sundry gifts bestowed upon men, and ilk ane has not this gift, to discern the Lord's merciful visitation. And therefore happy are ye, albeit ye be not great in other gifts, if so be that ye know this; for the Lord, he has some gifts of his own bestowing allanerly (only), whilk he will bestow upon the meanest, and yet he will deny them to the proudest; even as the tops of the mountains, they will be dry and have no dew, while as the valleys will be wet with it. So those who exalts themselves high, and boasts themselves of their other gifts, of their knowledge, learning, experience, etc., the Lord will, for all that, oftentimes leave them void of saving and sanctifying grace.²

"From the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." That is, as the dew is multiplied upon the earth, so sall thy people be. This is ane ordinar phrase in Scripture. Hushai says to Absalom, "Convene the people from Dan to Beersheba, and then

¹This beautiful illustration was once and again employed by Henderson in the course of this memorable year. See particularly, his Replies to the Aberdeen Doctors, where it occurs.

²A marked allusion to their professors and clergy, who, with the single exception of Principal Howie, had actively countenanced the recent defections both in doctrine and practice.

we sall light upon David as the dew lighteth upon the ground; and then there sall not be left of him and of all the men that are with him so much as one.”¹ And this phrase is well set down, Isa. 54, “Rejoice, O barren, and thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the married wife.” And therefore he uses this form of speech, v. 2, “Enlarge thy tents, and let them stretch the curtains of thy habitations; lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.” And all these things are requisite to be done when the people of God are multiplied thus.

Let us observe here, if the word of God continue in this land, in the purity thereof, and the sacraments be rightly administrate, the people of God will then multiply exceedingly here. The chiefest city in this land, they are forced to marvel where the people has been in former times that are in it now, so that they cannot get kirks to contain them. And they think, if the gospel continue in the purity thereof, all the kirks that they are building, with the rest, sall have enough ado to contain them.² And it is a marvel to consider how the Lord has multiplied his people, at this time. This is not that we are to glory in multitudes, but to let you see the great work of God, who has multiplied his people thus. And as it was at the beginning of the plantation of the Christian religion, there was three thousand converted at one preaching of the apostle, I will not say that there has been three thousand converted at a preaching here, but I may say this, that at one preaching there has been some thousands wakened up, who had not been so for a long time before. And

¹2 Samuel 17:12

²The Tron Church in Edinburgh, which is the city spoken of, was then a-building. The loose stones and rubbish about the new building were used by the rabble in the riots of 1637. And the erection of the Parliament House had left space for another place of worship under the roof of St. Giles’.

will it not be a hard matter, seeing that it is so, that Saint Andrews sall be as Gideon's fleece; that all the kingdom about it sall be wet with the dew of heaven, and it sall only be dry? Even so, will it not be a shame, that all others sall be stirred up, and ye not a whit stirred up in this day more than if there were not such a thing. And therefore, beloved, I would have you to join yourselves with the rest of the people of God in this cause.

"Thy youth." That is, *thy young men*. Those that are renewed by grace they are called young, albeit they were never so old, because their age is not reckoned by their first, but by their second birth. Ay, moreover, still the older that the children of God grow in years, and the weaker in the world, they grow younger and stronger in grace. Secondly, they are called young, because of the strength that they have to resist temptations. Before they be renewed by grace and born again that way, they are like bairns, that every temptation prevails with them; but then they are as young men, who are able to resist temptations to sin, so that sin gets not liberty to exercise dominion over them. Thirdly, they are called young, because they will contend with all their power and might for the faith. I would have all of you to be young in these respects, and labour to get ane evidence of your new birth by these, that ye are growing in grace, [gaining?] still more strength to resist temptations, and by contending earnestly for the faith; even be bold in this, especially in contending for the truth. Strive for the truth, for if ye anes lose it, ye will not get it so easily again. And this same is the covenant of truth whilk ye are to swear to; for as our Covenant is renewed, so also it is expounded (explained) according as the exigencies of the time requires, and it is applied to the present purpose.

Beloved, I told you already that ye have no cause of fear, for I avow and attest here before God, that what ye do is not against authority, but for authority, let some men who are wickedly disposed

say what they will; but what ye do is for authority. And I told you of the obligations whereby authority are bound to this. And for the words of it, because they are conceived in a terrible manner, ye need not to stand [in] awe for this; and it were good that ye should read them over again, and think upon this wrath of God whilk we pray for to come upon us, if we do intend anything against authority.

Objection. We have oblished ourselves, by our subscription already; what then needs us to obleish ourselves over again by our oath? *Ans.* It's true, I grant, many of you has subscribed it already, and so ye are bound; but now ye are to swear also, that so through abundance of bands to God ye may know yourselves to be the more bound to him. David says, I have purposed, I have promised, I have sworn, and I sall perform thy righteous statutes.¹ There be also here sundry Acts of Parliament, that are all of them made within this same kingdom for the maintenance of the true religion; and for thir, they speak for themselves. And I would have these who say we do anything against law and against our superiours, to see and try if there be anything against them, but [and not] all directly for them.

Beloved, I hope that it will not be necessar for us to spend mickle time with you in removing of scruples. Good things I know has over many objections against them from the devil, the world, and our own ill hearts. And I know some of them who are accounted the learnedest in the land, have assayed their wits and used their pens to object against this.² But truly these who are judicious, they have confessed that they have been greatly confirmed by that whilk they have objected; and the reason of it was, because they who were the

¹Psalm 119:100

²“Dr John Forbes, Laird of Corse, professor of divinitie in the Old Toun Colledge, wrot a pamphlet, wherein he accused all the supplicants and subscrivers of ye covenant as blinde guides, of heresie, schism, sedition, temertie, refractoriness, perjury, and rebellion.”—Supplement to Row.

most learned assayed themselves to see what they could say, and yet when all was done, they had nothing to say that was worth the hearing.

For the first part of this Confession of faith, there is not a word changed in it; and if so be that men had kept that part of it free of sinistrous glosses, and had applied it according to the meaning of those who were the penners thereof, there needed not to have such a thing ado as there is now; but because they have put sinistrous glosses upon it now and misapplied it, therefore it behoved to be explained and applied to the present time.

The first thing that ye swear to is, That with your whole hearts ye agree and resolve, all the days of your life, constantly to adhere unto and defend the true religion. There is no scruple here. 2. That ye suspend and forbear the practice of all novations already introduced in the matters of the worship of God, or approbation of the corruptions of the public government of the kirk, or civil places and power of kirkmen, till they be tried and allowed in free assemblies and in parliaments. Now, I know there be some who make scruples here. How can we, say they, bind ourselves to forbear the practice of that whilk Acts of Assembly allows, and Acts of Parliament commands? *Ans.* We do not herein condemn the Act as altogether unlawful, whatever our judgment be of it, but this is all that we do.¹ Because such ills has followed upon these novations, therefore we think it meet now to forbear the practice of them till they be tried by Assembly and Parliament.

And this is not a breach of the Act, when all is done. Because the

¹“The opinion of Henderson and Dickson was clear and decided that the Articles of Perth were unconstitutional and abjured; but they deferred their own convictions to those of others, such as Baillie, and consented to leave the matter, for the present, an open question in the Covenant. Their view was afterwards confirmed by the Assembly.”

Act is not set down in the manner of a command, but only as a counsel; for so the Act of the pretended Assembly bears. The words is, "The Assemblie thinks good," etc., "because all memory of superstition is now past, therefore we may kneel at the communion." Then, if there be any danger of superstition, by the very words of the Act we may gather this, that we should not kneel: and so they who practise¹ now keep the letter of the Act, but they who forbear keep the meaning thereof more nearly than the practisers. 3. We promise and swear against the Service-book, Book of Canons, and High Commission, with all other innovations and ills contained in our Supplications, Complaints, and Protestations. Now for the Service-book, I find every one almost to be so inclined willingly to quite (be done with) it. But let me attest your own consciences, if it had gone on for a while, and been read among you, as it was begun to be, if it had not been als hard for you to have quat it as to quite the Articles of Perth; and therefore, do not deceive yourselves, to let such things be practised any more. It is a pitiful thing, that those who are wise otherways should deceive themselves in the matters of God's service and worship, and suffer others to deceive them also. 4. Ye promise and swear, to the uttermost of your power to stand to the defence of the king's majesty, in the defence and preservation of true religion: as also, every one of you to the mutual defence of another in the same cause. Now there be a number who says, that in this we come under rebellion against the king, and we join in a combination against him, when we join ourselves thus, every one for the defence of another. I say nomore of it but this. It is not disputed here, ye see, whether it be lawful for subjects to take up arms against their prince or not, whether in offence or defence; but that we will maintain the true religion, and resist all contrary corruptions, according to our vocation. And every one of us oblishes ourselves for the defence of

¹i.e. kneeling

another, only in maintaining the cause of true religion, according to the laws and liberties of this kingdom. And indeed, this is very reasonable to be done, albeit not asked of; for when your neighbour's house is burning, ye will not run to the king to speir (ask) if ye should help him or not, before it come to your own; but ye will incontinent put to your hand, both to help him, and to save your own house. Ye may not say, neither, that because we may not oppose against authority, that we may not oppose against Papists or against Prelates; for that were to make ourselves slaves to men. And the very law of nature binds every one of us to help another, in a lawful manner, for a good cause. 5. Ye swear, because ye cannot look for a blessing from God upon your proceedings, except that with your confession and subscription ye join such a life as becomes Christians who has renewed their covenant with God,—herefore ye promise to endeavour at least, for yourselves and all that are under you, to keep yourselves within the bounds of your Christian liberty, and to be good ensamples to others in all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty ye owe both to God and man. And there is none who needs to skarre (be frightened) at this; for we are not hereby to tie any to the obedience of the law, but to the obedience of the gospel: and I am sure all are bound at least to prease to (strive after) this. And therefore I would have you to labour to it; and when ye find that ye cannot get it done, then run to Christ, and beseech him to teach you to do it, and to give you strength, according to his promise made in his new covenant; and so ye sall give glory to God and get good to your own souls. And, indeed, all of you are obleist to amend your lives, and to live otherwise than ye have done. And last of all, there is the *Attestation*.

Now, I hope all these things be so clear to you, that there is not any scruple in any of your minds. And therefore, that this work may be done aright, and may be accompanied by the power of God,

I would have all of you to bow your knees before that great and dreadful Lord, and beseech him that he would send down the Holy Ghost, and the power of his Spirit, to accompany the work, that so ye may do it with all your hearts, to his glory and honour, and to your comfort in Jesus Christ.

At the weekly exercise, probably toward the end of summer

Exercise, Galatians 5:7-9

The *Exercise* was a kind of critical discourse, on a passage of Scripture, generally delivered before the Presbytery, on a week-day.

This discourse has no date prefixed to it, neither is there anything in the discourse itself, from which the exact or even the proximate date of its delivery can be discovered. The probability is that it was delivered during the summer of 1638; at any rate, it was between the date of the last discourse, end of March or beginning of April,—and that of the next, 21st October. One sentence in the next discourse may be taken to refer to the time when this was preached:—“And then, does not this day, *and the last day that I was in this place, and many days since*, testify that ye are returning to walk after the Lord?” If so, then a good while—

“many days,” intervened between this discourse and the next, which, as has just been said, bears date 21st Oct.; so that we are safe in saying it was probably during the summer it was delivered. Like the last, it was preached at St Andrews. At that time, according to Baillie, that city was abandoned by its ordinary ministers, who were violent supporters of Prelacy, and who, since the swearing of the covenant, had entirely deserted their charges. Baillie’s words are—“That towne hes now no ordinaire ministers, but are supplied by the Presbytery.”¹ This explains why Henderson should have been there so frequently about this time.

This apostle, beloved, in the former cap., was shewin the grounds of Christian liberty, whereby the children of God are free from the yoke of sin, and also from the yoke of the law. And, then, in the beginning of this cap., he was earnest with thir people that they would stand to that liberty whereunto they were called, and wherewith Christ had made them free, and exhorted them that they would not be entangled in the yoke of bondage again. And then, ye know, after that, he sets down that this exhortation of his, it is both necessar for them, and it is also pertinent. First, it was a necessar exhortation, because the danger was great, if so be that they should rander themselves slaves again to the law, and to be circumcised; for then Christ should profit them nothing, but by so doing they made themselves debtors to the whole law. Secondly, he shews them also that this was a pertinent exhortation for them, because thir people was near the danger. 1. The danger was great, and so the exhortation was necessar. Therefore, they should stand to their liberty, and not be entangled in the yoke of bondage again; because if they were en-

¹Letter to Spang, 1st Nov. 1638.

tangled in it again, Christ should profit them nothing; they should be in danger of the curse of the law, and also be in danger of the loss of the favour of God; and then they were fallen from grace. And, therefore, the apostle himself, he resolves not to wait for the righteousness whilk is by circumcision, but for the righteousness whilk is by faith, providing that it be a true and lively faith, not wrought by fantasy but by the Spirit of God. "Because," says he, "in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision profiteth anything, but faith whilk worketh by love." 2. Now, having shewn how necessar this doctrine is, next he shews how pertinent it is also, and so how necessar it is for them. For this people they were in this case; they had anes begun well in the way of Christianity; they had continued for a long time in it; but false teachers had come in among them, and stopped them from running into that course. And not only had they stopped them, but they had also driven them back. So that if they will consider what they are doing now, they will find that they are not obeying the truth whilk they had received of the apostle, nor believing it as they once did.

Now, whereas they might object, and say, we did nothing but what we were persuaded to do, he tells them, "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you;" that is, it came not of God, for he gave them another persuasion than this. And if they say, What? this is but in a point of cere mony, and so this is but a needless noise to make so mickle din for nothing; he tells them that although the thing itself seem to be but little to them, yet the danger thereof may be a very great danger. For it may be the ruin of their whole religion, and the ruin of themselves also. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

For the more clear taking up of the words, ye sall mark thir things in them. 1. There is a representation of their present and of their preceding estate, "ye did run well; who did hinder you that

ye should not obey the truth?" 2. There is an answer to two exceptions whilk they might have made. First Obj.—We did nothing but what we were persuaded to do. A.—“This persuasion is not of him that calleth you.” Second Obj.—What, it is but a small matter; and so what needs there to be such din about it? A.—Take heed to yourselves in this also. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

Or, if ye will mark the words more nearly, ye will find that when he has by a comparison set before them their former and their present estate, he uses three reasons or arguments to bring them back to that estate again whence they were fallen. The first is from the present course of their defection, wherein they were going, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” The second is from the author of this defection, wherein they were going, “This persuasion is not of him that calleth you.” That is, it is not from God; and if it be not from God, then consider from whom it is. The third reason is from the danger wherein it brought them, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

And so he would reduce them to a better estate by bringing them to consider what they were anes; what they are presently; what they were who persuaded them to it; and what are the dangerous consequences of the estate they are in.

Let us observe here, that it is commendable in the apostle Paul that their estate goes so near his heart as ye see it does. He observes well and narrowly how they profit in grace by the preaching of the gospel, what errors enters in among them, and how great beginnings of ill is begun among them. For there was a necessity laid upon him that he who had the charge of souls, he behoved to do this. He says, “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.” He was separated by Christ for this end, and he separates himself also for it; and thought it enough for him to be about it, and troubled not himself with any civil or worldly business. And, deed, this is the duty of those who are

ministers and are ordained to preach the gospel, not to attend any civil charge in the world, although they might have never so great gain or never so great glory thereby; because they are separated for another charge than anything of the civil estate.¹ And, indeed, beside their calling of God to this estate, and beside the commandment of Jesus Christ, and the practice of the apostles, very sense and reason might teach us this mickle, that no man should trouble himself both with civil and spiritual affairs; for I am sure there is no back so strong but the charge of souls may stake (suffice) him very well to put upon it. And I am sure that the spiritual charge is so large, that even without the civil charge also no arm is able to fathom it; so that we may say of it with the apostle, Who is sufficient for these-things?

The apostle, in describing the estate of thir people, he might have expressed it in other terms than are here, but he uses the comparison from a race: and it appears that he has taken the comparison from the games of Olympus, whilk were mickle talked of in those times, and from whilk both divine and human writers used to borrow similitudes and comparisons, to express both the laborious and the renowned way of virtue. And ye will find that the apostle, in all his Epistles, he delights mickle in this same allegory or borrowed form of speech, of running a race; to make all Christians who had anes begun in the way of religion run still on in this race.

Now, for this Christian race of ours, the breaking aff of the race is at the beginning of our calling; the feet whereupon we are to run is faith, working by love; the course whereinto we must run is, forgetting those things that are behind, and bending fast towards the mark of the high prize of our calling in God—so we must not look what we have done, but look what we have to do; the mark or score

¹This is directed evidently, for one thing, against what were called “the civil places and power of kirkmen,” which had been found a great source of mischief to the church.

we are to run to, is the end of our life—so we must never cease in running of this race, so long as we are here; and the prize wherefor we run in this race, it is said to be above with Christ, at the right hand of the Father. And that is a greater prize than we can comprehend, even a great and exceeding great weight of glory for the souls of them who runs well. And when Christ shall come and descend into the clouds, and the voice of the archangel shall be heard, then they who runs well shall be called to come to the heavenly Jerusalem which is above, there to reign with Christ. Yea, Christ he is with them at the very beginning of the race, for he is the author of their faith; and he is with them all the way when they are running; and he is with them at the end of the way, to possess them in the inheritance. And, which should not be omitted here, there are many adversaries in the way, to hinder us from running out that course, that we go not forward in it; some with their horrors and terrors threatening us, and casting in stumbling-blocks in our way, whereupon we may fall; and some again casting in their golden apples, to entangle us, and to make us forget what we are doing. And there is none of them all that the apostle takes more notice of than of these, Colossians 2:18, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up in a fleshly manner.” That is, when men take upon them to be Lord and Jesus, in bringing things into the kirk which he hath not allowed, as their sort of false teachers did. They said, no doubt, they could not be saved except they embraced such ceremonies as these. But chap. 3, he says, “Let the peace of God rule into your hearts;” that is, men strive to get an assurance of the thing ye do, that it is right, and then go forward in the way, having this peace in your hearts.

And when the apostle says this to them, “Ye did run well,” indeed he gives them a very great commendation, for in running well

there are these things required. First, if we run well, we must still set our eye on the right mark or prize, even that whilk the Lord has promised to us; for in hope of that happiness whilk is to be gotten at the end of the course we must go on. For if so be that we be still seeking the world, profess what we will, we run not well. And therefore in running this race we must not set our hearts on the world, nor must we let the dust of it dim our sights, that we see not what is before us; but let us strive every day while we are running to get a new sight of the prize; and if we can get no more, yet to seek that whilk Moses gat, even to ascend to the top of a mountain, that we may see the promised land afar off. The Papists, they caluminate us very far when they say we have no respect to the recompense of reward, nor looks not to that; for indeed we look unto it, and have a respect unto it: and it were a very great fault in us if we did it not. Only there be two things we deny, whilk they would be at. 1. That it is not the principal and chief thing that we should look unto, to make us run well in this way: but the chief thing that we should look unto is the glory and honour of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. A loyal servant, when he is running a match, looks most to his master's honour and credit; and then he is sure of the reward and prize, if he win it, because he has a good master. 2. We look on the reward not as merited by our deservings, or that it can be merited, but only as freely promised of free grace. We know, if we run well, there is a reward promised to us, but not merited by us.

Secondly, for running well we must run in the right way. The way wherein we should run is plainly set down in the word of God; Christ he is called the way, the truth, and the life. There is a way whilk leads to the kingdom of God; Christ is that way; and he is the truth that teaches us truly how we should walk into that way. And beside that, if we be dead of ourselves, that we cannot walk into that way, then Christ is life, and there is a life-giving power in him to

communicate life to us, whereby to walk into it: and if we be weak, he furnishes us with strength. Our use of this is, whoever they be who draws us anyways from Christ, they draw us out of the right way, and lead us so much wrong.

Thirdly, for our running well: when we have set our eye upon the mark, and are running in the right way, then there are helps requisite for us in this way. It is a rough, troublesome, longsome, wearisome way; wherefore we must be provided for it before we enter in the way. And there is one help that is very necessar for to help us in this way, set down among those pieces of the spiritual armour. Ephesians 6.—to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: therefore we must not go barefooted to this race, because it is a rough and thorny way wherein we are to run. And that we may get shoes on our feet, we must have the knowledge of the gospel; and we must labour also to find this peace of God in the gospel; that so all those stumbling-blocks whilk can be cast into our way may not move us to go back, but all of them may work for our best. Song of Solomon 7:1, Christ says of the kirk, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes!” and Ezekiel 16:10 the kirk when she is in exile is said to be barefooted, but being set at liberty, she gets shoes on her feet; and being shod with thir shoes, they are like Israelites’ apparel in the wilderness, they wax not old.

Fourthly, if we will run well into this way, we must lay aside every weight that presses down; every profit and pleasure that may hinder us from running fast must be laid aside. Even that natural and sinning sin of original corruption whilk is in us, als far as may be, it must be laid aside, because it is a weight that presses down; and we must gird up the loins of our minds from all such things as may hinder us: otherwise we cannot run well.

Fifthly, when we have anes begun in this way we must not go back, nor may we remember what is behind, nor what we have done,

but always remember what is before us, and so what we have to do; have our eye ay toward the mark. And if we will run so, we sall not be disappointed.

And lastly, there is another thing required of them who run in this race. Hebrews 12:1, “We must run *with patience* the race that is set before us.”

And indeed, all these things are necessary for them who will run this race aright. And so in saying, “Ye did run well,” he says this far to them in effect, they did set their eye upon the right mark; that they did run in the right way to that mark, and so had a great mind to come to it; that they had used helps to help them forward into the way; that they had laid aside every weight that might hinder them to run; that they had resolved not to go back; and that they did run with patience. And so in saying, “Ye did run well,” he gives them a very large commendation; and certainly they are worth it all who runs well, and runs to the end of this race, and then gets the prize that is promised; as the apostle says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course with joy: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory.”

But he adds to this, “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” He had anes planted and confirmed the gospel among them, but there were others who had come in and hindered it. By saying *who did hinder you*, he brings them to consider two things—1. That they were hindered from going on into that way wherein he had taught them to walk. 2. That there were some who hindered them.

First. They were hindered from going on into the way. Ay indeed, they were more than hindered; for not only were there some who did stop the way, that they should not go on into it, but did also drive them back again. So that not only are they not running well, but they are driven back again by many steps and degrees: so

that here is a great change. Anes they did run well, and so they were in a good course, and going forward into it; but now they are driven back, and so they are in a course of defection. Beloved, there are two changes befalls people when they are running fast. 1. When some are running on to all excess of riot and headlongs to their own destruction, then God comes and stops them in that way, and brings them back; yea, he drives them out of that way, whilk was the broad way leading them to destruction, and enters them into the strait and narrow way that leads to life everlasting. This indeed is a happy change, and it is the beginning of a glorious change from misery to everlasting happiness. 2. Again, there is another change, whilk is both a shameful, a sinful, and a miserable change; and that is, when a person or a people are running on well-faurdly (becomingly) in the way to heaven, and then there are some who rises up and hinders them from running on into that way, yea forces them to come back from that degree whereto they have been advanced. And wherever [this change is], it is joined also with many other great ills. 1. It is joined with *scandal*. Ye did anes run well, and when ye turn back again, ye meet with others who were following you in the way, and readily (naturally) when they see you coming back they are driven back with you. 2. It is joined also with *shame*. If this be a great infamy for a man to begin to build a tower, and not to build it out, and to intend a war and go on a piece, and then turn back without doing anything, this must be a greater, to be like a reed shaken with every wind; to be like Demas, anes to profess Christ, and then to fall from him again and to follow this present world; or to be like Isidorus,¹ to have one religion in one king's time, and another in another king's

¹The author in all likelihood refers to Isidorus of Russia, Archbishop of Kiow, who betrayed the cause of the Greek Church, soon after the Council of Florence in 1438, and having been created a cardinal, died at Rome in 1463. See Mosheim, Reid's edition, p. 538, n.

time. 3. It is joined with *difficulty of reclaiming*. For when the evil spirit has been anes putten out, and gets leave to re-enter, he comes with seven spirits worse than himself; so that the last estate of that man is worse than the first; and so he runs seven times . faster back than ever he did. 4. Not only had it been better for him never to have known the way of life, than to have returned with the sow to the puddle, and the dog to the vomit, but there is also a certain ruin appointed for such a man, whilk he cannot escape.

This indeed is a very ill change, and there are many ills joined with it; and yet those who were called God's people were very subject to this. It is not thought so great a matter albeit the things of the world should slip from men, or that their bodily health should be impaired; but this is a greater wonder, when people are anes entered into a good way, that they should desire to go back. It is strange what the martyr Stephen says of the people of Israel, when they were now come out of Egypt, even while they were in the wilderness, "In their hearts they returned to Egypt again."¹ This is not that their bodies desired to go to it, for they thought themselves well freed of that slavery; and that day that they kepted the feast of the golden calf, they rejoiced that they were come out of Egypt, but in their hearts they returned to Egypt. That is, they were acquainted with the idolatry that was there, and when Moses was absent from them, in their hearts thought upon it and loved it, and finding occasion then, they practised that idolatry. And then (Numb. 14:4) they come to that, they would have been at the choosing of a captain to go before them to Egypt: and indeed this was very great ingratitude for them to return in their hearts so soon to Egypt. And the Lord he had spied out a land for them, as it is, Ezek. 20:6., even the glory of all the lands in the earth a land that flowed with milk and honey; and yet, Numb. 16:13, they put that commendation upon Egypt, that it

¹ Acts 7:39

flowed with milk and honey. And, Joshua 24:16, the people at that time promised readily to serve the Lord and to serve him only; but albeit they did run well then, yet afterwards they were stopped into the way and fordriven (driven aside); for Elias says to them, 1 Kings 18:21, “Why halt ye thus between two? If the Lord be God, then serve him, and if Baal be God, then serve him.” It is strange they answered readily, when Joshua asked at them to serve God, and to serve him only; but now they are in a doubt who is the Lord, and so answers him not a word. And this was not only to be seen of old among the people of Israel, under the law, but even also among us, in the days of the gospel: for there are evermore some whose hearts are going back to Egypt, and when their hearts have been there a while, then by their mouths and their pens they testify to the world the bad inclination they have to Egypt and to idolatry.¹

Secondly, he would have them to observe here, who were those who hindered them. Satan, no doubt, he had a hand into this hinderance, and I think the apostle will not altogether excuse themselves to be clean of it; but he lays the wyte (blame) principally upon false teachers, who did hinder them into their way, when they were begun to run well. Certainly there is no work so dones (exceeding) wicked, that has never so sore and so peremptory a curse pronounced by God against it, but there will evermore some wicked spirit be found to attempt and to assay it. It is strange Joshua pronounced a curse against him who should rise up to build Jericho, Joshua 6:26, very peremptorily, “Cursed be he that riseth up to build this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.” And yet, for all that, in the days of Ahab there was found a son of Belial, and

¹In allusion, no doubt, to those who, having made defection from the Reformation cause, and gone back so far toward Popery, employed both their tongues and their pens in favour of error, and in opposition to the truth.

Hiel, who attempted to build it: and als particularly as the threatening was pronounced, als particularly was it performed; for he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub.¹

Next, he would have them to consider that there was a great odds betwixt him and others who had entered them in the right way, and these who had drawn them aff that way again; betwixt them who had brought them to a right course and these who hindered them, when they were right. And so, indeed, there is a great difference between them; and if ye will compare them together in this same epistle, ye will find a threefold difference. 1. The apostle he had his calling of God to this office; but for thir false teachers, it is said of them that they came in privately unto it, and thrust themselves into the ministry; and so had not their calling of God. 2. The apostle, being called of God, used no unlawful means to persuade people to obey the truth, but only the preaching of the gospel and the demonstration of the Spirit of God.² But for those who were false teachers, they bewitched the people to believe lies, and as people use to say, they did cast glaumerie upon their eyes,³ and so beguiled them thus under a fair colour, to make them believe their lies. And when

¹ 1 Kings 16:34. The reader will here be reminded of Henderson's famous saying, with which he concluded the Glasgow Assembly of this same year—"We have now cast down the walls of Jericho: let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite." Allusion to the same subject will occur again: indeed there is a whole sermon on the Fall of Jericho; all which goes to show how much the preacher's mind was running on this subject during this year.

² If Henderson and his brethren had used anything approaching to unlawful means "in pressing or threatening of the meanest," when they offered the Covenant to the people of St Andrews in the beginning of this year, he would hardly have ventured on such a challenge now—still less to institute a comparison of his conduct in this respect with that of their false teachers.

³ *Glaumerie*. In MS. by mistake *Grammarie*. A charm cast on the eye altering the form and appearance of outward objects.

this could not do their turn, to make people follow them, they compelled them, as it is chapter 5, so that they used both craft and cruelty to garre people follow their ill ways. 3. The apostle he was ready to suffer for the truth whilk he taught; but thir false teachers, they would not suffer, they were not for suffering; and therefore they compelled all they could to follow them. And so, if we will look to their entry to their office, to their discharging thereof when they are entered, and to their sealing of that whilk they preach, we will see the diflerence to be clear.

Now, for their running well, whilk they were wont to do, but now they do it not, the apostle, to bring them to repentance for this, he uses three arguments here. The first is tane from the nature of their present course, compared with their obedience of the truth. Now, obedience to the truth is to run well; and here he says not only they did not run well, but they did not obey the truth. There are human and also divine truths. The gospel it is called the word of truth, as the apostle, writing to the Colossians,¹ very deservedly calls it. 1. Because it is the best, the most eminent, and the most excellent of all truths; for albeit we have the knowledge of all other truths, if we have not the knowledge of this truth, we may live in sin all our days and perish in the end: and albeit we have not great and accurate ingynes (understandings) for taking up of other truths, yet if we have the knowledge of this truth alone, it is able to bring us to salvation. 2. It is called the word of truth, because Jesus Christ is the special subject that is contained in it, who is called the truth; and therefore if we learn not to know Christ in the gospel, we learn not the gospel. 3. It is called the word of truth, because there are so many means used to persuade us that it is true; and it has also the testimony of the great Ambassador of the 'covenant to seal it, the testimony of the apostles, and of many faithful martyrs who has suffered for it. And indeed,

¹Colossians 1:5

we have need of all these to assure us of this truth, because there is a sibness (blood relation) in us to all other truths, but we are framed¹ to believe this truth: and so, many times we make God a liar. It's true we give him not a lie directly, but in this we give him a lie, when we consider not what he speaks to us out of his word of truth, and obeys it not. More particularly, the apostle aims at one truth here, whilk is Justification by faith, and not by the works of the law; for this is the law of the gospel.² And therefore, of necessity, these who maintains justification by works, and that there is inherent righteousness in man, that must be a lie: and the apostle, in all his epistles, he proves this, that we are justified by faith only, and not by the works of the law: but thir false teachers made them to believe, that they could not be justified without the works of the law. But this will never make us to run well, albeit we have the gospel, if we be not surely grounded in this principal point thereof. The philosopher speaks of this, and he takes his ground only from natural reason; but the Scripture says, Obedience is better than sacrifice; for when a man offers sacrifice, he only gives the thing whilk he has, but when a man gives obedience to any point of God's truth, he offers himself for the truth, and gives that whilk he has not of himself. And so it is more sure to be justified by faith, than by the works of the law.

This obedience to the truth, it leads us to three necessar duties.

1. To hear the truth, and so to get the knowledge of it. 2. We must have a persuasion thereof, that it is true, and so faith to believe it.
3. When we know it and believe it, then we must go on in the practice of it. Thir three cannot be well separated; for any to know and to practise a thing, and not to be persuaded of it by faith, that is a

¹*Framet.* i.e., There is no kinship between us and the truths of revelation; and therefore we are averse from them, while we take kindly to all others.

²The author doubtless has his eye on the Arminian opinions then openly taught and defended by the Episcopalian doctors.

sin: to believe a thing that we know not, nor practises not, that is a brutish thing. And, therefore, this is a sure way for every Christian, first, to know a thing; secondly, to be persuaded of the truth of it; thirdly, to practise it. It's true, indeed, the judgment of weighty matters belongs chiefly to these who are most inspired by the Spirit of God; but the judgment of discerning things belongs to every particular Christian. This is not, neither, to make every man a judge of weighty and public matters; but every man ought to be judge of things for himself, and ought to be persuaded of them before he practise them.¹

We see here that we should obey this truth: there is an absolute obedience required to this truth. There is no absolute obedience required to no other truth, but only to this. All other truths are inferior to this, and they are limited to the truth of God's word. And, therefore, whenever the truth of God, to whom all sovereignty, majesty, and power belongs, and the commandment of men comes in competition together, we must then say, as the apostle said, we ought rather to obey God than man. And when this is done, it must not be called disobedience to superiours; but it is obedience to them, because it is obedience to God, who is above them.² And, if we be put to suffering for this, then we suffer for Christ and his truth: and, therefore, the apostle says to servants, if they suffer anything of their masters innocently and patiently, they suffer it for Christ. So that, if men's commandments be contrary to God, we must in that case submit ourselves patiently to God, and suffer or (ere) we obey them.

¹The question of private judgment in matters of faith and practice was then, as it is yet, a chief point in dispute between Presbyterians and Prelauists. It will be found entering materially into the debate of Henderson and the King, in 1646.

²The Covenanters were charged with rebellion, and it was urged as an objection against their movements, that they were "against authority". We have here Henderson's answer to that charge, expressed, according to Henderson's wont, in words few, simple, and weighty.

II. The *second* argument the apostle uses is from an objection they might allege. The objection is this. We do nothing but what we are persuaded to do. But he answers—That persuasion is not a true persuasion. It seems, indeed, that they had a persuasion for that whilk they did; but it was not well grounded, it was not from God. There is a threefold persuasion spoken of in Scripture. 1. There is a infallible and certain persuasion, and that is called a persuasion of faith, whereof the apostle speaks, Romans 8:38, “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, whilk is in Christ Jesus.” And this persuasion has with it a full assurance of understanding, whereby we know things to be; a full assurance of faith, to believe them; and a full assurance, to wait for the things promised; and a full assurance of certainty to get them. And the more that a man have of this persuasion, he is the more holy and the more humble in himself. 2. There is a persuasion of charity, as the apostle says, “We are persuaded better things of you.”¹ Here there is no infallible persuasion, but only according to the Word of God, and a charitable construction of men’s outward actions. 3. There is a persuasion of fantasy, whilk is the persuasion spoken of here. And therefore, the apostle he expresses it not by such a word in the first language as he does the other two, but by a baser word: by a word that signifies, men who are led by their own wilfulness, and with a fantasy of things; men who live only upon opinions, and not upon solid truths. This, beloved, has been a common thing ever from the beginning; men presuming that they have been persuaded of a thing, when their persuasion has not been from God: and the apostle, in this epistle, tells us that it is so with many. And the Papists they have this persuasion; they say they are persuaded they do right, and yet their persuasion is not of God but a fantasy, because it is not from

¹Hebrews 6:9

the truth of God. And the people of Israel, when they worshipped the golden calfin the wilderness, they thought they worshipped Jehovah, and Aaron proclaimed it a day for Jehovah; and yet the martyr Stephen he calls it idolatry. And Micah, when he made his gods, and gat a Levite in his house to be his priest, he thought he could not go wrong then; and yet he was far wrong. And our Saviour says to his apostles, "The time shall come, when they who kill you shall think that they do God good service;" and yet, judge ye if the killing of the apostles was either good service or could be acceptable to God. And think ye not, but these who did burn the martyrs thought that they were persuaded that they did right? And yet it was but a fantasy, it was not from God. Certainly this is a thing that should be taken heed unto, that we believe not false persuasions; especially when they would persuade us to error and to idolatry.

"Is not of him that calleth you." Before, he said to them, "Who did hinder you?" and now he says, "This persuasion is not of him that calleth you."

We may see here that where any gives obedience to the truth, that obedience it is only from God; but where obedience is not given to the truth, that comes not of God, who calleth them to obey the truth. And he uses this as a sufficient for all the rest of their defections. They obeyed not the truth; and this was because that whilk they did was not of God's direction. For, if it can be said that there is no warrant from the truth of God for that whilk we do, it is enough to convict us that it is wrong. If any error were never so gross, and had never so many arguments against it, yet this is sufficient to confute the error thereof, that it is not commanded in the Word of God. As it is said to Nadab and Abihu, they offered up strange fire to the Lord whilk he commanded them not; and to the children of Israel the Lord says—"Ye caused your children to pass through the fire to Moloch," and joins not, "Whilk I forbad you to do," but

“whilk I commanded you not.” So that whatever we do in God’s worship, it is either written in God’s word, or else we have no persuasion for it: or if we think we have a persuasion, yet it is nothing else but a presumption, if it be not written in God’s Word.¹

He uses a word here of the present time, “Is not of him that *cal-leth* you.” But it may include both the bygone and also the present time: and so, for them to look to their first calling, and he who then called them and is also yet calling them; and if they will look to those who are now persuading them, they will find the difference to be great between them. As if he said, he that anes called you, in his great patience and mercy, and spared you then, he is renewing his call toward you again (as, indeed, he was at this same time calling them by this letter); and, therefore, it were best for you to return from your backsliding, and come home again to him, albeit ye have slid den back. Beloved, the Lord’s calling of us, and continuing the means of our salvation with us, is not a good ground to say that there is no backsliding in such a part; but that is only a ground of the Lord’s patience, who continues these with us when we are sliding back from him. And, indeed, it is very ill constructed by them who makes that a ground that he will not correct the people with whom he continues these tokens of his presence, whilk are only the tokens of his patience: and if that be continued, then he will strike in anger.

III. Now, only a word of the third branch of the text, whilk is taken from the danger that might ensue upon these things. “A little

¹ Similar to this is the language of the Shorter Catechism, in the compilation of which Henderson had a chief hand. “The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, *or any other way not appointed in his word*”. This was a main point of controversy between the Presbyterians and the Prelatic party, the latter of whom claimed a right to institute, in God’s worship, what pleased themselves, without regard to any positive authority from the Word of God.

leaven leavens the whole lump.” This is a proverbial speech of leaven. The nature of leaven is well enough known: Pliny has made a large description of this leaven, but we will not stay upon this now; for it is an ordinary thing among all writers. Only this, ye will find it often mentioned in Scripture; and I would have you to take heed to this, how many sorts of evil leaven there are, and how far the world are given to be soured with them.

There is the leaven of error and heresy; and our Saviour says to his disciples, Matthew 16:6, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” Luke 12:1, he says, “Beware of the leaven of hypocrisy.” There is also the leaven of the Sadducees;¹ and the apostle, writing to the Corinthians,² speaks of the leaven of malice and envy. And there is also a leaven of policy, and that is in holding out the true religion for being embraced, for some politic ends: as the Jews, they would not receive Christ, nor believe in him, for fear that then the Romans should come upon them, and take their kingdom from them.³ And, certainly, there is no man who will consider rightly but he may see all these leavens to be in the world even now; and so may wonder how the Lord should be so patient, and not bring sudden and sore destruction upon the world. And, indeed, it would not fail to come upon the world, were it not for the seasoning of God’s children that is among them; for as far as the world are soured by this ill leaven, as far are God’s children made savoury by the sweet leaven of Jesus Christ in the gospel.

Now he speaks here of a little leaven in matters of religion. This is our great fault, we evermore either excuse things that we do, and think them nothing; or otherwise we extenuate them and think them less than they are. They say in a manner, What needs all this

¹Matthew 16:6

²1 Corinthians 5:8

³John 11:48

din in so little a matter? this is not fundamental, and so what is the matter of the practice thereof? It's true, indeed, there are some things in religion not fundamental, but oftentimes this is ill applied also; for at the first we will think that to be but a little matter, whilk in end will turn to a pest and great infection: even as the apostle says here, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." They thought that to be but a small matter, whilk the apostle calls a great matter.

We must not only take heed not to change anything that is fundamental, but we must also take heed that we obey nothing, whilk is not warranted by God himself in the matters of his worship: and so we should labour for knowledge in them. For ignorance in these things brings not only condemnation upon us, but it brings also obstinacy; for if we knew God's will perfectly in these, we would not do the least jot by (besides) that. And indeed, if the servants of God who lived of old were living now, they would be thought very precise. When Moses was permitted by Pharaoh to take the whole people with him, and all that they had, and only to leave the cattle behind them, his answer was, That he would not leave one hoof behind him; he would leave nothing there that might make the people's hearts turn back to Egypt again. And Mordecai, when the sentence of death was given out against himself and all the Jews, he would not do so much as to bow his knee to Haman, albeit that might save all their lives: and yet that was not a fundamental thing. And Daniel, when the decree was given out that none should ask anything but only from Darius for so long, yet because he was used to pray with his windows open, he would not do so mickle as to close his windows, when he prayed to God, to save himself, And the apostle would not dispense with wicked men, no, not for ane hour; and he commands us not only to abstain from ill, but he commands us to abstain from all appearance of evil.

"A little leaven leavens the whole lump." This comes to pass

three ways.

1. Because of the connexion that is between error; for anes receive and embrace that whilk is thought but a little error, it will soon make way for more. Even as the Articles of our Creeds, they are so linked together as if it were a chain, so that if ye break but one link of the chain, all the rest will soon fall sundry; or like pearls put upon a thread, loose but the knot of the thread and let the end go loose, and incontinent they will all fall off. So, indeed, it is with errors. If we receive but one, and open the port to it, there is a multitude at the back thereof; so that if the first be not gainstood, it holds the way open for all the rest, and they come in. As is evident in the point of freewill; anes admit free-will in the kirk, and then follows, that there is no election of the free grace of God; that there is no certainty of our election; it admits universality of election, a resistance by us of the strongest working of the grace of God, no perseverance in whatever estate we be here. And sicklike (in like manner), in the point of justification by inherent righteousness; anes admit that, and it presupposes preparation to be in us for justification, a perfection of good works, meriting by good works, denying of the certainty of faith, and so denying the work of God. And this is evident to be true also in the matters of the government of the kirk.

2. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” Because when error is anes begun, it swells ay and grows greater. Whereas at the first it will be but like unto a pickle of seed, in a short time it will become like a tall cedar. For what were all this thick wood of errors at first, that are in the Romish Kirk now, but only like small seeds? but now they are grown to such a height that they cannot be gotten tane order with.

3. “A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” This comes by the infection of error. When error anes begins, it eats up as a cancer; it is like Saint Anthone’s fire, it begins first in a little thing; but at last

it overspreads all. A little spark of fire, if it be not quenched, is not only able to burn a whole lodging, but to burn a whole city. Even so is a little error able to infect many; and so this is true whilk the apostle says, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." That is, if ye receive and keep this whilk now ye count but small, then your whole religion will be infected next, and all will be corrupt. And, indeed, this is a great mischief that a kirk whilk was anes glorious should become as Egypt; that the Israel of God should become like Sodom; that the people of God should become like no people; that thus they should procure his spiritual presence to depart from them, when they anes depart from him; that he should plague them thus, first with spiritual judgments, and then pour out temporal judgments upon them also. And, therefore, it is good for us to learn to discern between that whilk is sound indeed in the matters of religion, and that whilk is corrupt, that we may know what is leaven indeed, and eschew that. Now we will not know leaven by a look: but taste it, and then ye will know it: and for that end, we should labour to have our right taste. And when we have found out anything by our taste to be sour in the matters of God's house, then keep out that, as we would keep out a botch, or as we would keep Saint Anthone's fire aff us; and when any sour thing is entered, let us strive to cast it out, so soon as we perceive it to be sour. Even as the Israelites were commanded, before they did eat the passover, to purge all leaven out of their houses during these days they were eating, so should we labour all our days, so far as we can, to purge and to hold out this leaven. For at the beginning, if it could be kent then (as indeed sometimes the Lord will show it to his own at the very first), then it might be easily holden out; but when all are departed from God, and all are infected with it, it is harder to get it out: yet so soon as the Lord let us see it, let us delay no longer, but purge out what old leaven is in, and keep out what is not yet entered, and would be in.

This is for the interpretation of this text; I leave the application thereof to yourselves: for the text it is the tree, the interpretation is the fruit that grows upon the tree, the application thereof is the hand whereby the fruit is plucked aff the tree. And, therefore, I leave it to ilk ane of you, who has heard me, to put up your hand and pull down the branch, pluck off the fruit that is meetest for you, and eat of it. And especially remember of the text, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you, etc.” The Lord save us from a distraction of this sort, for Jesus Christ’s sake. To whom, etc.

**When the communion was
celebrated at St. Andrews,
October 21st.**

At Leuchars

The Sabbath before the Communion, April 8

At the Communion, April 15

On the Sabbath after the Communion, April 22

At a fast, May 5

May 13

May 20

July 15

August 12

September 2 (probably)

October 28