

A
WARNING
TO
BACK-SLIDERS:
OR, A
DISCOVERY
FOR THE
RECOVERY
OF
FALLEN ONES.

Delivered in a Sermon at Pauls,
before the Right Honorable, the Lord
Major and Aldermen of the City of
LONDON.

By RALPH VENNING.

Hos. 2.7. *Then shall she say, I will go and re-
turn to my first husband, for then was it
better with me then now.*

LONDON, Printed by T. C. for John Ambrose,
the Fountain and Bear in Goldsmiths
Row, in Cheap-side. 1656.

WARRENING

TO
BACK-LEDERS

DISCOVERY

OF THE
RECOVERY

OF
FATHERS' NAMES

By MARY NEWBERRY

LONDON, Printed and Sold by J. B. R. at the
the Fountain and Basin Golden Lane
Row, in Old Street. 1724

To the Right Worshipful

THOMAS VINER,

LORD MAJOR,

AND THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,

THE

ALDERMEN

of the City of LONDON.

Honourable and Honour'd,

Hope it will not be imputed to me as a crime, that I did all I could to keep this Sermon from the Presse, not fearing that it would do any hurt; but rather that it might do little, if any good, in this hard, very hard-hearted age. But seeing it hath pleased (I think I may without offence say) God & you to call it to remembrance, some months after it was preach't, I could not but obey your Order in giving you that which you call'd for, viz. the Sermon, and not any other thing. For indeed, having ob-

The Epistle

serued some books frontispic'd with a Sermon preacht at PAULS, which (as 'tis said of Sir Francis Drake's Ship) had nothing left (not a plank nor rib) but the very name thereof; I durst not (and I hope none will think it a too nice and a needlesse scruple of conscience, that I say) I durst not give you that to read which you did not bear. You have the same things & words, with no more variation then, nor indeed so much as the necessary, very necessary difference, that is to be put between pen and tongue, required.

If it be estimated by the seasonableness of it, it will (as it seems you judge) be beautiful; and I hope that it will not be the less acceptable, nor the more successfull, for being plain: for I profess (to prevent all exceptions to be made against it on that account) that it hath more of heart then Art, and of affection, then affectation. The time would not give leave to usher it in with any Preface,

Dedicatory,

nor to close it with any Oratorious insinuations; nor is it (I think) fit to do it now, on the grounds fore-mentioned.

Homely, yet I hope wholesome, as it is, let it go; and the blessing of God go along with it. The less man appears in it, the more God may appear by it. If it may bring some glory to his Name, by engaging any to remember either from whence they should not fall, and so to stand fast; or any to remember from whence they have fallen, and so to return, I shall be glad, though my Name suffer by it, as I believe in some mens esteems it will. But not to trouble you any longer with such things, nor to enlarge this Porch beyond the proportion allowable, I shall instead of speaking to you, speak to God for you.

I do heartily beseech Almighty God, that that City (over which God hath made you overseers) may never become an harlot, that it may never be said of it, It hath lost its first love, and left its first works. It was full of judge-

The Epistle, &c.

judgment, righteous and Iudge
in it, but now murderers. That its
silver may never become dross, nor
its wine be mixt with water, that its
Princes may never be rebellious, nor
companions of thieves, that none of
them may love gifts, nor follow af-
ter rewards; that, *Obvius* it may ne-
ver be said, they judge not the Pa-
therless, nor doth the cause of the
widow come before them; *Let* the
Lord of Hosts, the mighty One of Israel
should say, Ah, I will ease me of mine
adversaries, & avenge me of mine
enemies. The good Lord rather than
his hand, and purely purge away
the dross, and take away the sin, &
make Judges as at the first, & coun-
sellors as at the beginning, that she
may be called the City of righteous-
ness, the faithful City, and for these
things, the beauty and the glory of
the whole Earth. Thus, honourable
and honoured, is the hearty prayer

March 1654.

Thos. Bunnels servant.

RALPH VENNING

1. The suddenesse of his coming;

I will come quickly.

2. The end of his coming; *I will*

remove thy candlestick out of his

place, unless thou repent.

I shall very briefly touch a few gene-

ral Observations, which the context and

the Text doe afford us, and then come

closer to the words.

The first Observation is this, That God

takes special notice, and keeps an exact

account of all our doings, be they good,

or be they bad; (*I know thy works,* viz.

what they were, and what they are.) God

hath his books of Remembrance writ-

ten, according to which he will judge

the world; for he will bring every work

to judgement, with every secret thing,

whether it be good or evil; *I know thy*

works, &c.

2. *Obs.* That persons may be prais'd

to their dispraise: they may be commen-

ded to their discommendation; *I know*

thy works, but, &c. nevertheless.

A mans praise is ever the lesse, when he

is prais'd with a *Nevertheless.* To com-

mend with a *but*, is but to discommend.

To say, such a man *was* a meek man, *was*

an humble man, *was* an holy man, is not

a praise,

(20)

a praise, but a dispraise; you did runne well, who hindered you? Such an one was good, but *quantum mutatus ab illo?* the man is not what he was. Praises with exceptions are (little better then dispraisements. Nevertheless, etc.

3. *Obj.* The good we have done will not excuse the bad we do do; God will not put the good in one ballance, and the bad in another, and make allowances of the bad for the goods sake; No, its no excuse at all to *Ephesus*, that she had labour'd, and that she had wrought; when it can be said, *I have against thee, and they have left thy first works.* Former fruitfulness will be no excuse for present barrenness; former industry will not plead for any mans present idleness; a good beginning will never make amends for a bad end; as the latter End be worse then the beginning; it had been better for them they had never known the way of righteousness; then when they have known it, to depart from the holy commandment. *I have against thee, &c.*

4. *Obj.* That when love decayes, our works decay, he layes all upon this; *Thou hast left thy first love.* As is our love of God, such will be our obedience unto God.

God. If *his* love be quick and lively, our life will be full of good works; but if once love decline, works will decay; for faith it self worketh by love; *Thou hast left thy first love.*

5. *Obs.* That God doth not strike without warning. God doth not surprize his creatures, nor fall upon them at unawares, but he gives them notice of his coming, before he comes; and he admonisheth before he threatens. *Remember, (saith he) or else I will come.* God doth not take advantage against poor sinners, nor deale with them according to their iniquities; for then, who could stand? but God, though he might use his Sword, will yet use his Word, and therefore gives them notice before-hand; and this is the very reason given by *Peter*, why God makes not haste to destroy the world, because *(saith he)* God is long suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; *Repent, or else I will come, &c.*

6. *Obs.* If Gods admonitions doe not take with us, Gods threatnings will certainly take hold of us; if we doe not hear his Word, we shall undoubtedly feel his Sword; if you do not repent, *I will*
(without

A Warning to

without doubt certainly I will come, and remove thy candlestick, &c.

I shall mention no more as to the general, only give you four other Observations from the Text, and then single out one of them to speak unto.

The first is this,

1. That to remember from whence we are fallen, is a very great help to our recovery; to remember from whence we are fallen, doth very much conduce to our recovery; 'tis like going into ones native aire, when in a consumption: Remember, &c.

2. God doth not onely require that we should remember from whence we are fallen, but he also requires that wee should repent for falling; Remember, and repent, &c.

3. God doth not onely require that we should repent for sin, but he also requires that we should repent from sinne, and do the first works. Repentance is to be not only for dead works, but from dead works. To repent without reformation is a contradiction, and whosoever (as one quotes from Tertullian) repents with a contradiction, shall be pardoned with a contradiction; to repent and continue
in

in sin, is repentance with a contradiction; to be pardon'd and goe to hell, is a pardon with a contradiction; such repentance, such pardon; *Do then the first works.*

4. If Backsliders do not remember, and repent, and reform; their doom will be sad at the coming of Christ. He will come, but to their cost and torment, for he will take away their candlestick, and cast them into outer darknesse; *Else I will come, &c.*

The first of these four is the Proposition which I shall speak unto, *viz.* That for a people to remember from whence they are fallen, doth very much conduce to their recovery and restoration. In the handling whereof, I shall shew,

1. What it is to remember.
2. That to remember doth conduce to recovery.
3. How remembering from whence we are fallen, doth conduce to recovery.

To the first, *viz.* what it is to remember. The word hath three significations; each and every of which do's very well suit with what is intuded in the Text,

1. *To remember*, is to call to mind that which we had forgotten, which we had let slip out of our memory. And so its used in *Matth. 26. 25.* *When the Cock crew, Peter remembered the words of Jesus, (and that very remembrance engaged him to repent; For he went out and wept bitterly.) He remembered the words of Jesus, that is, he called to minde what Jesus had told him, and he had forgotten, viz. That before the Cock crew, he should deny him thrice.* So then to call to mind that which we once were, and to look back upon that which we once did, and from which we are now fallen, is useful for our recovery and restauration to that state.

2. *To remember*, signifies to meditate upon; Now *meditation* is a thinking of a thing over & over, again & again; 'tis the fixing and setting of the thoughts upon such or such a subject. So 'tis us'd in *Psal 63. 6.* *I remember thee upon my bed, (and presently adds, as an explanation of his meaning) and meditate of thee in the night-watches.* So that, to remember is not barely to call a thing to minde, but to keep it in minde, to revolve it over and over. So *John 15. 20.* Christ charges them

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them to remember those words, *viz.* *That the Disciple is not above his Master.* To remember, that is, to think often of, and muse much upon those words. Now this a settled meditation upon, and keeping in minde the thoughts of what we once were, and what we once did, and what we once had, and from all which we are now fallen, doth very much conduce to the re-instating of us into that condition.

3. There is yet an higher degree of meaning in the word, and that is, as it signifies *to lay to heart*; not only to call to minde, and keep in minde, but to lay to heart: *Remember from whence thou art fallen*; that is, lay it to heart, be seriously and tenderly affected with it, for that's the laying of a thing to heart. According to this sense you have the word us'd *Isaiah 57. 11.* *Thou hast not remembered, nor laid it to thine heart.* And in the *Lamentations*, *chap. 3. v. 19, 20.* 'tis very pathetically and feelingly exprest; *Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soule bath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.* This is that which our remembrance is to reach unto, *viz.* to an humbling, to an heart-

heart-affecting, yea, to an heart-afflicting, for our being fallen; and thus to remember doth exceedingly conduce to our recovery; and that it doth so, is the second thing which I am to prove.

And this I prove by two irreprovable witnesses.

1. Gods own Testimony.

2. The experience of fallen ones, or Backsliders themselves.

1. God himselfe, who is truth, speaks the truth, and cannot lie, tells us so much in *Jerem. 8. 5, 6.* *Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back with a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to returne. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickednesse, saying, What have I done?*

As much as if he had said, How comes it to passe, what's the reason? why is it, that no man repented him of his wickednesse? 'Tis, saith he, because no man asked himselfe, *What he had done?* no man remembered from whence he was fallen; no man did so much as consider his wayes, nor cast an eye back upon his former conversation; *No man said, what have I done?* This remembering is a re-

flex act, 'tis a kinde of *catechizing* the soule, putting queries to a mans heart: Now saith he, there is no man doth this, they call not to minde, nor lay to heart their backslidings. *They that minde not what they have done, are not like to minde what they should doe.* The summe of it amounts to this, that if men did but remember from whence they were fallen, 'twere scarce possible but they should repent, return and do their first works.

2. *Besides Gods Testimony*, you shall have another to second it, (that out of the mouth of two witnesses this word may be establisht) and that is, the experience of backsliders or fallen ones. That in *Hos. 2. 7.* is a pregnant instance: *Then shall she say, I will goe and returne to my first husband; Why so? ask you, why? there is good reason for it; For then it was better with me then now.*

Here you see that calling to mind from whence she was fallen, engaged her to return; *I will return, for it was better, &c.* Goe where we will, we shall never speed so well as in walking with God; and if he decline his way, and goe out of his paths, we shall never be at ease till we returne again.

It will never be so well as it was at first till we come to our first Husband; *It was better than, then now.*

Another experience as evidential as the former, you have from the Prodigal; *Luke 15.* who, saith the Text, *When he came to himselfe,* (Mark that, *when he came to himselfe,* the man was not himself before; sin besots men, it darkens and dotts their understandings, that a man is not a man, but is beside himselfe; *But when he came to himselfe,* he quickly went from himselfe unto his Father; when he called to minde what he once had in his fathers house, when he remembered his former state, and compar'd his past with his present condition, now saith he, *I will arise and goe to my father;* when he remembered from whence he was fallen, he repented, &c.

A third, and no lesse famous an experience you have of this in *Psal. 119 59.* *I bethought me,* saith he, *of my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies:* He speaks the language of a man that had been wandering, that had gone out of his way, and turned aside to by-paths; but at last is at a stand, and makes an halt, and then bethought himselfe: *I began*
 said,

saith he, to call to minde whence I came, whither I was going, and where I was; and finding that I was not right, but was fallen; I fac'd about, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

Thus you see the truth clearly evinced, That remembring from whence we are fallen, doth very much conduce to our recovery.

The third thing which I have to doe, is to shew you how remembring from whence we are fallen, doth help us to returne, what kinde of influence it hath upon our hearts; or what are the things which it makes use of to engage us to returne.

It works upon us these three ways.

It works { 1. By way of shame.
2. By way of fear.
3. By way of ingenuity.

1. The remembring from whence we are fallen, works upon us by making use of that *shame* and *shamefac'dnesse* which is in man. Man (if not barded by sin) is a modest creature, and will blush at a fault when he sees it; Now when he comes to remember what he once was, and now is not; and what he once did, and now doth not; what he once enjoyed, and

is now deprived thereof, the man is ashamed, and bethinks himself to return for very shame.

You know when a man hath had the name and fame of a valiant man, and shall now be reputed, and reported a coward, he will need no other spur then shame for the quickening of him, to approve himselfe a man that may recover his first honour.

Shame hath a very great influence on men, and truly (*as the Proverb saith*) past shame, and past goodness.

But if a man retain his modesty, and do not get a brazen fore-head, a whores face, or a brow of brass, there's more then hopes of his recovery, when ever he remembers from whence he is fallen.

This needs no clearing, 'tis so cleare; yet take a proof of it from *Ezek. 16.* towards the latter end, *v. 61. Then thou shalt remember thy wayes; pray mark it, Then thou shalt remember thy wayes; and what then? Thou shalt be ashamed.*

So also, *v. 63. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee: Mark it, shame even after I am pacified; shame after reconciliation*

conciliation; after God remembers his Covenant, it will become us to remember our ways, which have not been good, and *that with shame.* In v. 60. saith he, *I will remember my Covenant,* and v. 61. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways.*

Now the shame ariseth upon this account, that a man should fall from that duty, that love and service from which he hath no reason, nor shadow, nor pretence of reason to fall. *'Tis the most unreasonable thing in the world to sin against God;* and if man be as'kd why he sins? he must be for ever speechless, that is, silent, not having any reason to give, any thing to say, why he should depart from God.

Thus God disputes it with backsliding *Israel,* Jer. 2. Thus saith the Lord, *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?* As if God had said, *What evil have I done?* as Christ said, *For which of my good works do you stone me? what have you to lay to my charge? what occasion have I given you that you should not love me now as at the first? what reason can you produce for your Apostasie,*
and

and for your falling from your first
love? am not I as lovely as ever, and
as loving as ever? for so God reasons
with them in the latter end of that
Chapter: *O generation, O vile, foolish,
reasonless generation, see the word of
the Lord, gainsay it if you can; have
I been a wilderness unto Israel, or a land
of darkness? If so, you have some oc-
casion to revolt and turn away back-
ward, but if not, wherefore then say
my people, what reason have my people
to say, We will come no more to thee?*
Oh! what a shameful thing (saith
God) is this, that a people should goe
from a God that never did them hurt,
but good all their dayes? A God, who
when they wanted bread, fed them;
when they wanted water, smote the
rock, and gave them drink; *He was
no wilderness to them in the wilderness;*
While they were in a barren land, God
was fruitfulnessse to them; he rained
Manna from Heaven, and fed them with
Angels food, and gave them honey out
of the Rock, &c.

Now after this exhortation, when
a man reflecting upon himselfe, shall
look back upon, and read over his
ways,

ways, and then finde I had no reason
to break the holy, just and good
commandments of my God; I can
give God no account why I should
return to folly, why I should look after
vanity, *lying vanities*, why I should
forsake my first love; What followes
hereupon, but shame and blushing? so
that for very shame, the man repents
and returnes *to do his first works*.

2. Remembring from whence we are
fallen, works upon us *by way of feare*.
There is in man a feare when he hath
committed evil; feare falls upon him, and
the man is afraid, lest the iniquity of his
heels should overtake him. You know,
that no sooner had *Adam* sinned, but the
man was afraid, and hid himselfe for feare.
No sooner had *Cain* sinned, but *Cain* was
afraid, and presently his countenance
fell. *When men fall, their countenance and
their courage falls*. When once men re-
member from whence they are fallen, they
feare lest threatnings should take hold
of them, and are afraid lest God should
reward them according to their iniqui-
ties.

God shakes his rod over backsliders,
and

and threatens them, that if they doe not come to him, *he will come, &c.* If they come not to him for their safety, he will come to them for their ruine. Now *very feare*, lest the wrath and damnation which God hath denounced against sinners, should fall upon them, and be their portion; very feare (I say) engages them to return.

And my beloved, God doth allow in us this Principle of feare; none of the faculties or affections of man are extinguished, but all made use of in working man God-ward; God doth not onely make use of a mans modesty, and love, and ingenuity, but he makes use also of that fearfulnesse that is in man: and therefore you shall finde that Christ himselfe (*surely not for nought*) gives this rule to his own Disciples: *Fear not him that can kill onely the body, but feare him that can take soule and body and throw them into hell, I say unto you, Feare him.* And as the Apostle saith, *so may I, Knowing the terror of the Lord, we perswade men; Knowing what a dreadfull thing 'tis to fall into the bands of the living God, we perswade men to remember from whence they are fallen, und to repent.*

3. *But then thirdly*, remembering from whence we are fallen, works upon our *ingenuity* too. Man is a very docible and teachable creature, and is exceedingly wrought upon by courtesies and kindneses; Now when a soul sees that God doth not only threaten him in case he do not come in, that he shall be damned; but also promises him in case he do come in, that he shall be welcome, that he shall be saved; this so works upon mans ingenuity, that he cannot finde it in his heart to stand it out against such a God.

A God of love and kindness, who promises all the entertainment that love can make for poor souls; and, *Oh Lord*, how sweet will that be!

God deals not with man after the manner of men, *Jer. 3. 1.* *They say (saith God) If a man put away his wife, and she goe from him, and become another mans, shall she returne againe? No, say they, by no meanes; But I say, Thou, and though thou hast plaid the harlot with many lovers, yet come, and welcome to me, saith the Lord.*

Now what soule can finde in its heart, when God saith, *Come, and I will pardon all thy backslidings, I will forgive*
all

all thine iniquities, I will entertain thee, and remember thy sin no more, thou shalt never hear of it again, I will never upbraid thee with falling from thy first love, if thou wilt return and make thine abode with me: *What soule, I say, can look God in the face, and turn his back upon that face, that lovely and smiling, love-looking face? Who can do it?*

I remember a very notable instance of this ingenuity in *Saul* towards *David*; it's a place worth your turning to it, to read and observe it, *1 Sam. 24*. You know that *David* had an advantage against *Saul*, and could have cut off his head, but *David* cuts off only the lap of his garment, to let *Saul* know that he could (for it was in his power to) have done more; Now, said *David*, *Behold, this day thine eyes* (sufficient witnesses) *have seen how the Lord had delivered thee into mine hands, and some bade me kill thee* (would I have observed the opportunity of providence, or attended to counsel, I had slain thee) *but mine eye spared thee* (whose eye spared not me) *and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my Lord* (though my Lord hath put forth his hand against me.) *Moreover my Father, (if thou doubt it) see, yea see the*
skirt

skirt of thy Robe in my hand, for in that I cut off the skirt of thy Robe, and killed thee not; know thou and see (for 'tis undeniably true) that there is no transgression in my hand, that I have not sinned, (as 'tis charged upon me, as if I sought not only the Crown, but the Kings life, that I might have his head, and then the Crown,) and if not, Why, Oh why huntest thou my soule, i. e. my life, to take it? Here is Davids plea. Let us now see the issue and successe thereof, vers. 16. It came to passe, when David had made an end of speaking these words, that Saul (melting and weeping) said, Is this thy voice, my son (O my Son) David, and Saul lift up his voice and wept, and he said, (yea, and had cause to say) to David, Thou art more righteous then I: (and he proves it clearly thus,) For thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I rewarded thee evil, and thou hast (demonstratively) shewed this day, that thou hast dealt well with me; forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou didst not kill me; (which he wondred at upon this account) if a man finde his enemy, will he let him go well away? Oh no, and at last, saith the Text, Saul went home; Saul scorned to be so base to hunt after

Dauids

Dauids life any more; No, but *Saul* went home. Why now here is the case, the very case (*my beloved*) we are all every one of us a backslidden man, that's fallen into the hands of God; he might have cut off our heads, but (*Oh mercy!*) he only cuts off the skirt of our garments, and when he hath done, he shewes it us, and then asks us, Oh ye sinners, ye sinners, how can ye hunt after my Glory? how can ye hunt after my Name? how can ye break my holy Commandements? with what face dare ye doe these things?

Now I say, *very ingenuity* makes the soule to cry out as *Saul* did, Is this thy voice, O my God? *is this thy voice?* have I (*alas, I have*) done wickedly, I will do so no more; LORD, *I will goe home.* I will hunt after thy Name and thy Glory no more; for thou (*Oh Love!*) though thou didst find me thine enemy, yet didst thou let me go well away, Oh, *saith ingenuity,* shall I now be an enemy to the God that hath been a friend to me? God forbid. Ah no, *I will go home.*

Take but one instance of this overcoming consideration, wherein you shall see backsliders returning upon this very account,

count, in *Jer. 3. 22.* *Returne, ye back-sliding children,* saith the Lord, *and I will heale your back-sliding;* What followes hereupon? *Behold, we come vnto thee, O Lord, our God.* What ingenuity (if any left) can stand it out against such sweet invitations? such not only alluring, but securing promises? surely none. *Behold, we come.*

Thus much, *or thus little* may suffice concerning the Doctrinal part, to haue shewen you, That remembring or calling to minde from whence we are fallen, doth very much conduce to our recovery, and how it doth it by working upon our Modesty, Fear and Ingenuity. *What remains now?*

But to beseech every one to remember whence ye are fallen, for we are all fallen short of the glory of God. And here we might take an occasion to look as farre back as *Paradise*, and to view that innocent state wherein man *once* stood, and there also to take an account *how well* it was with man then, when he stood before God, having no cloathing but his innocency, and therefore needed not to be ashamed though naked; *no sin, no shame.*

Certainly, *my beloved*, it is not with us, *alas, it is not with us*, our blushing tells us that it is not with us, as when we came out of the hands of God; Our feare also tells us, that it is not with us as when God made us; if God should come to us as he did to *Adam*; and say, *Adam, where art thou?* where art thou, O man? I am afraid that he would finde (*as well as make*) us afraid; he would finde us running behind the trees of the garden to shelter our selves, and say, *I heard thy voice, and was afraid.*

Now I say, let us call to minde from whence we are fallen, for we are all Renegadoes; we are all degenerated, we are all slidden back, and fallen down into a lumpish, earthly condition; *Oh let us look back again to Paradise*, and let our eyes affect our hearts, that we may be reinstated into a better Paradise, even into the second *Adam*, the *Lord Christ from heaven*, *heavenly*; There's no way to Paradise but by Christ; *This day shall thou be with me in Paradise*; Be with me, mark that; when a man is with Christ, (*that I may allude*) he is then in Paradise, then truly in happiness. *That day wherein Christ comes to a mans house, salvation*

vation comes to a man; and that day that a man comes to Christ, he comes to salvation.

Oh, let us long to be dissolved in this sense, to die to our sins, that we may live with Christ; that we again enjoy that old acquaintance which man had with God before he sinned, before shame, and before fear seized upon our hearts.

But seeing this is not the direct meaning, import, or scope of this place, I shall pass it by, having given it this touch by the way.

This word *properly* relates to us, as we have pretended to look heaven-ward again, by having an eye to Christ, making a profession of the name and fear of God: and that which it calls upon us for, is to consider *whether it be with us as at first, whether it be with us as in the days of our youth, when we came in to God in the beginning of our dayes.* Let us look back a little, and remember from whence we are fallen; for I am afraid it will be made appear that we are fallen not only short of God, (for that we are at best) but short of our selves; we are not as we were, we do not do as we did, it is not with us as in months past.

Now

Now that you may know whether and wherein you are fallen, and so remember it as to repent, and doe the first works; I shall shew you what Christians are at their first coming in, & conversion to God; I shall draw the picture of their life, though not so the life, and set before you some of their frames and works at first. There are ten things which I shall commend to your consideration, with my prayer to God that they may conduce to recovery.

The first thing is this.

First, That at the first Professors looked more after goodness, then after greatness; they minded more the beautifying of their souls, then the adorning of their bodies; they minded more eternity and the things thereof, then they did time & the things thereof; they cared more to be the Lords people, then to be Lords amongst the people. When others cry, *Who will shew us any good?* (corn, and wine, and oyl) their cry is, *Lord lift up upon us the light of thy countenance;* Let us enjoy our God, take the world who will. This, I believe, some of you know was once your heart; well then, if now thou mind greatness more then goodness, and the adorning of thy body more then the beautifying

ing of thy soule, and the things of this world more then the things of eternity and eternal life, thou art fallen. *Oremember from whence thou art fallen.* Souls had wont to be so taken up with the longing after communion with God, that they were scarce at leisure to bestow their looks upon the worlds vanity; If thou now be at leisure to bestow thine heart, thou art fallen; *Oremember from whence thou art fallen.*

It is a very glorious frame that is mentioned concerning our Forefathers, in the 11th. of the Hebrews, *Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*; in the 13th. verse. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, (to embrace a promise at a thousand yeares distance, two thousand yeares distance that is noble faith;) and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; for they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a Countrey (Mark) their whole bulinesse was to goe home to God; all their travel in this world was to travel heaven ward; they make no more use of this earth, but to set their feet on it, and walk on heaven-ward,*

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they

they declared plainly; no Demonstration
is more evident, then that *Abraham*, and
Isaac, and *Jacob* sought a Country; that
they were not taken up with the things
of this world, they sought a Coun-
try.

Now (*my beloved*) if we are come to
this, that we declare plainly, that we sit
down and build our houses, and our Pa-
laces, and our Citics, as if this were to be
our rest, *are we not fallen?* Surely if *A-*
brabam, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob* were alive,
they would blush to see Professors in our
dayes, that Pilgrims should take up their
abode on earth; Well then, *Remember*
from whence thou art fallen, and go to thy
old wont againe; look after goodnesse
more then greatnesse, and communion
with God; more then enjoyment of the
world. *But then in the second place,*

II. *At the first*, when Believers come
in to Jesus Christ, they are very industri-
ous in all holy duties, publicly and pri-
vately; they will take paines for God,
and for their soules, and will not offer
unto God that that cost them nought;
They will rise early, and goe to bed late, &
and eat the bread of carefulnesse; The de-
iring of their fathers will, for that is their
meat

meat and their drink; and certainly if
it be not thus now, thou art fallen; if thou
 put off God with any thing, *hay*, (*may I*
not fear put off God) with nothing, art
 thou not fallen?

Thou hadst wont to have been much
 in prayer, and much at hearing; if now
 thou art but little at prayers and little at
 hearing, art thou not fallen? They had
 wont to long for Sabbaths, and, O when
 will they come? and now they think
 Sabbaths long, and when will they be
 gone? *and art thou not fallen?* O remem-
 ber from whence thou art fallen, doe thy
 first works, pray as in the dayes of old,
 and hear as in the dayes of old, *with an*
appetite.

Many a time *some of your souls* know that
 you could leave the world to follow pray-
 er and hearing; and now do not your
 souls tell you to your face, you can leave
 prayer and hearing for the world? *and*
is not this a fall? L, and the fall is great.
 Remember from whence thou art fallen,
 and doe thy first works, to thy old indu-
 stry again.

My beloved, it is a great mistake to
 think that duties are drudgeries; if peo-
 ple abound in duties, they are afraid lest

they should come under a Covenant of Works: Why (*my beloved*) I tell you, that under the Gospel you must work for your living, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*; I say it again, under the Gospel you must work for your living; He that will not labour (*in this sense*) he shall never eat; I am afraid that many under pretence of fearing a Covenant of Works, have thrown away the Works of the Covenant. O remember from whence ye are fallen, and to your first works again; up and be doing, be as industrious (as ever) at hearing, and praying, for it is for your souls. *But then,*

III. Believers and Professors *at first*, when they began to be Saints, though they prayed much, and heard much, they thought it all but little, *yea, all nothing*, unless they enjoyed God in all these; if they at any time came to the wells, and found no waters, they have gone away *thirsted*; if they had come to her, come to prayers, and have not enjoyed God, have not found their hearts wrought upon, to be made the more humble and the more holy by it; they have gone *fighting away*, and with groans they have departed from the very Throne of Grace

well then, but if now thou canst be contented with bare hearing, though thou be never the better for it, and with bare praying, though never the better for it; I tell thee thou art fallen, *O remember from whence thou art fallen, and to thy first works again.*

Never think that the work is done till thou be drawn neerer to God by it, (as the Apostle saith) so order it, that all your meetings may be for the better, and not for the worse.

Now when are our meetings for the better, but when we are the better for our meetings? *What is it to draw nigh to God in prayer, if we be not drawn neerer to God by prayer?* What is it to goe and ask for humility, and abide proud? to goe and ask for heavenly-mindednesse, and abide earthly? *What is this?* will bare praying argue the soules communion with God? No, but when a soule is cast into the mould of his prayer, and hath enjoyed the frame he hath prayed for, then he may say he hath had communion with God; and therefore (I say) return to your first works; never think hearing and praying enough, unless you have your God in, and the works of God upon your hearts. *But then,*

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IV. Christians primitive, (let me call them primitive Christians) at their first coming in to God, all their expressions to God and man are genuine natural, without Art, ceremony or complement, they deal down-right, plainly & honestly with God and man; their prayers to God, they are not a heap of words, but a stream of affection; they are not a multitude of expressions, but breathings and longings of soul after God; their heart first speaks their words, and then their words speak their hearts to God, they feel what they doe; *I, but now, if thy expressions to God be matter of Art, and matter of complement; if thou put God off with a parcel of good language, thou art fallen.*

Time was when thy heart spake first, if now thy tongue run before thy heart, thou art fallen. *O remember to do thy first work again.*

And as to men their expressions were as honest, and as cordial, and as sincere as to God; they spake what they meant, and they meant what they spake; they did not speak every one to his neighbour with a heart and a heart. I am afraid we have too sad a cause to make complaint with

with the Prophet in the 12th. *Pfal.* *Help, Lord, the godly man ceaseth, the faithful failes from among the children of men; they speak vanity every one with his neighbour; with flattering lips, and with a double tongue doe they speak: A heart and a heart, that is, they so speak, that a man doth not know them when they speak: A man can lay no more stress upon their words, then upon the wind; they give one as good words as any in the world, and one hugs himself to think, O this will come to something, and all these words come to nothing. This was not at first, men made conscience first of speaking, and then of performing; men were shie of promising, but if they promised, they were so honest as to keep their words, though they lost by it, though it were to their hurt, though it were to their prejudice; if it be not so now, thou art fallen; O remember (I may say) thy first words in this sense, and let thy words and thy expressions be genuine and natural, the very breathings of thine heart; do not complement with God or man. But then in the fifth place, (for I will dispatch all I can.*

V. Believers, or Christians, or Saints;
(call

(call them what you will) at their first coming in, they have a very high and honourable esteem of them that bring them in; their hearts are knit to them, who knit their hearts to God; they are almost married to them that married them to Christ; they love them so dearly, so cordially.

I will shew you but one instance to speak for all the rest. In *Galatians 4*. It pleased God to make use of *Paul* to convert the *Galatians*, to bring them home to *Jesus Christ*; now saith he in the fifteenth verse; *When my temptation was in my flesh, you despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an Angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus*: If *Christ* himself had come in person, you could not have given him more honourable entertainment, and a more cordial welcome then you gave me. But now (saith he) *Where is then the blessednesse you spake of before? for I hear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your eyes to have given them to me*. Surely they were dear indeed, that were dearer then ones own eyes; and yet (mark but the next verse,) *Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* They that once,

at first would have pulled out their eyes for Paul, would at last have pulled out Pauls eyes, and were they not fallen think you?

Time was when beautiful were the fect of them that brought the glad tidings of peace; not only beautiful were the glad tidings of peace which they brought, but they that brought them were beautiful; that is, they were welcome; why now, with what face canst thou say, the tidings of peace which they brought are lovely, but they that brought them are loathsome? with what face canst thou say it? I am alwayes afraid that that which is brought, is never welcome, when they that bring it are not welcome.

(My beloved) time was (to my knowledge) time hath been, when a godly Minister that God hath made use of to convert a soule, O how dear was he? and how neer was he lodged to the hearts of such persons! but ah, but now, not a good look, nor a good word for them that did them no wrong but this, to bring them in to Christ; pardon them this wrong. What saith Paul, Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? O forgive me

me this wrong. I seek to save you, and you seek to undoe me; pardon me that wrong.

(My beloved) I durst ask many a soule, whether if ever they knew Jesus Christ in deed and in truth, God did not use some or other Minister of the Gospel to bring them in? I say generally, if so, why then should not that be as desirable to bring thee up that was desirable when it brought thee in? Is it an injury to help thee heaven-ward? Doth it do thee any wrong to save thy soul? if so, be their enemy though they tell thee the truth; but if it do good to thee, and to save thy soul be a courtesie, make much of them. If God should take away the candlestick, or the candle out of the stick, thou wouldst wish for it again; but if any be otherwise minded, let me tell them, they are fallen; and let me beseech them to remember from whence they are fallen, and to repent, and doe their first works. But in the sixth p'ace.

VI. Believers at first, upon their first advance heaven-ward, while they put their foot forward to eternal life; O how watchful were they over their hearts, and over their wayes, killing sinne
in

to the very first motions of it.

I dare say, that a thought of being proud, a thought of being covetous, a thought of sinning hath pierced their souls as a sword; and O how have they gone mourning all that day long, wherein they have found an earthly mind, and an inclination to depart from God! So tender were their soules, that if Satan did but offer a temptation, their very hearts rise, I, and in their might they rise up against it, and were so truly consciencious, that they abstained from it, I, and abhorred the very appearances of evil? If a thing did but look like sinne, though it were not a sinne; yet if it did but look like a sinne, O how were they afraid to look at it! how would they stand at a distance from pitch, and touch it not, lest they should be defiled! How this were they of looking upon the wine, when it was red in the glasse! and if a garment were but spotted with the flesh, O at what a distance would they stand!

Now (*My beloved*) if it be not so, you are fallen; if you have lost this tenderness, and lost this conscienciousness, and can now make bold, not only with the appearances of evil, but with appearing
evil,

evil, and apparent evils; *are you not fallen?* Time was when you were afraid to look like a proud person, what now to be a proud person, is it not a fall think ye? Time was when they were afraid, lest their carriage should give any body to think they were wanton; I, but now to carry it like wantons, is it not to fall? My beloved, I beseech you remember your first works, that good tenderesse and bleeding of soule at but a touch of sinne.

Again,

VII. They were not only watchfull over themselves, fearful to offend, and *blessed is that man that so feareth alwayes;* but they were also watchful over their brethren; over one another, they were their brothers keepers, I, and would not in any wayes suffer sinne upon their brother: and *I must professe,* I do not know wherein Professors are more fallen then in this. It is true indeed, they watch; but is it not for one anothers haltings? It is true indeed, they will reprove, but is it not with reproaches? Saints had wont to goe like *Shem* and *Japhet*, backward to cover the nakednesse of their brothers; and now like wicked *Cain*, who can fastest discover their brothers

nakednesse? And O what a fine thing it is, if they can but finde another as bad as themselves, as if another mans sin would iustifie them, and free them from condemnation! *Yea, in bloud and fire*

Moreover, if these souls in the dayes of old, could not gain their brother by exhortation, or counsel, or reproof; why, they would go home, and mourn exceedingly, as *Jeremiah* saith; if I cannot prevaile, *I will goe and mourn in secret*; and, O, how did their eyes run downe with tears, because others did not keep Gods Lawes! But alas! now, that that *Paul* would have told the world of weeping, men tell the world of laughing; and that is, that there are men, whose god is their belly, who are enemies to the Crosse of Christ; O remember from whence ye are fallen, and doe your first works: Leave reproaches; but use reproofs; and instead of watching for haltings, be sure to watch to keep from halting: *(But to make better)* in the sch. place: *in more manly*

VIII. There was this remarkable (and I beseech you observe it) in all primitive professors, and all young beginners, (as I may call them) they took a special care of all their Families, and Re-

lations

lations committed to their care; Oh how did they travel in birth for their children, till they were new-born! and travel again till Christ were formed in them: Oh! how would they beseech the Lord, that their servants might serve God? What care there was to make every one in the Family a Saint, a holy wife, a holy child, and a holy servant, to have a Church in a house.

You know, God called *Abraham* his friend, why? *I know, he will teach his children after him,* and saith *Joshua,* *As for my part, do what you think good, but and my house we will serve the Lord.* O what care there was among the old Professors, the old Puritans (you called them) to bring up their children in the feare of God, and to look to it, that a vile person should not be let into, much lesse abide in their house, if they could help it? But now (*My beloved*) is it not the sad complaint that is (and is to be) made, no children more neglected then Professors children, no servants more neglected then Professors servants? Oh that this should be spoken in these dayes, where there is more light in words, but (it seems) more darkness in deeds; *O remember from whence ye are fallen!*

To your old Family-work againe, O set up Family-duties again! if ever you mean to have good Families, up with Family-duties again; if ever you mean to have good Relations, pray more with them, and pray more for them; if ever you mean to have good children, O give them up to God, and teach them the fear of the Lord, train them up in his paths betimes. Little would one have thought ever it should have been a question among Christians, whether one should teach children the fear of the Lord; whether one should teach a childe the trade of his way, when he is young, that when he is old he may not depart from it?

I remember that it was the saying of a Heathen, being asked what things we were to teach children to know? Wee must (said he) teach them to know that when they are young, that they must doe when they are old; that was his answer. *We were best call him a Christian, and call Christians Heathens,* for by their practice both may be said. Is it not a shame that it should be said, no children so rude, so vile, so abusing the Name of God, as them that will be (forsooth) the most eminent Professors, and of them that have attained

attained (in pretention) to more steps then ordinary heaven-ward? *But in the ninth place,*

IX. Saints at their first coming in to God in the begining of their daies they were visible Saints, he that did run might read an alteration. Alas! the Saints are grown invisible, and are they not fallen? *Tertulian* tells us that Christians were known by the amendment of their lives; no man so meek as the Christian, no man so humble as the Christian, no man so holy as the Christian, so just, so upright, so faithfull as the Christian; they were known all the world over by being the best men, they were visible Saints; a man might have read the Image of JESUS CHRIST in them, and the vertues of their Master were limned over; *The lived the word of life in the works of their lives.*

But now Saints (I say) are grown invisible, and are they not fallen? Truly there are scarce any outward words or works almost to be found, by which one can discern a Saint from a sinner In our Age; it was otherwise once, but we are fallen. They will tell you, O what sweet enjoyments they have within! it may well be within, for none can see it with
out;

but; Christ tells us, *By their fruits* (saith he) *you shall know them; And, Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye keep my Commandments.* O we can talk of ravishments within, and O what a place of Scripture was set home upon my heart at such a time! and O how God ravished me upon such a day! O but can ornament be hid? can a man conceale coals in his bosome? where is this humilicy and holinesse that should arise from this communion with God? where is the righteousnesse, the justice, the upright dealing amongst men that was wont to be visible amongst the Saints? *O that in a visible world the Saints should be invisible!*

It is storied of a Philosopher (if I mistake not) the Cynick, *Diogenes*, that he went with a lanthorn and candle at high noon into the Market-place; the people asked him what he meant to doe? I am going to finde out a man (saith he:) A man (say they:) here is a multitude of men, here are store of men in the Market; O (saith he) I would finde out *a man*, one that acts like a man, and lives like a man.

Truly, one might go (*would God there were no cause to say it*) through congrega-

tions, and through such meeting places as these are, with a lanthorn and candle amongst the Saints to finde out a Saint, amongst Professors to finde out a Professor.

You will say, here are store : I, here are Professors, but where is that that is professed? A man may finde many that profess humility, but where is that humility that is Professed? one may finde many that professe holinesse, but where shall one finde the holinesse that is professed? one may finde many that profess heavenly-mindednesse, but where shall one find the heavenly-mindednesse that is professed? As he said, Give me that that tells me the man is a man : so, give me that too that tells me a Saint is a Saint ; give me that that makes a Saint visible, *a visible Saint* for my Religion. *In the last place,*

X. Saints at the first coming in to Jesus Christ, were very choice of their company, and of their communion : they were not every bodies fellow, at least every body was not theirs. Saith Paul, I am crucified to this world, I and the world is crucified to me; I am even with it, (*Saith he*) I pay it in its own coin; *the meaning of it is this,* the world thinks not the Saints worthy of their company, and the Saints think not the

the

the world worthy of theirs. At first they were very choice of their society, 'twas a vexation to their soul to live in *Sodom*, an hell with them to be in *Mesek*, and to have their habitation in the tents of *Kedar*, they would not be among the croud, nor go with a multitude to do evil.

They were in very truth *Separatists*, that is, men that did withdraw from sin, and sinners; I mean no Faction, nor this, nor that; but (I say) they were truly *Separatists*, men that separated from sinne and sinners. You have somewhat in one of *Pauls* Epistles as an answer to that question, *1 Cor. 5.9*. It seems the poor souls were very shie of their company, what company they kept; and therefore saith he, *I write to you not to keep company with Fornicators, yet not with the Fornicators of this world*, for then ye must go out of the world; the world is so full of them, that you will scarce buy or sell, but you will meet with a drunkard, swearer, fornicator, or one sinner or other; *But* (saith he) *if there be any man that is called a brother*, any man that professeth the name of God, and the fear of God, and this man be a fornicator, or this man be covetous, or this man be so and so, *I would*

not have you eat with that man, no, I would not have you so much as sit at his table, much lesse at Gods Table with that man.

And the same Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 6. 14 *Why will ye be unequally yoked? What communion hath light with darknesse? What fellowship hath Christ with Belial? or righteousnesse with unrighteousnesse?* To see a Saint and a sinner keep company, were to see the living and the dead keep house together, and you know what sweet work there is like to be; Why now, if thou be no more shie of thy company, but likest all, as if all were alike, thou art fallen: It may be thou canst please thy selfe as well in a fornicators company, or in a drunkards company, or in an earth-worms company, or in a jesters company, as thou canst in the company of a Saint, or in the company of a dear child of God: I tell thee, if so, thou art fallen; *O remember from whence thou art fallen, and doe thy first works.*

Be choice (saith he) have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darknesse, nor with the workers of darknesse, but reprove them rather; how? by withdrawing from them; by having no more fellowship with them: *For Saints so be inti-*

intimate with sinners, is too intimate that they are sinners; and therefore I beseech you, that you will please to remember from when you are fallen, and let us so remember as to repent: Let it grieve our hearts that we have grieved our God, and let us love him the more, for that we have loved him so little; let us now make strait steps to our feet, and be double diligent; and as it is said of another of the Churches, let our works be more, I, and better at last then at first. O that as we grow in days, we may grow in grace, and abound in the work of the Lord.

Thus (my beloved) let us remember and repent, and do our first works; *and then, when Jesus Christ comes, we shall not need to fear the removing of Candlesticks, but the lighting up of joy and peace to our souls; I, and he will say unto us, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.*

So much (*and no more*) for this time.

FINIS.