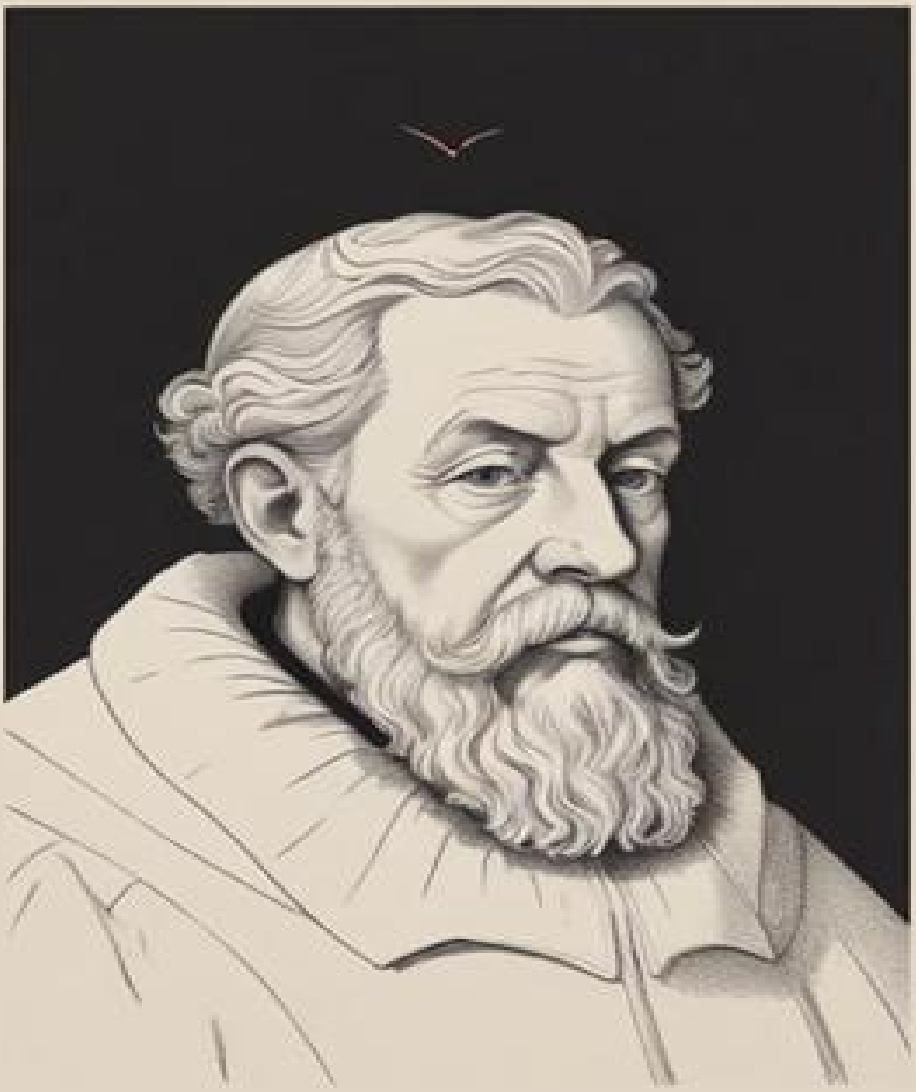
37 OF THE MOST INSPIRING AND INSIGHTFUL SERMONS



REV. JAMES USSHER

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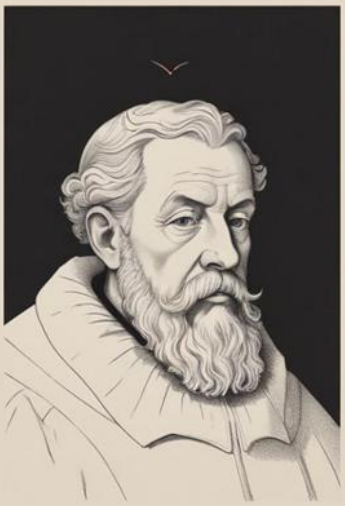

REV. JAMES USSHER

37 of the Most Inspiring and Insightful Sermons

by James Ussher

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SERMON I:

Do Not Harden Your Hearts - Hebrews 4:7

"Again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, to day after so long a time, as it is said, to day if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts."

I HAVE entered on these words in the other university on a day of public humiliation, as being suitable to the occasion, the chief matter of them being the doctrine of the conversion of a sinner.

Forasmuch as "God's judgments are abroad upon the earth," and hang over our heads, the only means to prevent and remove both temporal and eternal, is our speedy conversion and return unto God, else "He will whet his sword, bend his bow, and make it ready" to our destruction. God did bear a deadly hatred against sin in the time of the psalmist, and so he doth still, for his nature cannot be changed. If we return not, we are but dead men. The eternal weight of God's

wrath will be our portion, both here, and in the world to come, if we repent not.

In the words there are three observable points, though not expressly named, yet if we weigh the context, sufficiently implied.

1. Continuance in sin brings certain death, it hinders us from entering into God's rest, and out of it there is nothing but death: or,

For sin God's judgments are on particular nations, and persons.

2. If particular nations, or persons turn away from their evil courses, no hurt shall come near them, or if temporal calamities surprize them, they shall be made beneficial unto them.

"God takes no delight in the death of a sinner," nor that he should despair of his mercy: but would have us turn out of the broad way, which leads to destruction.

3. It behoves every one speedily to set about the work of conversion.

Esteem not this therefore a vain word. I bring you those things, whereon your life depends. Obeying it, you are made for ever, neglecting it, you are undone for ever. Unless you embrace this message, God will bend his bow, and make ready his arrow against you, or rather the arrows which he hath drawn to the head, he will let fly upon you. Know therefore,

1. "That continuance in sin brings certain death." There will be no way of escaping, but by repentance, by coming in speedily unto God.

The words of this text are taken from Psalm 95. "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the temptation in the wilderness." If when God calls us, either to the doing of this, or

leaving that undone, yet we are not moved, but continue in our evil ways. What is the reason of it? It is because we harden our hearts against him. The Word of God; which is "the power of God to salvation, and a two-edged sword to sever between the joints and the marrow." The strength of the Almighty encounters with our hard hearts, and yet they remain like the stony and rocky ground: whereon though the word be plentifully sown, yet it fastens no root there, and though for a season it spring, yet suddenly it fades and comes to nothing. We may haply have a little motion by the word, yet there is a rock in our souls, a stone in our hearts, and though we may sometimes seem to receive it with some affection, and be made as it were sermon-sick, yet it holds but a while, it betters us not: Why? because it is not received "as an ingrafted word." Therefore, saith St. James, "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word." Let the word be ingrafted in thee; one sprig of it is able to make thee grow up to everlasting life. Be not content with the hearing of it, but pray God it may be firmly rooted in your hearts; this will cause a softening. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" against Almighty God. If you do, expect him also to come against you in indignation. Hearken what he saith by his prophet: "Ic will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." Mark, "I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish those that are settled on their lees." When a man is thus settled and resolved to go on in his sins, to put the matter to the hazard come what will come, there is a kind of atheism in the soul. For what does he but in a manner reply, when God tells him by his minister that he is preparing the instruments of death against him, Do you think us such fools to believe it? What does this but provoke God to "swear that we shall never enter into his rest." What is the reason of this? It is because men are not shifted, they have no change, they are settled on their lees. "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, he hath been

settled," and hath not been emptied "from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity." Consider we whether our security comes not from the same cause: we have not been emptied from vessel to vessel, we have always been at rest. Why have we so little conversion? There are two things hinder it: the hardening of a man's heart against the word: and our settling ourselves on our lees. When we have no change in our condition, we are secure, we never see an evil day. That makes us say with the sensualists in the prophet, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." And this is that, which slays the foolish person: "Wo to them that are at ease." It were better for thee to be emptied from vessel to vessel, to go into captivity. For as long as a man continues thus in an unregenerate condition, he can look for nothing but troubles; certain judgments must necessarily follow, and as sure as God is in heaven, so sure may they expect misery on earth: and they shall receive the eternal weight of God's wrath, treasured up against the day of wrath: therefore there is a necessity of our conversion, if we will keep off either temporal or eternal wrath. Our Saviour makes it the case of all impenitent sinners, to be liable to wrath: one judgment befel the Galileans, another those on whom the tower of Siloam fell: but what saith our Saviour: "Supposef you that these were greater sinners above all the men of Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except you repent you shall all likewise perish." All, every mother's son here present, if you turn not from your sinful courses, God will meet with you one time or other, if you harden your hearts against him be sure. "Who ever hardened his heart against God and prospered?" As long as a man is in this condition, his state is woful. As many as are in the state of unregeneracy, are under the power of Satan. Mark the apostle's words: "Inh meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." The state then of the

hardened and settled on their lees, is as of a bird in a cage, taken alive, at the will of the fowler. So it is here, as long as we continue obstinate, and hardened, we are taken alive at Satan's will, we are at his disposing. While we are at liberty, we are waylaid by his nets and traps, and taken, we are at his pleasure: as long as we are hardened in heart, we are in the Devil's cage: true repentance is that, whereby alone we purchase our freedom, whereby we recover ourselves; and therefore in Rom. chap. 2 ver. 5 hardness of heart and impenitency signify the same thing: "After thy hardened and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." Mark then: what is a hard heart? It is an impenitent heart. Dost thou harden thy heart? Then know that for the present thou art a dead man. If notwithstanding all God's threats out of his word, thou art not a jot moved, thou art dead whilst alive, as "the woman that lived in pleasure." And if thou continuest so, thou treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath, and the just revelation of God's judgments. God's word is the especial means to recover thee. A man that is in a swoon, they rub him to recover him, because there is life in him; but if dead, strong waters, or any thing else cannot restore him. Examine thyself then, does the working of the word rub, and gall thee? It is a sign there is life in thee; but if it make no impression, it moves thee not, it is a sign of a dead heart. Consider then the danger of this condition for a man to resolve on his evil courses, never purposing to alter matters. It exceedingly hastens God's judgments.

But leaving this, I proceed to the second point, which is to direct us how to work our escape. Though God threatens us, yet if we have but the grace to look about us, and remember ourselves: if God do but cause us to consider we have to deal with a merciful Father, and make us meet him by humiliation, then though our sins were as scarlet, yet submitting ourselves to our judge, living as obedient

subjects, the storm shall pass from us: so that this is the second point.

2. Notwithstanding God threatens us, yet if he gives us but grace to repent, and bethink ourselves, let our sins be never so great, we may be sure of mercy.

O that we could see with what a gracious God we have to deal! Canst thou but humble thyself? All these things shall speak peace unto thee. As an impenitent sinner is under the power of Satan, and liable to all misery: so contrarywise whoever returns and seeks the Lord, is sure to be under his wings, and free from all evil. Thinkest thou that God makes use of threatenings for thy hurt? No, he deals not with us as an angry judge, but as a compassionate father: men will take an enemy always at an advantage, when they may do him most hurt. God's terrors overtake us, he threatens us, that he will do this and this, that we may prevent it. He knows that unless his terrors awake us, we will rest secure. Before he smites us, he tells us; "He will whet his sword: He hath bent his bow, and made it ready: He hath prepared his instruments of death." He could shoot thee presently, and instantly run thee through, but he threatens thee, that so he may not strike thee. "Non to vult percutere qui tibi clamat, observa; He that saith: Look to yourself, hath no intention to strike thee." See what the prophet Amos denounces from the Lord: "Ik have given you cleanness of teeth, I have withholden rain, I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, Im have sent amongst you the pestilence, yet have you not returned unto me. Therefore thus will I do unto thee O Israel, and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." What judgments have befallen us, have befallen us for our own use, if so be we will be warned by them. The reason why God saith, he will overthrow us, is not because he means to do it, but that we may prevent it by repentance. Look into Jeremiah, chap. 3 ver. 1

and see what wonderful passages are to this purpose: there is a law case: "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers." And in the twentieth verse: "As a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel." And yet see God's unspeakable mercy: "Return again unto me." And twenty-third verse: "Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding: turn to me, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." See God supporteth us the worst and vilest of all, and yet as it were intreats us to return. See then the conclusion of the second point; how, if God give us but grace to repent, let our former evils be what they will, the danger is past, the terror I mean of eternal destruction; so that you may say, and not in Agag's delusion, the bitterness of death, the second death, is pastp.

But I leave this and come to the third, for which I chiefly chose this text. You have seen how dangerous a thing hardness of heart is, how it brings certain death: and that if we have the heart to repent, we are safe. As to make it appear in an instance. It is not the falling into water, but the lying under it that drowns a man. Art thou fallen into sin? only lift up thy head: if thou canst be but thus happy, the promise of salvation belongs to thee. The main thing then is this.

3. It behoves us to set about the work of conversion and repentance presently.

God is angry with us, and we know not whether God will execute his judgments on us this day or no, therefore go about it presently. God will remove all our adulteries, and put away all our sins, if we will come to him within a day. Now what madness is it to neglect it "After

a certain time," saith the apostle, according to that in the psalmist, "God hath limited a certain day:" Thou hast provoked the holy Ghost and now he limits thee a day: "Whereforeq," saith the Holy Ghost, "today if you will hear his voice." Now is it safe think you to pass this day? A hard heart is a provoking heart, and as long as it continues hard, it continues provoking God, and despising the Holy Ghost. "To-day therefore hear his voice," that is, this present day. But which is that day? It is this very time, wherein you stand before God, and in which you hear me. If you embrace the opportunity, happy are you; if not, you shall give as dear an account, as for any thing you ever heard in your life. There is no dallying with God, take his proffer, take him at his word, in a matter of salvation. He calls to thee to-day, peradventure he will speak no more, therefore we shall find it is a limited day: "Exhorts one another to-day, whilst it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." While it is called to-day, that is, stay not till to-morrow, but embrace the present opportunity. This day God holds out the golden sceptre, and my life for yours, if you accept it you shall be saved. If you take it not to-day, your heart will be more hardened to-morrow; and so it may be you will never touch it; your hearts will be like stones, and you will be incapable of yielding. "God is angry with us." Why? He is our adversary, because we bear arms against him, and will try the mastery with him. We oppose him in hostile manner as long as we continue sinful against him. What is the best counsel in this case? "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him." It is wisdom to do that soon, which must of necessity be done. If it be not, we perish for ever. "Kissu the son, lest he be angry, and thou perish from the right way."

OBJ. But what needs such haste, I may do it hereafter, when I come to my journey's end?

SOL. There needs haste. The day is limited. A thousand to one, if God be angry, but we perish from the way. "I have heard thee in an accepted time, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee, behold now is the day of salvation." It is a day of salvation, and would not we be glad to know this time? Behold this is the accepted time. "Seeky the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near." This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. Embrace this time, for now he may be found; this instant is the time, the τὸ νῦν, the present now. God at this time stirs the waters, if now thou wilt step in and close with God, casting down thy weapons, then this will be the day of thy salvation; this is called, as God's day, so our day: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes." Mark, "If thou hadst known in this thy day:" so that if we pass by in this acceptable time those things which belong to our peace, they will be hidden from our eyes. Therefore should the enemies of Jerusalem lay "her even with the ground," because she had neglected this opportunity, the day of God's visitation. Wilt thou be so hard hearted, as to put from thee God's grace? If thou findest now that Satan hides this from thee, and persuades thee to do it to-morrow, and to take a day of thine own, neglecting God's day, know and remember that he is a liar from the beginning.

Give me leave to press this to you, for nothing more brings destruction, than this putting from us the proffers of God's grace; unless we return to the Almighty, humbling ourselves, there will be "bitterness in the end." There is the matter, whether God must wait on us, or we on him? This "is the day of salvation," saith God, and we must take time to think of it, whether it be seasonable or no. Alas

1. By this means we incur the highest presumption: and this is no light thing inconsiderately to be passed over. Shall God offer you

such a proffer, and you be so presumptuous, as to think such a one more seasonable? It is high presumption for thee to make thyself wiser than God, to neglect that he prescribes, and that with a promise too, as if thou hadst God at command. If thou resolve to take to-morrow, it is requisite that thou have,

1. Space to repent, and

2. Grace to do it.

Now neither of these are in thine own hands, if they were, thou hadst ground for a farther delay. If thou hadst power to say, I will live so long, or couldst by thine own might prolong thy life, it were something, but it is otherwise. In refusing God's proffer, thou refusest him that hath thy life in his hand. What high presumption is this? See it in Jezebel: "I gave her space to repent, but she repented not." As if God should have said, it is I gave it her, I gave her time to live, I might have cut her off in the midst of her whoredoms. Observe here by the way the reason why God gives us this space; it is to repent. What presumption must that be, when we will go quite contrary to God? And because we have space, therefore we will not repent. Why does not God smite thee from heaven, when thou thus audaciously settest thyself against him? Why does he not strike thee with a thunderbolt? Sure he gives thee this space not to spend idly, but to another end; not to follow our lusts, neglecting God's call, but that thou mayest remember thyself, and return with all thy heart. Remember those words of the prophet, "Myb times are in thy hand." He said not, My times are in mine own hands; for he knew it was grand presumption. Why then should any challenge that to himself which belongs to God, as if he were the lord of his own life, supposing God's call unseasonable, and that he may think on it better hereafter? May not a young man die soon? Now an old man

cannot live long. Many strong and lusty men are brought to the grave as well as the weak and feeble. And why should we suffer Satan to abuse us thus? Thy space then is preserved in God's hand, and therefore thou mayest not be lord and master of it. But admit God grant thee space, yet thou mayest not have the grace to do it. What was Jezebel's case, "Though God gave her space, yet she repented not." What canst thou tell, what may then become of thee? perchance thou mayest live long, yet mayest thou never find as much as thy thoughts on repentance, much less the grace to do it: thou mayest not have a desire that way, much less perform it. Repentance is not a thing at our own command. "Ind meekness," saith the apostle, "instruct them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth." "If God will give it them." It is a thing then, it should seem, in God's hand, it is his proper gift. Mark, the apostle would have God's ministers to be humble and meek; but how many are of other spirits? If another's opinion be contrary to theirs, they are in a heat presently, as if a man were master of himself and of his own heart, to believe what he would. No, no, repentance is a grace out of our reach, it is not in a man's own power. Be meek therefore in instructing. What needs passion? That helps not the matter. The opening of the eyes of the blind is in God's hands; thank him for what thou seest, and know that it is his gift. The apostle speaking of our Saviour Christ, saith: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." The grace of repentance then is no herb growing in our own garden, it is a gift of God's bestowing. And to this purpose is Acts, chap. 11 ver. 18. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." As God grants life, so repentance unto life. "I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus," saith the Lord, "Thou hast chastised me, and I am chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the

yoke, turn thou me, and I shall be turned." And to the same purpose: "Turng thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." As if Zion should have said, we are no more able to turn ourselves than a dead man. "After that," saith Ephraim, "I was turned, I repented, and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea even confounded." See then what an high presumption it is for a man to presume he hath this grace of God at command: But as it is high presumption, so

2. It is the highest contempt and despising of the grace of God. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering?" Thus is it here. God gives thee space: thou hast it, but employest it not in what God gave it thee for. Thou deferrest the main business; and the apostle accounts it no better than despising the proffers of God's grace and goodness. Dost thou think God will take this at thy hands? Wilt thou despise him, and think he will not despise thee? "With the froward he will shew himself froward." God will come on a sudden, if thou makest not use of thine opportunity, and take all away from thee. The threatening is plainly laid down: "Ifi thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee." It is spoken to us all, and therefore concerns us all: "Whosoever hath an ear to hear, let him hear." They are God's words I have spoken to you this day, and you shall be accountable for them: let not the Devil steal this from you, hold it fast, this is your day: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee suddenly as a thief." It is the heaviest judgment can come on unconverted persons, irregenerate souls, not to awake till God comes on them, never to bestir themselves till hell rouse them up. Thus will it be with us, unless we awake by repentance, God will come stealing on us as a thief by sudden death and speedily cut us off.

To pray against sudden death, and not to fit thyself for it, is to add contempt to thy presumption and rebellion. The wise man tells us,

"That man knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." Mark, when it falls suddenly, at unawares, here is the wisdom then to provide that thou mayest not be taken suddenly. "Ifl the good man of the house knew at what time the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to have been broken up." And therefore Christ counsels us "to watch, since we know not the day nor hour when the Son of man cometh." Here is the difference then between wisdom and folly. Hereby may we know whether we are wise men or fools, if we foresee this day, and provide for it, it is an argument of wisdom, if we watch, so as that, when it falls, it may not fall on a sudden on us. If we are negligent of this day, and suffer our hearts to be dead as "Nabal's like a stone." He had a great time of repentance, ten days, yet repented not, for his heart was dead, and like a stone; and this may be the case, if thou despisest the day of thy salvation, God's day, and thine own day too, thou mayest be a Nabal, no more moved than a pillar in the church, as I have found some by sad experience.

But you may reply, I suppose God will not take me at an advantage, I trust I shall have life and space, and not Nabal's condition; I hope I shall have my wits about me to be able to cry, "Lord have mercy upon me."

But suppose God gave thee a tender heart, and thou art sensible of thy danger, that so thou call and cry earnestly to God for mercy, yet this is a miserable condition. Thou shalt find it will not be enough to cry, "Lord be merciful unto me." If thou neglectest him here, he will cry quittance with thee on thy death bed: nor do I speak this of myself; no: look what Wisdom saith: "Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out mine hand, and no man regarded, but

set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." As if he had said, you refused me, on my day I called and cried unto you, but you set at nought my words, and rejected my counsel, and were wiser than I, therefore "will I laugh at your destruction:" when you are in misery I will mock and deride, instead of succouring. A terrible thing it will be, when instead of hearing our cries to answer them, he shall deride us, and laugh at our folly and madness; and in the twenty-eighth verse: "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." See what folly then it is to let slip this time. This is the acceptable day, "Seeko the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near." When a man refuses God's day, God will not hear his prayer, all his sighs and sobs, his groans and cries, shall not prevail. "I will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear." When men will needs be choosers of what God would not have, God will have his choice too, and it shall be that which will be displeasing to them. "I will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them."

SERMON II:

Do Not Harden Your hearts Part 2 - Hebrews 4:7

"Again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, to-day after so long a time, as it is said, to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

THE last day I entered on the opening of this place, and shewed, how the Lord had proposed a limited time for our conversion unto him, in which we should hear and obey his voice.

We shewed farther how it was Satan's policy to make men seem wiser than God, that when God proposes a certain time, and limits us a day, wherein he will be found, we will not have his, but our own. True, say we, God calls on us, and it is fit and convenient to hearken unto him; but yet I will stay for a more seasonable opportunity. There is nothing provokes God so much against us, as when we will thus scorn that acceptable time he hath proposed: nor can there be a greater hindrance to repentance, than to stop our ears at his counsels, and to suffer him to call and cry unto us so long, and yet to abuse his patience by a foolish neglect. It accuses us of rebellion and high presumption, on such infirm grounds, to put from us the day of salvation. Folly it is in the highest degree to trust on the future, when as in our own hands we have neither space nor grace for such a business. God is the Lord, and owner of them both, and will not part with his prerogative. "Go to, you that say, to-day or to-morrow we will return unto the Lord," you add to presumption both folly and rebellion. Jezebel had space to repent, yet she repented not, for she had not the grace, that, without this, will not benefit.

Seeing then these are not in your power, "harden not your hearts, as in the provocation;" nor offer despite unto the Holy Ghost, "by whom you are sealed to the day of redemption." If we embrace not God's day, we despise the riches of his goodness, long suffering, and patience. "Despisestb thou the riches of God's grace, not knowing

that the long suffering of God leadeth to repentance?" There can be no higher presumption than this, to bid defiance to the Spirit of God: nor can there be greater contempt of mercy, than to set light of the time of our repentance, and returning unto God, making that the greatest argument of our delay, which God uses to draw us to him. God gives us space, that we may repent, and we repent not, because he gives us space: He gives us life, that with fear and trembling we may set about the business of salvation, and we, through strong delusions; put from us the proffers of his grace, as if they were unseasonably offered. What madness is it to frustrate the Almighty of his ends and purposes? "The Lord is not slack touching his promise." It is a great stop and hindrance to our progress in goodness and the work of repentance, when we distrust God, and take him not at his word. He sends abroad his ambassadors, who proclaim, "Thisd is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation, to-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" yet we put this day from us, and say, hereafter is a more acceptable time. I have this delight, this pleasure to take first in the world, I am not so weaned from it, as I would be. As if God would take it well from our hands, that we should then return to him, when there is no remedy. I will first use all the pleasure the world affords me, and then, "Lord have mercy on me," will serve the turn. This is the very stifling of the beginning and proceeding of Christianity. Let this be well and speedily weighed, as we tender our good and comfort.

OBJ. But may some say, what needs this haste, may we not use leisure? Soft and fair goes far.

SOL. True, soft and fair goes fairly in the way. In this case, though thou go but softly, thou mayest come to thy journey's end; but the doubt remains still, there is a question whether thou art in the way, or not. Happy are we if we are, although we can but halt and limp on

in this way: although this should be no ground for us to content ourselves therewith. We must not trifle in the ways of holiness. It is that concerns our life, and must be seriously thought on, and that speedily too. "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him." God is thine adversary, unless thou agree with him speedily, his patience will break forth into his fury. "Kissf the son lest he be angry, and thou perish from the right way." Thou hast no assurance of thy life, thou mayest be snapt off, whilst thou thinkest it time enough to repent and return. As long as we go out of the way of repentance, we are in the way to hell, and the farther a man goes in a wrong way, the nearer is he to hell, and the greater ado to return back: and in this regard soft and fair may go far; but it is far out of the way, far in the way to perdition and destruction. As long as we are out of the right way to heaven and happiness, we are in the path that leads directly to the chambers of death.

But let me in this particular rip up the heart of a natural man. What is the reason that when God gives men a day, and cries out, "This is the day of salvation, this is the accepted time," what in the name of God, or the Devil's name rather, for he is the adversary who maligns our salvation, should cause them to put salvation from them? To defer and desire a longer time? Thus a natural man reasons with himself, I cannot so soon be taken off from the profits, and pleasures of the world; I hope to have a time, when I shall with more ease and a greater composedness of mind, bring myself to it: or if it be not with so much ease, yet, I trust, in a sufficient manner I shall do it: wherefore, for the present, I will enjoy the profits, and delights of the state, and condition where I am; I will solace myself with the pleasures of sin for a season; I hope true repentance will never be too late.

This is well weighed; but consider, whether these thoughts which poise down our hearts, be not groundless: see, whether they will hold water at the last; and whether in making such excuses, to great presumption we add not the height of folly. To pretend for our delay the profits and pleasures of sin, and yet hope for heaven at the last, as well as the generation of the righteous; it is but a mere fallacy, and delusion of Satan, to fill our hearts with such vanities. Can it be expected, that we should have our good in this world, and in the world to come too? This is well, if it might be.

But let us try the matter, and begin with your first branch.

You are loth to part with your profits and pleasures.

But consider what a grand iniquity this is. Can you offer God a greater wrong and indignity? "Do you thus requite the Lord, you foolish and unwise?" Dost thou think this the way to make thy peace with God, whom thou hast offended, as long as thou mayest to be a rebel against him? What a high dishonour is it to him, that thou shouldst give him thy feeble and doting old age; and the devil thy lively and vigorous youth, thy strength and spirits? Dost thou think he will drink the dregs and eat the orts? Will he accept thee in the next world, when thou thus scornest him in this? "If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not an evil? If you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts?" But mark how he goes on: "Cursedh be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Mark, God accounts such service a corrupt thing, and the person that offers it a mere cheat, a deceiver. Never look for a blessing from God in heaven, when thou sacrificest to him such corrupt things. No, thou art cursed of God, as long as thou continuest in this hypocrisy. We are to offer

and present ourselves "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Now judge whether they offer God the living, who say, when my doting days come, my lame days, that I cannot go, my blind days, that I cannot see, I will offer myself a sacrifice to God; will this be acceptable to him? "Is not this evil," saith the Lord, "to offer me such a corrupt thing?" Nay more, he is accursed that offers such an offering, such a polluted sacrifice. God will not like with it; when we serve ourselves first with the best and choice? "Do you thus requite the Lord?" Do you think he will accept it at your hands? Go offer such a gift to thy ruler, to thy prince, will he accept it, or be pleased with it? No, a landlord will have the best and the choice; and it must needs provoke God, when we give him the refuse. "I am King of kings, saith the Lord, my name is dreadful," and I will look to be served after another manner. Let no man then thus delude himself with vain hopes, but let him consider, how dishonourable a thing it will be to God.

2. And how unprofitable to him, whoever thou art. Indeed, we cannot be profitable unto Him properly as he that is wise may be profitable to himself. But he is so gracious a master, that he esteems our sincere and seasonable service to be his own gain, and our sloth and neglect to be his detriment, he accounts our destruction to be his own loss. Now it is the ready way.

1. It is the ready way to thy destruction. Heaven, and happiness, and eternal life, are laid up for those that embrace the acceptable time; death, horror, and eternal misery for those that refuse it; and wilt thou hazard soul and body on this? Moses, on this ground, "did rather choose to suffer affliction in this world with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." When these things are past, "what profit will you have of those things, whereof then you will be ashamed?" Nay, whereof, were thine eyes open, thou wouldst

now be ashamed; and happy wouldst thou be if thou wert, as the converted Romans were, even now ashamed. Shame accompanies sin so constantly and unavoidably, that even repentance itself removes it not. The Romans, now Christians, were ashamed for what they had done, before they knew Christ. When a man comes to see truly and thoroughly into himself, he will find no profit of such things as these: death will certainly follow us, not only temporal but eternal; also if we repent not the more speedily, that is all the profit we shall find.

2. But suppose thou prevent everlasting death by repentance, yet "what profit is there of those things whereof we are now for the present ashamed?" The best can come is shame.

3. Thou art loth to part with the pleasures of sin for a season, and hereafter thou thinkest thou canst amend all. But consider the particulars, and then shall you see how you are befooled in your hearts and souls. Believe it for an undoubted truth, there is nothing in the world, by which Satan more deludes a man, than by his persuading him to neglect his day, and that he may repent well enough hereafter. That you may expel this suggestion out of your souls, pray unto God that he would go along with his word, and cause you to lay this to heart, that by his spirit your understanding may be enlightened to see the truth. Though I make this as clear as the sun, that it is a false supposition, a mere folly, on which we build, in deferring our return to God, yet God from heaven must teach you, or you will be never the wiser. Know therefore that this very day God reaches out the golden sceptre to thee, and what folly were it to neglect it, since thou knowest not whether he will ever proffer it thee again? And assure thyself, that he is a liar that tells thee, thou mayest as well repent hereafter as now: and this will appear, whether we consider the order of outward things in the world, or the nature of sin.

1. For external things, every age after a man comes into the world, if he embrace not the present opportunity for repentance, is worse than other, and are each of them as so many clogs which come one after another to hinder it. As for thy childish age, that is mere vanity, and thy riper age will bring many impediments and hindrances, that youth never thought of. Thou art then troubled about many things, and perplexed how to provide for maintenance; in the midst whereof know, that thou hast not a body of brass, but a corruptible and fading body: and yet such is the folly of the heart of man, that the less ground he hath to go, the fewer days to spend, the more he often provides, and is the more covetous. Consider that the wisest of men gave thee this counsel: "Remember thy Creator in the day of thy youth, before the evil days come, wherein thou shalt say, thou hast no pleasure in them." Here we find it is a youthful thing, and should be a young man's practice: not according to that devilish saying, "a young saint and an old devil:" but "remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The more sin thou committest, the more unapt thou art to repent. Custom in sinning makes thee a Lot; the elder thou growest, the more loth to go out of Sodom. Besides,

2. Consider what sin is in its nature. It is a weight. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Sin is then a weight, and so an heavy thing; but add sin to sin, a weight to a weight, and it becomes heavier and heavier. A man that is in a state of impenitency, hath this weight laid on him, and is subject to the Devil, in a state of rebellion against God. A man now in this estate is weighed down, what will he be, six, seven, or ten years hence, going on in his impenitency? How will he then shake that off, which now he cannot free himself of? He must hereafter buckle against it with a great deal of disadvantage, and wrestle with more difficulty. One says well, that if we consider of sin aright, it is like the rising of water, over which a man being to pass, and finding it higher than it was

wont to be, he stays a while, and then tries again, and finds it higher than before: he stays yet longer, till it become impassable, so that he may not adventure without great disadvantage. Thus it is with sin: now, peradventure, the waters of iniquity are passable, if thou wilt thou mayest go over, but if thou delayest the adventure, the streams of sin will run together into one channel, and be more difficultly passed. Thou shalt find them like the waters in Ezekiel, rising from the ankles to the knees, from the knees to the loins, till they become water, in this indeed unlike them, not to swim in, as they were, but to sink in, like the waters of the Red Sea returning in their force, in which Pharoah, and his host, sank down as a stone, nay as lead when the wind of the Lord blew upon them.

Take another metaphor from the Scripture: the Scripture compares sin to cords, which are instruments of binding, and the mystery of the Gospel is expressed by binding and loosing; "Whosesoever sins you shall bind on earth, they are bound in heaven, but whose sins ye remit, they are remitted." Every sin thou committest is a bond, and binds thee hand and foot, against the judgment of the great day. Therefore it is said: "Hisr own iniquity shall take the wicked, and he shall be bound and holden with the cords of his sins." Now consider what folly it is, when a man shall say, Though my sins are so many cords difficult to be broken, yet I will not trouble myself about it in my younger days, but I will stay till my old age, and then I hope I shall be the better able to break these bonds, and cast all these cords from me; when every iniquity I commit is as a new cord, which binds me faster and faster. Is not this madness itself to think so, that in our younger years being scarce able to break one of them, in our dotage we shall be able to break ten thousand together? And certainly this is the disposition and nature of sin.

3. But add hereunto the argument in the text: "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart;" but repent while it is called to-day. Shewing that if we pass this day, we shall be harder and harder. Wherefore, saith the apostle, "Exhort every one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." As if he had said, if thy heart be hard to-day, it will be harder to-morrow. Custom in sin hardens the heart, and takes away the sense of it. Wherefore saith the apostle, "It speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh, For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness." So that we see if a man once give himself up to sin, he will not be satisfied therewith, but will give himself up to iniquity unto iniquity. What is the meaning of that? It is as if he had said, if we give ourselves up to iniquity, we will not rest there, but we will add iniquity unto iniquity, sin unto sin: we will be brought to such a custom in evil, as that it will be "easier far a blackmoor to change his skin, and a leopard his spots, than for those that have been accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well." It will be to as much purpose to wash an *Æ*thiopian, as to go put off that ill custom, and shake off that second nature. Sin is a hammer, and sin is a nail too. Every sin strikes the former sin home to the head, that whereas before it might easily have been drawn out, it roots it in so fast, as that it can very hardly be plucked out. Mark how the apostle describes this cursed nature of sin: "Havingx eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls, a heart they have exercised with covetous practices." What makes a man prompt in any thing but exercise? When a man is exercised in sin, see the event of it: it brings him to that vicious habit, as that at length he cannot cease from sin. If a man deal with a young twig, it will bend, and break at his pleasure; but when it comes to full growth, it is past his strength. So fares it with sin: if thou dealest with it whilst thou art

young, and it in thee, before it hath taken root, thou mayest easily wield it, at least with more facility, than otherwise thou couldst; but if thou let it run on to confirmed habits, it becomes immoveable. Wherefore saith the apostle, "Let us lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us." The reason is evident, because, else we shall be so hardened, as that we shall not be able. A man that hath a green wound, if he will seek for his cure betimes, it may be quickly, and easily remedied; but through delay, it begins to fester, and must be lanced to the quick, not without great pain and anguish to the patient. Sin is such a wound; if it be let alone, it corrupts; and proud flesh the more grows up, the longer the cure is delayed. This therefore should be a chief thing we should take heed of, how we put from us God's time, and the proffers of mercy, till another day.

2. But there are another sort, as greatly befooled, as these, yea more, if more may be: and those are they who put it off till the hour of their death, till the last gasp, as if they desired to give God as little of their service as possibly they might, who think if they can but cry Peccavi, and "Lord have mercy upon me," when their breath departs their bodies, they shew a good disposition, and perform such acceptable service, as that God cannot choose but grant them a pardon: but think not all will be surely well, because thou hastest to shake hands with God, at thy journey's end, when thou hast not walked with him all the way.

OBJ. But did not the thief repent at the last on the cross, and why not I on my death bed.

SOL. This is no good warrant for thy delay, for Christ might work this miraculously, for the glory of his passion. Dost thou think when in thy health and strength, thou hast, for several years, despised the riches of God's goodness and forbearance, and long suffering that

leads thee to repentance, that as soon as thou art cast on thy death bed, and ready to breathe out thy soul, the rocks shall be rent again, and the graves opened, to quicken thy repentance and beget in thee a saving faith? Trust not therefore on this, nor content thyself with good intentions, but set about the business in good earnest and presently. Our death beds will bring so many disadvantages, as will make that time very unseasonable: whether we respect,

1. External hindrances, such as are pangs and pains in thy body, which must be undergone: and thou shalt find it will be as much, as thou well canst do, to support thyself under them. Every noise will then offend thee; yea thou wilt not be able to endure the speech of thy best friends. When Moses came to the children of Israel, and told them God had sent him to deliver them, what acceptation found this comfortable message? The text saith, "They hearkened not through anguish of their spirits." See here the effects of anguish and grief; Moses spake comfortably, but "by reason of their pains, they hearkened not unto him;" they were indisposed to give attendance. So shall it be with us on our death beds, through the anguish of our spirits we shall be unfit to meddle with ought else; especially, when the pains of death are upon us, the dread whereof is terrible: how will it make us tremble, when death shall come with that errand, to divide our souls from our bodies, and put them into possession of hell, unless we repent the sooner. Now thou art in thy best strength, consider what a terror it will be, what a sad message it will bring, when it comes not to cut off an arm, or leg, but soul from body. Now then make thy peace with God: but that these men are fools, they would "through fear of death be all their lifetime in bondage." It is the apostle's expressiona. The consideration hereof should never let us be at rest, till we had made our peace with God; it should make us break our recreations and sports. The considerations of what will become of us should put us in an extacy. Nor are these all our

troubles; for besides these, outward troubles will then even overwhelm us, when a man is to dispose of his wife and children, house and lands, he must needs be very unfit at this time, for the work of repentance. These things will cast so great a damp on his heart, as that he shall be even cold in his seeking after peace with God.

2. But suppose these outward hindrances are removed, that neither pains of body, nor fear of death seize on thee, neither care of wife nor children, houses, nor lands distract thee, but that thou mightest then set about it with all thy might, though thou wert in the most penitent condition, that might be to man's seeming, yet where is the change or new nature should follow thy contrition, unless we see this in truth, we can have but little comfort. Shall I see a sinner run on in his ill courses, till the day of death, and then set on this work, I could not conclude therefore the safety of his soul, because it is the change of the affections, not of the actions, that God looks after; for the fear of death may extort this repentance, where the nature is not changed. Take an example of a covetous man, which dotes on his wealth more than any thing else in the world; suppose him in a ship with all his riches about him, a tempest comes and puts him in danger of losing all, both life and goods, in this strait he sticks not to cast out all his wealth, so he may preserve his life; and shall we therefore say he is not covetous? No, we will account him nevertheless covetous for all this, not that he loved his goods the less, but his life the more. It is so in this case, when an impenitent person is brought upon his death bed; he is apt to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, If God will but grant me life, and spare me now, I will never be a drunkard, swearer, or covetous person, more. Whence comes this? Not from any change of his nature, and loathing of what he formerly loved, but because he cannot keep these and life together: fear alters his disposition, the terrors of the Almighty lying upon him. I have myself seen many at

such a time as this, that have been so exceeding full of sorrow, and penitent expressions, that the standers by have even wished their souls to have been in the other souls' cases, and yet when God hath restored them, they have fallen into their former courses again; and why is this? But because when repentance comes this way, it alters only the outward actions for the present, not the sinful dispositions, things that are extracted from a man, after the outward appearance, not the nature. Therefore saith the Lord, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Mark, when God's hand is on them, they will seek him: and as in chap. 6 ver. 1 say one to another, "Come let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up." How penitent were they, when God's hand was on them: but let it once be removed, and hear how God presently complains of them: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud," such a goodness as is extorted, that is as temporary as earthly dew! Another considerable place we have in Psalm 78 ver. 34. "When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and inquired early after God." Was not this a great conversion? When they were in this dismal condition, they were not troubled with cares, for wife or children, houses or lands, how can we think but that these men died in peace, that were in so good a humour; yet see what follows: "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouths, and lied unto him with their tongues."

Besides, consider the unworthiness of it; I will forsake sin, when sin forsakes me: we leave it when we can keep it no longer: "Thank you for nothing," may God say, if you could, you would sin longer, this is that folly, which deferring our repentance brings us to.

But to draw to a conclusion: God hath set us a certain day, and if we pass the time, wo be to us. For though he is full of mercy, and patience, yet patience hurt oftentimes harms, and provokes the Almighty to fury. "God will not always strive with man, but his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," if he convert in that space, and return, well, if not, he shall be swept away. And to this purpose is that parable: "Ae certain man had a figtree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none, Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, behold these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" There is an appointed time, then, fore-ordained by God, wherein he offers us grace. "Let it alone," saith the dresser, "one year more:" it may be seven years, or ten, it may be but two hours, for ought thou knowest, that God may offer thee longer this space. No man knows the time, and its continuance, but he that hath appointed it to this purpose: which is a point I thought not to speak of, but now I will.

You hear much talk of God's eternal and everlasting election, and we are too apt to rest on this, that if we are elected to salvation we shall be saved, and if not, we shall be damned, troubling ourselves with God's work of predestination, whereas this works no change in the party elected, until it come unto him in his own person. What is God's election to me? it is nothing to my comfort, unless I myself am effectually called. We are to look to this effectual calling. The other is but God's love to sever me from the corrupt mass of Adam's posterity. But what is my effectual calling? It is that, when God touches my heart, and translates me from the death of sin, to the life of grace. Before this effectual calling, even the elect Ephesians were "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Now there are certain times which God appoints for this

effectual calling, wherein he uses the means to work on us, and of which he can say, "What could I do more than I have done?" And mayest thou not fear an actual rejection, since thou hast lived thus long under the means of grace; that God hath waited these, not only three, but many years, the dew of heaven continually falling on thee, and that yet thou shouldest remain unfruitful. Doest thou not fear, I say, that dismal sentence, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground;" God's grace is not to be dallied with, as wanton children do with their meats; if we do thus slight him, he may justly deprive us of all. See a terrible place to this purpose: "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God, but that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Consider these places: God calls us, where the droppings of his grace are distilled; consider then, do we bring forth that fruit which is meet for the dresser, answerable to those continual distillings and droppings on us? If our consciences witness for us, happy are we, but when there have been these showers of grace out of God's word flowing down upon us, and yet we have received so much grace in vain; O what can we expect, but a curse in this life, and eternal death in the world to come? What can we look for, but the figtree's curse, which was barren? The tree was not cut down, but withered: we are near the same curse, if we answer not God's grace. When we have had so long a time the ministry of the word, and yet suffer it to be lost through our barrenness, our condition is sad, and woful; we can look for nothing, but withering. "Buth beloved, I must hope better things of you, and such as accompany salvation." Labour therefore to prevent, and arm yourselves against this suggestion and fallacy of Satan, and resolve to hear God in this acceptable time, now to set to the work, which if we do, all will be well, God will be gracious to us. If otherwise, we are undone for ever. Till you have learned this lesson, you can no further.

Wherefore let not Satan possess you with that madness, to cause you to pass and let slip this golden opportunity, through a false conceit, that you may have a more seasonable day of your own, for repentance hereafter. I will not say, that a death bed repentance is always fruitless; the ancient fathers, though they give no encouragement to defer it till then, yet in case it be so long put off, they enjoin it even then. Ἕως ὅτε ἐμπνέεις, ἐν ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς τῆς κλίνης, ἐὰν ἧς κείμενος ψυχορῥαγῶν μέλλεν ἐξιέναι τοῦ θεάτρου τούτου καὶ τοῦ βίου, τότε μετανόησον τοῦ καιροῦ· ἡ στευοχωρία οὐ κωλεύει τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίαν, &c.

"As long as thou breathest, even in the last day of thy life, upon thy bed, when thou art expiring, and about to depart from the theatre of this life, then repent: the straitness of the time doth not exclude the philanthropy of God, that love which he beareth to mankind. Only remember what I have said of the danger of this procrastination, and how unfitting a season it is, for so great a work, and what reasons we have to judge it seldom serious."

SERMON III:

If anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself - Galatians 6:3-4

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

HAVING entered on the doctrine of the conversion of a sinner in that text, Heb. chap. 4 ver. 7 upon which depends our everlasting salvation, I laboured to persuade you of the necessity of taking the accepted time of embracing the proffers of God's grace, and of the necessity of doing it speedily.

I shewed you that there is a certain time in which God will be found, and that this time was the present time.

I declared unto you the great danger that would follow, if we took not God at his word, but refused his day for a day of our own, as if we were wiser than he; if when God calls, and holds out the golden sceptre, we refuse to draw near, and touch it: also what danger there is of being deluded by Satan, and our own hearts.

I shewed you farther, that the work was half done if this were done, if we could but learn this lesson.

And now all that I shall speak will be to little purpose, if this be not first wrought. If it be already wrought in us, blessed are we. Our condition were thrice happy, would God now strike in, and cause us to return to himself. It is not good to dally with God, the time may come when it will be too late, when we shall wish we had done otherwise, and taken the accepted time.

Now I will go on to a farther point, which is this; when Satan cannot prevail with a sinner, to say to his soul, or to think with himself, I will do it hereafter, or I will at the day of death, when he cannot prevail with him to defer it, and leave it quite undone for the present: then

he will give way to his doing a little to it, but it shall be so superficial, and on such false grounds, that he had as good leave it undone; for Satan makes him thus conclude with himself, Well, since I see it is a duty so necessary, I will not put it off an hour, but yet I see no such matter required in conversion, no such great need of being new moulded. But now in the point of conversion, there are two things to be thought on.

First, what estate the sinner is in for the present, and then, when he hath made search, and found it to be amiss; then the next thing is, he must turn unto God, and resolve to amend.

I shall not now stand to speak of that common aspersion cast upon religion, and ways of God, that men must sail to heaven by the gates of hell, of which many are so much afraid: but yet we must not think that our Saviour came to heal those, which were whole already; he is a God of wisdom, and the Physician of the soul; he comes to find that which is lost: so that we must be lost in our own apprehensions, if we will be found, as David was. He first saith: "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost, then seek thy servant." If now we are once lost, we are lost for ever, for he seeks us not; therefore we should first consider with ourselves, what estate we are in now, how the case stands with us at present, that if God should come and strike thee with death, if thou wert now to come to judgment, what would trouble thee most, what couldst thou then answer him? Therefore since it is uncertain how soon God may deal thus with thee, it is wisdom to be always ready. "Letc us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord." Let us first try how the matter stands with us, at the present; let us examine ourselves and our ways, and see if all be well, and then may we go on with comfort in the way wherein we are.

But when we have searched, and find things not go as well as they ought, or that we are not in a right way, then after our searching we must turn unto the Lord: thus the prophet did: "I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." First he thought on his ways, he considered, whether he was going to heaven or hell; when he had thus thought, he made haste, and "turned his feet unto God's testimonies." Here are both put together: first he made haste and thought on his ways, and then he turned.

I took this text to shew that one of these is as dangerous as the other, and how men are apt to deceive themselves in their search and examination. It is as dangerous not to prove our ways, as to put off and defer our turning to God. This is a dangerous disease, that when men come to examine and try their spiritual estates, they have false weights and unequal balances to prove themselves by: they are very willing to save themselves the labour, though they be deceived. A man is loth to be cozened by another; but here is his folly, that he is willing enough to deceive and betray himself. Such fools the devil makes many men, because they take not right glasses to look on themselves in, and so they deceive themselves: "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself; but let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another."

In the words here are,

1. The disease.

2. A remedy.

1. The disease is in the third verse "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." This is a common dangerous disease; and a disease which is both common

and dangerous is the more to be feared, the more careful must the physician be. This is the most common disease, for there is not a man but finds a snatch of it in his own heart. And it is the more dangerous: for who is in more danger than he that is blind and will be blind? that is willing to be cheated by Satan, and himself. This is the patient. Now what his disease is, and the dangerousness of it, the apostle tells us: "He thinks himself to be something, and he is nothing." This is the patient to be cured, and that is his disease, than which none more common: for there is not the worst of men, but will say, I thank God I am something, and I am not half so bad as the preacher would make me, I have some good thing in me.

Now this his disease stands in two things.

1. That he is nothing.

2. That he thinks himself to be something.

1. He is nothing. And for a man to be brought before God's judgment-seat, and have nothing to answer, how will it fare with him then? But yet this man cannot but think, he is something: well then, something he is, but nothing to the purpose: as we say of an idol, An idol is nothing in the world: that is, nothing that can help, or succour those that bow to it, and adore it, nothing that can relieve the worshipper of it. An idol is something indeed, for it is silver, or gold, or brass, or stone, &c. But it is nothing that can plead for a man when he holds up his hand at God's bar.

2. "He thinks himself to be something, though he be nothing:" He thinks he shall come to heaven, though he be not in the way; as the foolish virgins, that thought they should be let in, feared not the contrary, till they came to the marriage chamber door. So these men walk in their way all their life, and yet fear not entrance into heaven,

till they receive sentence to the contrary. If these men knew themselves to be nothing, they would seek something for themselves; but now they are nothing, though they think themselves something. This is the disease.

2. The remedy is in the next verse, "Let him prove his own work." Let him view himself in a true glass, and that is the point we shall insist on. If then we provide, that Satan shall not delude us in deferring, and putting off our repentance; so let us also provide, that he deceive us not with a false conceit of our ways and estate; that we may not make ourselves something, when we are nothing. Therefore let us see what false glasses they are, that men get to themselves. If Satan bring us to have a good opinion of ourselves, and our condition, and persuade us, that it is not with us, as precise preachers tell us; that it is no such matter to go to heaven, but that it may be done with less pains and more ease: when, I say, Satan lulls a man asleep with such plausible things as these, he hath him where he would have him. Why then no marvel, if this man like his ways, when he looks upon them with false glasses.

1. The first false glass is self-love, and the property of love is to make the good things in the party it loves very great, and the vices very little, self-love represents nothing in its true shape. The apostle speaking of the latter days, saith, "There shall be perilous times:" and wherein lieth the peril? "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." As if he had said, that is one of the worst perils, for a man to have a great conceit of himself. If one be sick of this disease, it will so blind him, that he shall never see a thing in its right place: we may see it by the contrary in the want of love. Suppose it in the case of a malignant neighbour, for example; he that is full of malice and envy towards his neighbour, (consider what a false glass this is,) will never want matter of quarrel against him. The man that wants love, see how the

good and bad deeds of his neighbour shew themselves to him: when he looks on the good actions of his neighbour, they appear but very small, he is always abridging and contracting his virtues and good things, making them seem less than indeed they are. On the other side, all things he sees amiss in him, this want of love makes them far greater than they are. Love breeds the contrary; when a man loves himself, his good things seem very great, and his evil things very small, those he abridges and contracts; and hereupon is that instance brought of the Jews. "Thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them that do such things, that thou shalt escape," &c. When such a man looks upon his own sins, they appear small to him; but when on the infirmities of others, they seem very great. With one eye he looks on himself, with another on his neighbour. This man perchance is a drunkard as well as his neighbour, covetous, as well as him, yet he concludes them great evils in his neighbour, but extenuates them within himself: self love causes this difference. As long as this sways us, that we love things, because they are our own, we shall never be able to guess at our own condition. If another man should look on you both, would he not account thee partial? If a man hath a son or daughter, though they be not so wise or beautiful as another man's, yet he delights in them as much as if they were, he loves them because they are his own. Let a man be born in a barren country, he will praise it most, not because there is none so good, but because he loves it best, it is his own country. Thou wilt never be a good judge of thine own estate if thou viewest thyself in this false glass, for it will easily deceive a man.

True, I know self love is a deceitful glass, and looking therein, a man will be favourable to himself, and so deceive himself, for it renders things in a bigger shape than in truth and reality they are. But

2. I thank God, my neighbours also, and all others that know me, speak well of me. I have not only a good conceit of myself, but every man about me can speak well of me, cannot say, "black is mine eye." I have a good report of all men. But if this were enough and sufficient to assure thee of the goodness of thy estate, it were well, but it is not enough. True it is, a good report from men for fair and honest dealing is not to be despised; yet it will do no good, unless thou have it from God. It was one of the happinesses of our Saviour, that he was in favour with God and men; it was with God too as well as men. When both meet together, it is well indeed. Demetrius, in John, chap. 3 ver. 12 we read, "had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself." To have a good report from men, and also from the truth, is an happy thing; but having it not from the truth, "Wo to us, when all men speak well of us." What folly is it to rest upon a good report from men, when I have it not from the truth? The like madness it is, as for a man to trust in the absolution of his fellow-prisoners, when the law of the land condemns him. Shall a sick man be so mad as to say he is well, because others say so? as if we should seek ourselves out of ourselves. No, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another." "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly, whose praise is not of men but of God." Not as if this did discommon, or turn out the praise of men; but it is comparatively spoken, and it is meant, whose praise is not so much of men as of God. So that this is the second false glass, when a man concludes himself to be in a good estate because men praise him, thinks it well with him, because others think so, and say so. He hath a good opinion of himself, but that is not all, other men give him a good report too. And this follows the former: for a man needs never fear flattery from others, that doth not flatter himself.

But these are not my only grounds that I have so good an opinion of myself, and that others speak well of me, but when I compare myself

with others and I find wherein I may rejoice. So that this is the

3. Third glass, when a man compares himself with others, and himself.

1. When he compares himself with others. I thank God, saith he, I am better than twenty of my neighbours; I know this man that follows such courses, and another lives in such a foul sin. Sure, saith he, I am not such a sinner as these, therefore I am happy, and I doubt not room in heaven. This is the cause that the Pharisee went home unjustified, because, looking on other men, he justified himself: "God I thank thee I am not as other men, no extortioner," &c. This fellow is so far from begging any thing of God, that he fills up his time with thanksgiving, he thinks he wants nothing, and that is his error; he looks on other men, and compares himself with them, and thence concludes he is well enough, because he is not so bad as this or that man. This is the common deceit, when men take this for a rule, that because they are not so bad as the off-scouring of the world, but are better than the ordinary sort of men, therefore they suppose they are very well, or as well as they need to be. As if a sick man should say, I am not so sick as such a man, who is at the point of death, therefore I am very well. I would desire such men, that as they look on those that are under them, so they would a little cast up their eyes on those that are above them. When you look on the publican, this and that man, and bless yourselves, because you are not so bad as these, who perchance are before you in points of morality: if you stand on comparisons, look on those that are above you, that go beyond you in grace and zeal, and look not so much on the sins of others as your own: another man's sins may condemn him, they cannot save thee. When a thief and a murderer are both arraigned at the bar for their lives, will the thief say to the murderer thy sin is the greater, thy fault is of an higher nature, therefore I shall be saved, because mine is not

heinous, when they both are punishable with death? The fault of another will not make thy case better. It is no point of justification, thus to deceive thyself, and to conclude because another is worse than thee, that therefore thy estate is blessed. So we see the degrees of false glasses. Self love, or self conceit: then a good opinion of men: and conferring a man's self with some others. He is better than they, therefore his estate is good. An absurd conclusion; the devil will mightily insult over such as he can so easily deceive.

But this man goes farther; I not only compare myself with others, but with myself too, and find good ground to conclude the safeness of my condition. I remember a time, when I was vain and idle, when I ran in a way contrary to God. But now I have sowed my wild oats; and whereas before I was loose and dissolute, I have care to do my duty, to serve God, &c. I am not so profane as formerly, my estate must needs be good. This is a very dangerous thing to say, that because I am not as bad as I was, I am therefore good. It is as if a man had a debtor, a slack paymaster, to whom the creditor calls earnestly to pay the debt; the best answer the debtor gives is this, I am sure there are many worse paymasters in the world than I am, and I myself have been a worse, and more slow paymaster heretofore than I am now. Well, because there are worse paymasters, and he himself hath been a worse, doth this make him a better now? And shall this serve to excuse thee, by comparing thyself with others that are worse? And with thyself, that because thou hast mended thyself in some particulars, therefore thou art in the way to heaven? It is a false and foolish conclusion.

4. Now we come to the main thing, another false glass, which we call partial obedience, when a man goes further, looking upon the letter of the commandment only, saying, I thank God I forbear many sins, and do many duties, I am not a thief, nor a murderer, swearer,

drunkard, or covetous person: I do not take God's name in vain; I have not broken the Sabbath, though I doubt whether it be moral or no. I have served God in coming to his house, given obedience to my parents, &c. And looking on this he concludes, doubtless all is well with him: as when I have a thousand thorns in my feet, and have three or four taken out, will this help me? because I have not the stone or the gout, shall I conclude I am well, as if I could not be sick without this or that disease. Because I do something that God requires, shall I think I do as much as I need? No, we must take heed of that, God will not be contented with partial obedience; he will have the whole heart or none.

OBJ. But mine is not partial obedience, I do my endeavour, as far as I am able to do, what God requires: here comes in natural reason, and saith, I thank God I do what I can, and I see no reason, why more should be required. I conform myself, as I am able, and I see it needful, to the greatest duties of Christianity; I lead such a blameless life, that no man can tax me in any particular what God hath enabled me to do; and according to moral philosophy, I know not how more can be required: I go as far as Seneca's rules, and somewhat farther, and sure this is not partial obedience.

SOL. I speak not against morality. But yet let me tell thee, if thou hast no more than morality, it will not bring thee to heaven. Not but that a moral man is an excellent stock, whereon to graft grace and virtue, it is a good help to heaven, yet it comes far short of bringing him thither. Natural reason was once a full and fair glass, till it was broken by the fall: but now it is insufficient. The tables in Moses' hands were excellent things, God made the first tables with his own hand, and perchance they may be therein typical, when these were broken, Moses makes the second, these not so excellent as the former, though I should esteem a piece of these more excellent than

all the relics of the papists, for there was something of the first in them, God writes them with his own finger. This glass which was then so perfect, is now broken, and is not so perfect as it was, though there be something yet remaining in it; we may see something of its ancient lustre in the Gentiles; "for these having not a law, are a law unto themselves." There are practical principles yet remaining in the tables of our hearts, so that they that care not for the law, shall be judged by that natural light, which is in them. We have a conscience to difference between good and evil. This is the truth. It is a part of the image of God implanted in us, which we are not to despise lest we be judged with those that "hold the truth in unrighteousness:" the truth is the principle of difference betwixt good and bad: the soul was to have a seat as a queen to rule all our actions: but now this queen is taken captive, and all is lost: morality and inward principles are to be much esteemed, as things which God at first planted, yet do they come short of bringing a man to heaven. The young man in the Gospel had a good esteem of himself, and was doubtless well esteemed of others, and did many things: but yet our Saviour tells him, "how hard a thing it was for one no better qualified than at that time he was, or rather impossible (for he preferred his wealth before the blessed society of Christ) to come to heaven:" Although he thinks himself well enough, though he were rich not only in great outward possessions, but in his moral virtues too, so that when our Saviour tells him of the commandments, he replies: "all these have I kept from my youth," which evidenced him to have been a good moral man indeed in that he had done so much, yet this was not enough, one thing lacked: "go and sell all that thou hast," &c. However, because there was so much in him, we read, Mark, chap. 10 ver. 21. "Jesus loved him:" he sheweth that his cause was heavy, that going so far he should not attain his end. But this was not to be despised, for this Jesus loved him. So 1 Kings, chap. 14 ver. 13. "He only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found

some good things towards the Lord." If there are but some good things in a man, the remains of God's work, God loveth his own work; here is the point then, though morality be good, and natural reason be good: and what through the providence of God remains in us, since the state of our first creation; (for this state was a pure and a full glass, made by God himself, but since the fall is much darkened: if we consult with natural reason and moral philosophy, they will discover many things:) yet this comes short. There are abundance of things that it cannot discover, manifold defects which it cannot discern. The apostle saith in the Romans, chap. 7 ver. 7. "I had not known sin but by the law. I had not known lust to have been a sin, had not the law said, thou shalt not lust." We have many sins we cannot know, but by the law, yea such secret sins, as must be repented of. Our Saviour overthrew the tables of the money changers, and would not suffer them to carry burdens through the temple, though for the use of those that sacrificed, a thing which had some shew of religion in it. He whipped both out, not only those that had residence there, but those that passed through: he would suffer none but those that could justify what they did by the law. Now, as God would not have sin lodge and make its abode in the soul, so he would not have it made a thoroughfare for sin: he would not have vain thoughts come up and down in the hearts. Now, "by the law comes the knowledge of these secret sins." Reason is a glass much to be esteemed for what it can shew; but it is not a perfect glass; sometimes it shews a sin, but many times diminishes it, that we cannot see it in full proportion. The apostle makes this use of the law, that by it "sin becomes exceeding sinful." Thou mayest see sin to be sin by natural reason, but to see it exceeding sinful, this morality comes short of, thou must have this from the law of God.

5. There is another false glass, when the "Devil transforms himself into an angel of light," when he preacheth Gospel to a man. Beware

of the doctrine when the deceiver preacheth. This may be his doctrine: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." From this, by Satan's cunning delusion the natural man thus concludes: A mere heathen shall be shut out of heaven's gates, but I believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, therefore I am in a good condition. Why then should I trouble myself any further? There is no man can accuse me, and my own good works will testify unto me, that I do enough. Strictness in religion is troubleness, and it is an unreasonable thing to do more: but this is but a mere delusion of Satan, for there is nothing more quiets, and satisfies a man, than religion; there is nothing in the world more reasonable, than the service of God. First then know thy disease, and then apply those sweet and sovereign cures. It is no easy matter for a man to believe: we block up the strait ways of God, if we think it an easy matter to believe of ourselves. It must be done by the mighty power of God: it is as great a work of God, as the creation of the world, to make a man believe: it is the mighty power of God to salvation. Such a one must not receive Christ as a Saviour, but as a Lord too. He must renounce all to have him, he must take him on his own terms. He must deny the world and all, looking beforehand what it will cost him. Now for a man to take Christ, as his Lord, denying himself the world, and all, to resolve to pluck out his right eye, cut off his right hand rather than to part with him, and account nothing so dear to him as Christ, is no small matter. Thou canst not be Christ's spouse, unless thou forsake all for him. Thou must "account all things as dung and dross in comparison with him:" and is not this a difficult thing? Is this an easy task? Easily spoken indeed, not as easily done: it must be here as in the case of marriage; a man must forsake all others, yea the whole world, else Christ will not own him. Observe the speech of the apostle, "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward that believe," &c. Mark, is to believe so easy a matter think you? Why, unless the mighty power of God be engaged for it, with that strength

as it was engaged in raising Christ from the dead, it cannot be. When thou art to believe, and united unto Christ, the agreement is not that thou shalt take him as thy wife, and thou shalt be his husband: no, he must be thy husband, and thou his wife, and according to the obligation of that relation, thou must be in subjection to him, and must obey him. Now for a man to be brought out of his natural condition, and to take Christ on any terms, so he may be saved by him in the end, is not so easy. Canst thou think there is no more required but only the outward baptism, or that there is no more in baptism but the outward washing of the flesh? No; "Hek is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is so inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart." Thou then enterest into God's livery. Mark this, for by it I strive only to bring thee back to thyself. Thou enterest into covenant with him; thou bindest thyself to forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil; and we should make this use of baptism, as now to put it in practice. When we promised, there were two things in the indenture; one, that God will give Christ to us, the other, that we must forsake all the sinful lusts of the flesh: this is that which makes baptism to be baptism indeed to us. The other thing required is, that we forsake all. It is not confined to the very act, but it hath a perpetual effect all the days of thy life. I add, it never hath its full effect till the day of our death, the abolition of the whole body of sin. That which we seal, is not complete till then, till we have final grace. The water of baptism quenches the fire of purgatory; for it is not accomplished till final grace is received. We are now under the physician's hands, then shall we be cured. Baptism is not done only at the font, which is a thing deceives many; for it runs through our whole life: nor hath it consummation till our dying day, till we receive final grace: the force and efficacy of baptism is for the washing away of sin to-morrow, as well as the day past: the death of sin is not till the death of the body, and therefore it is said "we must be buried with him by baptism into

his death." Now at our death we receive final grace; till when, this washing and the virtue thereof hath not its consummation.

Let no man therefore deceive you with vain words; take heed of looking on yourselves in these false glasses, think it not an easy thing to get heaven, the way is strait, and the passage narrow. There must be a striving to enter; there must be an ascending into heaven, a motion contrary to nature: and therefore it is folly to think we shall drop into heaven, there must be a going upward, if ever we will come thither.

SERMON IV:

You were dead in the trespasses and sins - Ephesians 2:1-3

"And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, where in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince that ruleth in the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Amongst whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others."

THE last time I declared unto you the duty that was necessarily required of us if we look to be saved, that we must not only take the matter speedily into consideration, and not be deluded by our own hearts and the wiles of Satan; but that we must not do it superficially or perfunctorily, but must bring ourselves to the true touchstone, and not look upon ourselves with false glasses, because there is naturally in every one self-love; and in these last and worst times men are apt to think better of themselves than they deserve. If there be any beginning of goodness in them, they think all is well, when there is no greater danger in the world than being but half Christians. He thinks (the half Christian I mean,) that if he hath escaped the outward pollutions of the world, through lust, and be not so bad as formerly he hath been, and not so bad as many men in the world are, therefore he is well enough: whereas his end proves worse than his beginning. This superficial repentance is but like the washing of a hog, the outside is only washed, the swinish nature is not taken away. There may be in this man some outward abstaining from the common gross sins of the world, or those which he himself was subject unto; but his disposition to sin is the same, his nature is nothing changed: there is no renovation, no casting in a new mould, which must be in us. For it is not a little reforming will serve the turn, no, nor all the morality in the world, nor all the common graces of God's Spirit, nor the outward change of the life: they will not do, unless we are quickened, and have a new life wrought in us; unless there be a supernatural working of God's Spirit we can never enter into heaven. Therefore in this case it behoves every man to prove his "own work." A thing men are hardly drawn unto, to be exact examiners of themselves, cœlo discendit γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, a heathen himself could say, to know a man's self is a heavenly saying; and it is an heavenly thing indeed, if we have an heavenly master to teach us. The Devil taught Socrates a lesson that brought him from the study of natural to moral philosophy, whereby he knew himself; yet the

Devil knew morality could never teach him the lesson indeed. All the morality in the world cannot teach a man to escape hell: we must have a better instructor herein than the Devil, or ourselves; the Lord of Heaven must do it, if ever we will be brought to know ourselves aright. St. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the learnedest doctors of the Pharisees, and yet he could not teach him this. When he studied the law, he thought himself unblameable, but coming to an higher and better Master; he knows that "in him, that is, in his flesh dwells no good thing." By self-examination a man may find many faults in himself, but to find that which the apostle afterwards found in himself, to see the flesh a rottenness, the sink of iniquity that is within him, and to find himself so bad as indeed he is, unless it please the Lord to open his eyes, and to teach him, he can never attain it.

Now we come to this place of the apostle, wherein we see the true glass of ourselves, the Spirit knows what we are, better than ourselves; and the Spirit shews us that every man of us either was, or is such as we are here set down to be. We are first natural before we can be spiritual, there is not a man, but hath been, or is yet, a natural man, and therefore see we the large description of a natural man before he is quickened, before God, which is rich in mercy, enlivens him being dead in sins, and saves him by grace in Christ. Thus is it with us all, and thus must it be; and we shall never be fit for grace till we know ourselves thus far, till we know ourselves as far out of frame, as the Spirit of truth declares us to be. In this place of Scripture consider we

1. Who this carnal man is; what they are which the apostle speaks of, to be "dead in sins: and that walk after the course of the world, led by the Devil, and have their conversation after the flesh, children of

wrath." These are big words and heavy things: consider first the subject, of whom this is spoken.

Then follows the prædicate, or

2. What that ill news is, which he delivers of them. We begin with the first.

1. Who they are of whom this is spoken: and that is you: "You hath he quickened who were dead:" and "ye (in the words following,) that in times past walked after the course of the world:" and in the third verse more particularly: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past." He speaks now in the first person, as before in the second, so that the subject is we all and ye all. Not a man in this congregation, but is or was as bad as the Holy Ghost here makes him. But

2. To come to that, which is delivered of him: he is one "not quickened, dead in sins:" no better than nature made him, that corrupt nature which he had from Adam, till he is thus spiritually enlivened.

Now he is described.

1. By the quality of his person.

2. By his company. "Even as others." Thou mayest think thyself better than another man, but thou art no better; never a barrel the better herring (as we say): "Even as others;" thou art not so alone, but as bad as the worst, not a man more evil in his nature than thou art. When thou goest to hell, perhaps some difference there may be in your several punishments, according to your several acts of

rebellion; but yet you shall "all come short of the glory of God," and for matter of quickening, you are all alike.

I. First concerning their quality: and this is declared.

1. By their general disposition, "they are dead in trespasses and sins." Dead, and therefore unable and indisposed to the works of a spiritual living man: besides, not only indisposed and unable thereto, but "dead in trespasses and sins." For, the separation of the soul from God is a more dangerous death, than the separation of the soul from the body, and this is the reason, why St. John calls damnation the second death: reckoning (in comparison) the natural death for none. Accordingly also speaketh the learned patriarch of Alexandria:That is not properly death, which separateth soul from the body, but that which separateth God from the soul. God is the life of the soul, but he that is separated from life is dead, being deprived of alacrity and cheerfulness, as of life." He lies rotting in his own filth, like a rotten carcase, and stinking carrion in the nostrils of the Almighty, so loathsome is he: all which is drawn from original sin. Not only disenabled to any good, but prone to all sin and iniquity.

2. By his particular conversation: and that appears in the verse following. "Where in times past ye walked." How? Not according to the word and will of God, not according to his rule, but they walked after three other wicked rules. A dead man then hath his walk you see: a strange thing in the dead, but who directs him in his course? These three, the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the worst guides that may be; yet if we look to the conversation of a natural man, we see these are his pilots, which are here set down.

1. The world. "Wherein in times past ye walked after the course of the world." He swims along with the stream of the world. Nor will he be singular, not such a precise one as some few are, but do as the world

doth, run amain whither that carries him. See the state of a natural man. He is apt to be brought into the slavery of the world. This is his first guide. Then follows

2. The second, which is the Devil. The Devil leads him as well as the world: "According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Instead of having the Spirit of God to be led by, he is posted by the spirit of Satan, and "the lusts of his father the Devil he will do," he hath not an heart to resist the vilest lusts the Devil shall persuade him to. When Satan once fills his heart, he hath no heart to any thing else, than to follow him.

3. There remains the flesh, his guide too, and that is not left out, verse 3. "Amongst whom we had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." So that you see the three guides of a natural man; and he is as bad as these three can make him: and till the stronger man comes and pulls him out, in this condition he remains, and in this natural estate, he is a son of disobedience. We see then the state of disobedience described to be wretchedness.

3. This further appears by that which must follow, which is cursedness. Rebellion and wretchedness going before, cursedness will follow. For God will not be abused, nor suffer a rebel to go unpunished: therefore saith the apostle, "We are by nature the children of wrath." Being the natural sons of disobedience, we may well conclude we are the children of wrath. If we can well learn these two things of ourselves, how deep we are in sin, and how the wrath of God is due to us for our sins, then we may see what we are by nature. Thus much concerning the quality of a natural man. Next follows

II. His company. "Even as others." By nature we are "the children of wrath even as others." That is to say, we go in that broad wide way

that leads to damnation, that way we all naturally rush into: though we may think it otherwise, and think ourselves better, yet we are deceived. For it is with us even as with others. Naturally we are in the same state that the worst men in the world are; so that we see the glass of a natural man, or of a man that hath made some beginnings, till Christ come and quicken him.

Q. See we then who it is spoken of to be dead men, that are rotten and stinking, as bad as the world, the flesh, and the Devil can make them? Who should these be?

A. I answer, it is you: "you hath he quickened." And ye, "wherein ye walked," &c. But who are they?

The Ephesians perhaps that were in times past heathens: I hope it belongs not to us. They were Gentiles and Pagans that knew not Christ, "Aliens to the commonweal of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, without God in the world." ἄθεοι, as the text renders it, atheists, and therefore they might well be so. But I hope it is not thus with me, I was never a Pagan or Heathen, I was born of Christian parents, and am of the Church.

But put away these conceits. Look on the third verse: "Amongst whom we also had our conversation:" and wherein ye yourselves, &c. It is not only spoken of you Gentiles, but verified of us also: as if he had said here as Gal. chap. 2. "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles." He paints out not only you the Gentiles in such ugly colours, but we Jews also, we of the commonwealth of Israel. We, before we were quickened, were in the same state that you are described to be in.

OBJ. Oh but the apostle may do this out of fellowship, and to avoid envy, as it were making himself a party with them, as Ezra did, that

included himself in the number of the offenders, though he had no hand in the offence: "O our God," saith he, "what shall we say? Our evil deeds," &c. "and how shall we stand before thee because of this?" Making a particular confession, whereas he was not accessary to the fault, but to sweeten it to them.

SOL. But here the apostle doth not so, he was not thus minded, but it is we all, he puts universality to it: so that it is clear, that before conversion and quickening by grace from Christ, we all, all of us are in as foul and filthy a condition as this which is here described and set down: so that this is the point, that it is not spoken of some desperate sinners, but that it is the common state and condition of all the sons of Adam.

DOCT. All men, every man and woman in this place, either is or hath been in the state that here the apostle describeth the natural man to be in.

Therefore we have all need to examine ourselves, whether we yet remain in that condition or not. The apostle brings this description to testify the truth of the point: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." The whole current and course of the Scripture shews the universality of it, that it is true of all. See, the apostle speaking of himself and the rest, saith, "Weh ourselves also," not only you of the Gentiles, but "we ourselves also were foolish, disobedient," &c. "But after the kindness of God towards man appeared," &c. That is, before the "day-star of grace did arise in our hearts," there is not the best of us all but have been thus and thus.

Rom. chap. 3 ver. 19. There the apostle insists on the point expressly, "that every mouth might be stopped;" to shew the state of all men naturally, having laid down a large beadrole of the iniquities of the heathen, he cometh afterward to convince the Jews. "What, are we

better than they; no in no wise; for we have proved before that all are under sin: there is none good, no not one."

OBJ. But though you bring many places to prove that all are sinners, yet I hope the Virgin Mary was not.

SOL. An inch breaks no squares, but all are sinners. "There is none righteous, no not one." The drift of the apostle in this, is to shew that these things are not spoken of some heinous sinners only, but there is not one to be exempted; and therefore in his conclusion, he saith that whatever things the law saith, it saith to them which are under the law. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God: and that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified from sin."

So that now having proved this so clearly to you, consider with yourselves how needful it is to apply this to our own souls. Many men, when they read such things as these of the Scripture, read them but as stories from strange countries. What, are we dead in sins, not able to stir one foot in God's ways? bad we are indeed: but dead, rotten and stinking in sins and trespasses? What, as bad as the world, the devil, and flesh, can make us? What, children of wrath? Firebrands of hell? Few can persuade themselves that it is so bad with them. Therefore take this home to yourselves; think no better of yourselves than you are: for thus you are naturally. Therefore consider if thou wert now going out of the world, what state thou art in, a child of wrath, a child of Belial, or the like. Set about the work speedily, go to God, pray, and cry earnestly; give thyself no rest, till thou know this to be thy condition: let not thy corrupt nature deceive thee, to make thee think better of thyself, than God saith thou art.

Now that we may better know to whom these things belong, know it is thou and I, we all have been, or are in this estate, till we have

supernatural grace; and therefore we are declared to be children of wrath, and children of disobedience, till regenerated. Why? It is because it is thy nature, it belongs to all. Now we know the common nature always appertains to the same kind: there is nothing natural, but is common with the kind. If then by nature we are children, then certainly it belongs to every mother's son of us, for we are all sons of Adam. "In Adam we all die." That is the fountain whence all misery flows to us. As thou receivedst thy nature, so the corruption of thy nature from him; for "he begat a son in his own likeness." This therefore is the condition of every one. The apostle in 1 Cor. chap. 15 speaks of two men, "the first was from the earth, earthly, the second was the Lord from heaven." What, were there not many millions and generations more? True, but there were not more men like these men of men, two head-men, two fathers of all other men. There were but two, by whom all must stand or fall, but two such men. By the fall of the first man we all fell; and if we rise not by the second man, we are yet in our sins. If he rise not, we cannot be risen. We must rise or fall by him. He is the mediator of the second covenant. If he rise and we are in him, we shall rise with him; but if not, we are dead still. So it is in the first Adam, we all depend on him, he is the root of all mankind. It is said in Isaiah, chap. 53. "Our Saviour should rejoice to see his seed." His seed, that is to say, he is the common father of all mankind, I mean of all those that shall proceed from him by spiritual generation. He shall present them to his father, as when one is presented to the university: "Behold here am I, and the children thou hast given me." So in Adam, he being the head of the covenant of nature or works, that is, the law, if he had stood, none of us had fallen; if he fall, none of us all can stand. He is the peg, on which all the keys hang: if that stand, they hang fast; but if that fall, they fall with it. As we see in matter of bondage; if the father forfeit his liberty, and become a bondman, all his children are bondmen to a hundred generations, here is our case. We were all once free, but our

father hath forfeited his liberty; and if he become a slave, he cannot beget a freeman. When our Saviour tells the Jews of being freemen: "We were never bondmen," say they, though it be false; for even Cicero himself could tell a Jew that he was a slave, genus hominum ad servitium natum, although they had a good opinion of themselves: but our Saviour saith, you are bondmen unto sin and Satan. For till the Son make you free, you are all bondmen: but when he makes you free, then are you free indeed. So that we see our condition here set down.

1. "We are dead in trespasses and sins;" that is, there is an indisposition in us to all good works. A dead man cannot walk or speak, or do any act of a living man; so these cannot do the actions of men that are quickened and enlivened, they cannot pray with the spirit, they cannot love God, &c. They cannot do those things that shall be done hereafter in heaven. There is not one good duty which this natural man can do. If it should be said unto him; Think but one good thought, and for it thou shalt go to heaven, he could not think it. Till God raise him from the sink of sin, as he did Lazarus from the grave, he cannot do any thing that is well pleasing unto God. He may do the works of a moral man, but to do the works of a man quickened and enlightened, it is beyond his power. For if he could do so, he must then have some reward from God; for however we deny the merit of good works, yet we deny not the reward of good works to a man that is in Christ. There is no proportionable merit in a cup of cold water and the kingdom of heaven, yet "he that gives a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward." Here then is the point. The best that a natural man doth, cannot so relish with God, as that he should take delight in it, or reward it: whereas the least good thing that comes from another root, from a quickened spirit, is acceptable and well pleasing to him. Consider for this end that which is set down. Take the best works of a

natural man, his prayers, or sacrifice, and see there what is said. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." It is said again, where there are additions: "Theo sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: How much more when he brings it with a wicked mind?" Suppose there should come upon this man a fit of devotion, where he hath or should have some good motions, is it then accepted? No, it is so far from being accepted, that it is an "abomination to God; how much more then, if he brings it with wicked mind?" That is, if he brings it not with a wicked mind, it is an abomination, how much more with it? See the case set down in Haggai, chap. 2 ver. 12, 13, 14. "If one bear holy flesh," &c. "shall it be holy? And the priest answered, No. Then said Haggai, If an unclean person touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And he said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, So is this people, so is this nation before me, saith the Lord, and so is every work of their hands, it is unclean." A man may not say, prayer is a sin, because it is so in them; no, it is a good duty, but spoiled in the carriage. He mars it in the carriage; and therefore instead of doing a good work, he spoils it; and so instead of a reward, must look for punishment. "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and faith unfeigned." Let the things thou dost be according to the commandment: look what thou dost be in the middle, end, and beginning according to the commandment. If wrong in all these, then though the work be never so materially good, being faulty in the original, middle, or end, it is so far from being a good work, that God will not accept of it, and thou mayest rather expect a plague for spoiling it, than a reward for doing it.

See then the beginning of a good work, it must be "from a pure heart." A man not ingrafted into Christ, is a defiled, polluted person, his very mind and conscience are defiled. The conscience is the purest thing a man hath, it holds out last, and taketh part with God,

that as Job's messenger said, "I only escaped to tell thee," so conscience only remains to declare a man's faults to God, and to witness against the man; and yet this very light, the eye of the soul is defiled: therefore if thou have a corrupt fountain, if the heart be nought, the fountain muddy, whatever stream comes from it cannot be pure.

Again, the "end of it is love." Consider when thou dost any duty, what puts thee on work. Is it love doth constrain thee? If love do not constrain thee, it is manifest that thou dost not seek God but thyself, and art "to every good work a reprobate," that is, thou art not then able to do any thing that God will accept; the best thing thou dost, will not relish with God. A hard estate indeed, that when a man shall come to appear before God, he shall not have one good thing, that he hath done in all his life, that God will own. Some there be that take a great deal of pains in coming to the word, in prayer public and private, in charity and giving to the poor. Alas, when thou shalt come to an account, and none of these things shall stead thee, not one of them shall speak for thee, but all shall be lost; how heavy will thy case be? "Looks to yourselves, that you lose not the thing that you have wrought:" by being indisposed to do the works of a living man, we lose all; that is to say, God will never own nor accept them: we shall never have reward for them. So that here is the case, thou being dead, unable to perform the works of a living man, canst have no reward from heaven at all; until a man is quickened, and hath life from Christ, his works are dead, as well as his person. "Without me," saith our Saviour, "you can do nothing." St. Austin on this place observes that Christ saith not, "Without me ye can do no great matter:" no, but unless you be cut off from your own stock, taken from your own root, and be ingrafted into me, and have life from me, and be quickened by me "you can do nothing at all:" nothing, neither great nor small, all that you do is lost. So that if there were nothing

but this being dead, you could do no good action. "Iu know that in me, that is, in my flesh," saith St. Paul, "there dwelleth no good thing," that is, nothing spiritually good, nothing for which I may look for a reward in heaven. The Lord will say of such a man, thou hast lived ten, twenty, forty, or it may be fifty years under the ministry, and yet hast not done a good work, or thought a good thought that I can own. "Cut down this fruitless tree, why cumbers it the ground?" And this is the case of every man of us, while we continue in our natural condition, till we be ingrafted into Christ, and live by life, God will own nothing we do.

But now we are not only dead, and indisposed to the works of a living man, though this be a very woful case, and we need no more misery; for this will bring us to be "cut down and cast into the fire," if we continue so: but this is not the only sad case of a natural man, but he is very active and fruitful in the works of darkness, the others were sins of omission. Here he is wholly set upon the commission of sins and trespasses. He not only "brings not forth meet fruit," or good fruit, or no fruit, but "he brings forth thorns and briars; and is therefore rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt." Thou art not only found a barren tree, and so deservest to be cut down; but thou bringest forth thorns and briars, and deservest to be burnt; not only no good fruit, but noxious, bad and poisoned fruit; and this doth mightily aggravate the matter. Now for us that have lived so long under the ministry, and the Lord hath watered, and dressed, and hedged us, do we think the Lord expects from us no good fruit? Had we lived among heathens, or where the word is not taught, then so much would not be expected; but we have heard the word often and powerfully taught, and therefore it is expected, that we should not only bring forth fruit, but meet fruit, answerable to the means. Where God affords greatest means, there he expects most fruit. If a man live thirty or forty years under powerful means, the

Lord expects answerable fruit, which if he bring forth, he shall have a blessing from the Lord. But when a man hath lived long under the means, and brings forth no fruit pleasing to God, but all God's cost is lost, when notwithstanding the "dew and the rain which falls oft upon him, he brings forth nothing but thorns and briars, he is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt. The earth which drinketh in the former and the latter rain," &c. if it bring not forth fruit answerable to the labour of the dresser, "it is nigh unto the curse."

Now if we consider but the particulars, and search into God's testimonies, we shall see how bad this man is.

But who should this man be?

We have God's own word for it. It is men, generally all men. "God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every thought and imagination of his heart was only evil continually." Every word is as it were a thunderbolt: and was it not time, when it was thus with them, for God to bring a flood? The thoughts are the original, from which the words and actions do usually proceed. Now all their thoughts were evil: what, was there no kind of goodness in their thoughts? No, they were "only evil continually:" and that was the reason the flood came. Well, but though it were so before the flood, yet I hope they were better after the flood. No, God said again after the flood: "Thea thoughts of the hearts of men are evil," &c. Like will to like. Men are of one kind, till they receive grace from Christ. We are all one nature, and naturally all the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts are only evil continually.

See it in the understanding: "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are foolishness unto him," &c.

Look upon his will, "It is not subject to the will of God, neither indeed can it be." Our Saviour doth anatomize the heart of such a man: "Thosed things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile the man, for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," &c. "these are they which defile the man," because they come from his heart from within. If a man go by a house, and seeing great flakes of fire come out of the chimney, though he see not the fire within, yet he cannot know but there is fire within, because he seeth the flakes without. I am not able to see the heart of any man, and to declare to you what I have seen with mine eyes; but yet if I see such to come forth, as murder, thefts, blasphemies, lying, and the like, I may say there is hell-fire in the heart; thy heart is a little hell within thee, these manifestations from without make it appear to be so. The words of this man are rotten words and stinking words, and his heart is much more. So, this is the point, we are utterly indisposed, aliens to all good, and bent to all evil. "I am carnal," saith the apostle, "we are sold under sin," slaves unto it; sin is our Lord, and we its slaves. We have generally forfeited our happy estate, and are servants to Satan, whom we obey. Therefore this is a thing not easily to be passed over; this is our condition, of which if we were once truly persuaded, we would never give ourselves any rest, till we were got out of it.

If the party that goes to the physician, could but know his disease and cause the physician to know it, and the causes of it, whether it came from a hot cause or a cold, it were easily cured, it were as good as half done: that is the chief reason why so many miscarry, because their disease is not perfectly known. That is the reason that we are no better, because we know not how bad we are. If we did once know our disease, and knew ourselves to be heart sick, and not like the Laodiceans, "which thought themselves rich and wanted nothing, when they were poor, blind and naked," then we would seek out, and

were in the way to be cured. So much for this time, but we will have another lecture on this point.

SERMON V:

The Scripture imprisoned everything under sin - Galatians 3:22

"But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

YOU see in this excellent portion of Scripture, the two covenants of Almighty God: to wit the covenant of nature, and the covenant of grace. The first of nature, which was "written by God in man's heart," and this is the holy law of God, by virtue whereof a man was to continue in that integrity, holiness and uprightness, in which God had first created him, and to serve God according to that strength he first enabled him with, that so he might live thereby.

But now, when man had broken this covenant, and entered into a state of rebellion against God, he is shut up in misery, but not in misery for ever, as the angels that fell were, being "reserved in chains till the judgment of the great day." No, the Lord hath shut him up in prison, only for a while, that so he may the better make a way for

their escape and deliverance, and for their entrance into the second covenant of grace: that so making him see his own misery, wherein by nature he is, and cutting him off from his own stock, he may be ingrafted in Christ, draw sap and sweetness from him, and bring forth fruits to everlasting life. And this is the method the Scripture useth: "Itb concludes all under sin, that so the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." It is no new doctrine devised by us, but it is the course and method of the Scripture: for it begins in this great work with imprisoning and shutting up. The law is as a justice of peace, by his mittimus commands us to prison. It is a serjeant that arrests a man, and carries him to the gaol. But why do the Scriptures do thus? It is not to destroy you with famine; the law sends you not hither to starve you, or to kill you with the stench of the prison, but thereby to save and preserve you alive, and that you may hunger and thirst after deliverance. So that we find the reason added in the text, "The Scripture concludes all under sin," why? It is that "the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." You are shut up as prisoners and rebels, that having found the smart of it, seen your misery, and learned what it is to be at enmity with God, and the folly to make yourselves wiser and stronger than God, you may submit yourselves, casting down your plumes, and desire after Christ with an hungry and thirsty appetite, for not only a priest to sacrifice himself for you, and a prophet to teach and instruct you, but a king to be swayed by him, earnestly craving from your soul to be his subjects, and to be admitted into the privilege of his subjects in the commonwealth of Israel, and esteem it your greatest shame that ye have been aliens so long, so long excluded. "The Scripture then concluded you under sin," and shut up by it, not to bring you to despair, but to bring you to salvation: as a physician, which gives his patient bitter pills, not to make him sick, but that so he may restore

him to health: or as a chirurgeon, that lays sharp drawing plasters, and cuts the flesh, not with an intent to hurt, but to cure the wound.

This is the Scripture's method: "It concludes all under sin, συνέκλεισεν, hath shut up all." The text saith not τοὺς πάντας, but τὰ πάντα, not all men in the masculine gender, but all things in the neuter. And it is all one, as if the apostle hath said, "The Scripture arrests not only thy person but thine actions:" the Scripture lays hold not only of the man, but of every thing in him. This word all is a forcible word, and empties us clean of every thing, that we may truly confess with the apostle, "In me, that is, in my flesh dwells no good thing." It is impossible a man should by nature think thus of himself, that there is no good in him; or that he should by asking others find himself half so bad, as the law makes him to be, by shutting up a man under sin, and all things in a man, yea all good whatsoever is in thee.

And this it doth "that thou mayest come to Christ:" as it is enlarged in the second verses following: "Before faith came," saith the apostle, "we were kept up under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed: wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Before the time then that thou hast faith, (which is "the day wherein salvation comes to thine house) thou art kept under the law." Thou art not assured of salvation, nor canst thou expect, till then, that God should shew thee mercy. We have a conceit, that though we are never transplanted, nor cut off from our own stock, yet God will shew us mercy: but we shall beguile ourselves to hell therein; for "we are kept under the law till faith comes," that so we may know ourselves. "We are kept," &c. kept, it is a metaphor drawn from military affairs, when men are kept by a garrison, and kept in order. Now the law is God's garrison, which keeps men in good awe, and order. The law doth this, not to terrify you too much, or to break your minds with

despair, but to fit you for the faith: it is a "shutting up, till that faith comes, which should afterward be revealed." He is a miserable preacher which ends with preaching of the law; the law is for another, it is to fit us for faith. "It is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." We thunder not the law, to make men run away from God, but to bring them home unto him. The schoolmaster by the smart of his rod makes the child weary of his bondage, and desire earnestly to be past his nonage, and this is his end, not that he delights to hear him cry. Thus are we beaten by the law, not that God delights or loves to hear us sigh or sob, but that we may grow weary of our misery and cruel bondage, may desire to be justified by faith. The law then "is so a schoolmaster," as that by making us smart, it might bring us home. We see then the course and method of the Scripture, it "hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

Now because men like not this kind of doctrine, to begin with preaching of the law, and therefore think there may be a shorter and nearer way to preach Christ first, I will therefore make known unto you this method of the Scripture, and I will justify it unto you.

There must be this preparative, else the Gospel will come unseasonably. If, before we are soured by the leaven of the law, Christ be preached, he will be but unsavoury and unpleasant to us.

1. Does God at the first preaching of the Gospel begin with Adam by preaching Christ, before he saw his sin and wickedness? No, he said not to him presently, as soon as he had sinned, Well, Adam, thou hast sinned, and broken my covenant, yet there is another covenant, thou shalt be saved by one that comes out of thy loins: but God first summons him to appear, he brings him out of his shelters and hiding places, tells him of his sin, and saith, "Hast thou eaten of the tree

which I forbad thee to eat of?" But the man shifts it off, and the woman also to the serpent: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Yet all this will not excuse him, God's judgments are declared, his sin is made apparent, he sees it: then being thus humbled, comes in the promise of the Gospel, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head. Be ye open then ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in."

2. John the Baptist, who was the harbinger to prepare the way for Christ, preaching to the Scribes and Pharisees, warned them, "O generation of vipers." He came "to throw down every high hill, and to beat down every mountain: he calls them serpents. This was his office, to lay the axe at the root of the tree.

3. And Christ himself coming into the world, and preaching to Nicodemus, begins: "Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." A man in his natural condition can never enter into heaven, for he is carnal. "That that is born of the flesh is flesh, and that that is born of the Spirit is Spirit." It is carnal, and must be born again. A little patching will not serve the turn. Thou must be new born, new moulded, a little mending is not sufficient: A man must be a new creature, and new made. So that this is the substance of this doctrine of Christ, that if thou be no better than moral virtue, or civil education can make thee; if thou hast any thing less than regeneration, believe me thou canst never see heaven. There is no hope of heaven till then, till thou art born again: till then our Saviour excludes all these fancies that way.

4. The apostles begin to gather the first church after Christ's resurrection. They do not begin to preach Christ first, his virtue and efficacy; but first they tell them of their great sin, in crucifying the Lord of life, viz. "Whom with wicked hands you have taken and

crucified." But what was the end of their doing thus? It is set down: "Theyf were pricked to the heart, and then they cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" See, this was the end of all, the humbling of them, that by declaring what they had done, they might be pricked at the heart; so that now they see it, if it be no better with them, than for the present, it is like to go ill with them. This makes them cry out, "What shall we do? Then," saith Peter, "repent and be baptized, and you shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost." After he had told them their own, and had brought them to their search, which is their first work, then comes the promise of Christ. Observe the apostle's method in the epistle to the Romans: which book is a perfect catechism of the Church, which contains these three parts of divinity: humility, justification, and sanctification. See how the apostle orders his method. From the first chapter to part of the third, he treats all of the law, and "convinces both Jew and Gentile, and all, of sin." Then mark his conclusion: "that every mouth may be stopped." When he had stopped every mouth, cast down every strong hold, which lifted itself up against God: when he had laid all at God's feet, and left them bleeding, as it were, under the knife of God, then comes he to Christ: "Theh righteousness of God without the law is manifest." He had done his first business in humbling them, in shewing them their sins by the law: and as soon as that was done, when every mouth was stopped, then comes he to "the promise by faith in Jesus Christ to all that believe."

You see then the method of the Scripture is first to "conclude all under sin," and so to fit men for the promise of Jesus Christ. Know, therefore, that law is the highway to the Gospel, the path that leads to it, that way which must be trodden in: we are still out of our way, till we have begun our walks in this path: and if thou art not terrified by the law, and the sight of thy sins, been at thy wits end, as it were,

weary of thy condition and bondage, thou art not in the way yet. "Our sowing must be in tears." And it is said, that in the Church triumphant "all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes." That is a promise: but is it possible that tears should be wiped from our eyes before we shed them? Shall we look to go to heaven in a way that was never yet found out? Shall it be accounted a point of preciseness to walk in this way, or a soul-torturing doctrine to preach it? This is the way that all our forefathers have both preached and gone. This is that time of sowing spoken of in Psal. 126 ver. 5, 6. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." It brings us joy in the end, to begin our "sowing in tears." It waters that precious seed, and makes it bring forth joy unto us in abundance, yet such as no man can take from us.

So then having laid this point for a foundation, we now will come to the next.

That until we come to Christ, the law lays hold of us. Till Christ come we are shut up under the law, kept under it. And if there were nothing else in the world to make a man weary of his condition, this were enough. Until a man hath given over himself to Christ, and renounced his own righteousness, he is subject to the law, kept under it, not under grace. It brings a man only to the place where grace is. Put this therefore close to your consciences, and jumble not these two together. First nature cometh, and whilst you are under that, you are under the law. Never think you are under the covenant of grace, till you believe, of which belief we shall speak more hereafter. Whilst you are under the law you are held under it, and by it made obnoxious to the wrath of God; "Whoever is under the law, is under the curse."

Now that I may unfold it, and shew what a fearful thing it is to be under the law, to be held under it, although many think it no great

matter, hearken what the apostle saith of it: "Cursed be every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Well then, art thou under the law? Then never think of being under grace at the same time; not but that we may hope to be under grace afterwards: by this law we must be judged, and the judgment of the law is very severe: it requires not only, that thou do this, or that good thing, but if thou continuest not in every thing that is written therein, it condemns thee.

Strange conceits men have now adays, and strange divinity is brought forth into the world: that if a man does as much as lies in him, and what he is of himself able to do; nay farther, though he be a heathen, that knows not Christ, yet if he doth the best he can; if he live honestly towards men, according to the conduct of his reason, and hath a good mind towards God, it is enough, he need not question his eternal welfare. A cursed and desperate doctrine they conclude hence. Why, say they, may not this man be saved as well as the best? But if it be so, I ask such, What is the benefit and advantage of the Jew more than the Gentile? What is the benefit of Christ? of the Church? of faith? of baptism? of the sacrament of the Lord's supper? This ground of Pelagianism is that, for which the devout spouse of Christ, the Church, abhors us, when we shall undertake to bring a man to salvation without Christ: whereas, if he be not under grace, under Christ, he is accursed. If thou wilt be saved by the law, it is not thy endeavour or doing what lieth in thee, that will serve the turn;" every jot and tittle that the law requires must be fulfilled. What would be thine estate, if thou shouldst be examined according to the strict rigour of the law? Not the least word or thought, that is contrary to it, but thou must give an account for. If thou standest upon thine own bottom, or lookest to be saved by thine own deeds; not one vain word which thou speakest, but thou shalt be questioned for, cast, and condemned. Consider then the great difference of being

under Christ and grace, and of being under the law. When we are under Christ, we are freed from a great deal of inconvenience: we are not liable to answer for those evil things which we have committed; as in that comfortable place of Ezekiel: "All his iniquities that he hath done shall not be mentioned unto him." When a man is come to forsake his old way, his evils are cast out of mind; a marvellous comfort to a Christian: whereas if a man be not in Christ, every idle word he must be accountable for; if in Christ, the greatest sin he ever committed he shall not hear of. All they that stand on God's right hand, hear only of the "good things they have done, you have fed, cloathed, and visited me:" but they on the left hand hear not a word mentioned concerning the good they have done, only their evil deeds are reckoned up.

Now that I may declare to you the difference between the law and the Gospel, I will difference it in three particulars.

1. The law rejects any kind of obedience besides that which is thorough, sound, full, and perfect, without any touch of the flesh. It rejects all cracked payment: it will take no clipped coin. That obedience which hath any imperfection joined with it, will not be accepted: but here I must not speak without book. See Rom. chap. 7 ver. 14. "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal." And then concludes: "O wretched man," &c. "The law is spiritual," what is that? We may know the meaning of it by the particle but: "but I am carnal." "The law is spiritual." That is, it requires, that all our works be spiritual, without any carnality, or touch of the flesh. If in any point of our obedience there be a smell of the cask, it is rejected. If the beer be never so good, yet if it have an evil smatch, it will not relish. Let our services have this savour of the flesh, and they will not be pleasing to God, neither will they have a right savour in his nostrils. And thus "the law is spiritual, but we are carnal." Now it is

otherwise here in the state of the Gospel: alas! we are carnal, it is true. The apostle himself complains, "That there is a law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, and leading him captive," &c. Yet notwithstanding the Gospel accepts our obedience, though the law will not. What is the reason of this? Why, it is plain. When the law comes, it looks for justice, it presents a strict rule to us; it requires we should be complete: but now the Gospel doth not so; it requires not justification of our own, but looks that, being justified by God's free grace, we should shew forth our thankfulness, and express that we are so in heart, by our obedience to our utmost power. Here is all the the strictness of the Gospel: "If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to what a man hath not." God takes well the desires of our mind. This is then our blessed condition under the Gospel: it requires not perfect obedience, but thankfulness for mercies received, and a willing mind. Suppose we cannot do what we would, that is no matter, God looks to our affections, and the willingness of our minds; if it be according to the strength that thou hast, it is received with acceptance. Here then arises the second point of difference, and that is,

2. The law considers not what thou now hast, but what thou once hadst. If thou sayest, I have done my best; and what, would you have a man do more than he can do? The law heeds not that: it considers not what thou doest, but what thou oughtest to do. It requires that thou shouldst perform obedience according to thy first strength, and that perfection once God gave thee, that all thou doest should have love for its ground: that thou shouldst "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and strength." Here the law is very imperious, like those taskmasters in Egypt, "that laid burdens on the Israelites too heavy for them to bear." They had at first materials, and then they delivered in the full tale of bricks: but when the straw was taken from

them, they complain of the heaviness of their burden. But what is the answer? "Youn are idle, you are idle, you shall deliver the same tale of bricks as before." So stands the case here. It is not enough to plead, Alas! if I had strength, I would do it; but I have not strength, I cannot do it. But the law is peremptory, you must do it: you are compelled by force, you shall do it. The impossibility of our fulfilling it does not exempt us, as appears by comparing Rom. chap. 8 ver. 3 with Rom. chap. 7 ver. 6 although it be impossible, as the case stands, for the law to be by us fulfilled, yet we are held under it, as appears plainly thus. If I deliver a man a stock of money whereby he may gain his own living, and be advantageous to me; and he spend it, and when I require mine own with increase, he tells me, True, sir, I received such a sum of money of you for this purpose, but I have spent it, and am disenabled to pay. Will this serve the turn? will it satisfy the creditor, or discharge the debt? No, no, the law will have its own of him. If thou payest not thy due, thou must be shut up under it. It is otherwise under the Gospel: that accepts a man according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not. And here comes in the third point.

3. Under the Gospel, although I am fallen, yet if I repent, the greatest sin that is cannot condemn me. By repentance I am safe. Let our sins be never so great, yet if we return by repentance God accepts us. Faith and repentance remove all. The law knows no such thing. Look into the laws of the realm. If a man be indicted and convicted of treason, murder, or felony, though this man plead, True, I have committed such an offence, but I beseech you, sir, pardon it, for I am heartily sorry for it: I never did the like before, nor never will again. Though he thus repent, shall he escape? No, the rigour of the law will execute justice on him: there is no benefit had by repentance, the law will seize on him, he should have looked to it before. If thou committest murder or burglary, it is not enough to put one good

deed for another; to say, I have done thus and thus for the king; I kept such a fort, or I won such a town: this will not serve thy turn, it will not save thy neck: the law takes no knowledge of any good thing done, or of any repentance. This is thy estate. Consider then what a case they are in, that are shut up under the law: until a man have faith, it admits no excuse, requires things far above thy power to perform; it will accept no repentance: and therefore we may well make this conclusion in the Galatians: "As many as are under the law, are under the curse, as it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."

But now, where are we thus shut up? "It is under sin," as the apostle tells us. "For the law discovers sin to be sin indeed: that sin by the commandment may become exceeding sinful." The law makes us see more of it than we did, or possibly could come to have seen. "By the law cometh the knowledge of sin: I had not known sin but by the law." Yes, peradventure I might have known murder, adultery, &c. to have been sins, but to have known them to have been exceeding sinful, I could not but by the law. To know what a kind of plague sin is in itself, so as not to make a game of it, or a small matter, as many usually make it; to see the ugliness of it, I cannot without the law. But that we may know what sin is, and that we may see it to be exceeding sinful, I here bring you a few considerations, which I would have you ponder on, and enlarge them to yourselves, when you come home.

1. Consider the baseness of him that offends, and the excellency of him that is offended. You shall never know what sin is without this twofold consideration: lay them together, and it will make sin out of measure sinful. See in David: "The drunkards made songs and ballads of him." He aggravates the indignity offered him, in that he

was their king, yet that those wretched and filthy beasts "the drunkards made songs of him." See it likewise in Job, chap. 29 when he had declared unto them in what glory he once was, that he was a king and prince in the country. Then see chap. 20. "They that are younger than me have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock." He aggravates the offence: first, from the dignity of the persons wronged, "a king, and a prince." Then from the baseness and vileness of those who derided him, "They were such as were younger than he, such as whose fathers he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flocks." A great indignity, and mightily aggravated by these circumstances, that a king should be abased by such vile persons. Now some proportion there might be between David and the drunkards, Job and these men; but between thee and God what proportion can there be? Who art thou therefore that darest set thyself in opposition and rebellion against God? What a base worm that crawleth on the earth, dust and ashes, and yet darest thou thy Maker? Dost thou, saith God, lift thyself up against him, before whom all the powers of heaven do tremble? whom the angels do adore? Exaltest thou thyself against him who inhabiteth eternity? What, oppose thyself, a base creature, to Almighty God thy creator? Consider this, and let the baseness of the delinquent, and the majesty and glory of that God against whom he offends, be the first aggravation of sin, and thou shalt find sin "out of measure sinful."

2. Consider the smallness of the motives, and the littleness of the inducements that persuade thee, so vile a creature, to set thyself against so glorious a God. If it were great matters set thee a work, as the saving of thy life, it were somewhat: but see how small and little a thing does usually draw thee to sin. A little profit it may be, or pleasure: it may be neither of these, or not so much. When thou breathest out oaths, and belchest out fearful blasphemies against

God; when thou rendest and tearest his dreadful and terrible name: what makes such a base and vile villain as thou thus to fly in God's face? Is there any profit or delight in breathing forth blasphemies? Profit thou canst take none, and if thou take pleasure in it, then the devil is in thee: yea, then thou art worse than the devil himself. This is the second consideration which may make us see the vileness of sin, and abhor ourselves for it: to wit, the slenderness of the temptations, and smallness of the motives to it.

3. Add what strong helps and means God hath given to keep thee from sin. As, I say, thou shouldst consider the bitterness of the delinquent, the glory of the offended, the mean motives which cause so base a creature to do so vile an act; so also consider the great means God hath given thee to keep thee from sin.

He hath given thee his word, and this will greatly aggravate thy sins, to sin against his word. When God convinces Adam, he proceeds thus far with him: "Hast thou," saith he, "eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" What, hast thou done it, as if thou wouldst do it on purpose to cross God? God hath given thee an express command to the contrary, and yet hast thou done this? Hast thou so often heard the law, and prayed, "Lord have mercy on me, and incline my heart to keep this law," and yet wilt thou lie, swear, commit adultery, and deal falsely, and that contrary to the command of God, obstinately disobey him?

Now God hath not only given this great means of his word and commandment, but great grace too. Where understand that there is not only final grace, but degrees of grace: else the apostle would not have said, "receive not the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in vain." Consider then how much grace thou hast received in vain. How many motions to good hast thou rejected? Perhaps thy heart is touched at

this sermon, though it is not my tongue, nor the tongue of the most elegant in the world, that can touch the heart, but the Spirit that comes along with his word. Now when thou findest with the word a spirit to go with it, it is a grace. If thy conscience be enlightened, and thy duty revealed to thee, so that it tells thee what thou art, what thou oughtest to do, and not to do, it is a grace. Now if for all this, thou blindly runnest through, and art never the better, but obstinately settest thyself against God, and dost many things which others that have not received the same grace would not have done, know then that thou receivest this grace in vain, and thy case is lamentable.

4. Consider God's great goodness, which ought to restrain thee from sin upon a double account.

First, his goodness in himself should keep thee from offending him. There is nothing but goodness, infinite goodness in him, and canst thou find in thy heart to sin against so good a God? To offend, and wrong a good dispositioned person, one of a sweet nature and affection, it aggravates the fault, it is pity to wrong or hurt such a one, as injures nobody. Now such a one is God, a good God, infinite in goodness, rich in mercy, very goodness itself; and therefore it must needs aggravate the foulness of sin to sin against him: but now he is not only thus in himself, but

Secondly, he is good to thee: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance?" &c. What hast thou that thou hast not received from his bountiful hand? Consider of this, and let this be a means to draw thee off from thy sinfulness. When David had greatly sinned against God, and when God brings his murder home to him, he pleads thus with him: "Whenu thou wert nothing in thine own eyes, I brought thee," saith God, "to the kingdom, I took thee from

the sheepfold, and exalted thee, and brought thee to a plentiful house." And may not God say the like to us? and "Do you thus requite the Lord, O you foolish people and unwise," that the more his mercy and goodness is to you, the higher your sins should be against him.

5. Besides, consider more than all this, we have the examples of good men before our eyes. God commands us not, what we cannot do: if God had not set some before our eyes, that walk in his ways, and do his will, then we might say that these are precepts, that none can perform. But we have patterns, of whom we may say, such a man I never knew to lie, such a one never to swear, and this should be a means to preserve us from sinning. Noah was a good man, and being moved with fear, set not at nought the threatening of God, but "built the ark, and thereby condemned the world." His example "condemned the world," in that they followed it not, although it were so good, but continued in their great sins. So, art thou a wicked deboist person? there is no good man but shall condemn thee by his example. It is a great crime "in the land of uprightness to do wickedly," to be profane, when the righteous by their blameless lives may teach thee otherwise.

6. And lastly, add to all the consideration of the multitude and weight of thy sins. Hadst thou but sinned once or twice, or in this or that, it were somewhat tolerable. But thy sins are great and many: they are heavy, and thou continually increasest their weight, and addest to their number. "A lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities, and every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces." Why? "Because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased." If thou hadst committed but two, or three, or four sins, thou mightest have hope of pardon; but when thou shalt never have

done with thy God, but wilt be still increasing, still multiplying thy sins, then mayest thou expect to hear from God's mouth that dreadful expostulation in the prophet: "Howb can I pardon thee?" Thus David sets out his own sins in their weight and number: "Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." The continual multiplying of them adds to their heap both in number and weight.

Thus I have shewed you what the law does in respect of sin, the benefit of being under the law, that it makes sin appear in its own colours, and sets it forth to be, as indeed it is, exceeding sinful. But the law does not yet leave sin, nor let it escape thus: but as the law discovers our sinfulness, and accursedness by sin, its wretchedness and man's misery by it, till his blessedness comes from the hand of his Jesus: so it lays down the miserable estate which befalls him for it. If he will not spare God with his sins, God will not spare him with his plagues. Let us consider of this accursedness sin brings on us: God will not let us go so, but as long as we are under the law, we are under the curse; and till we are in Christ, we can expect nothing, but that which should come from the hand of a provoked God. Assure thyself, thou that pleasest thyself in thy abominations, that God will not take this at thine hands, that by so base a creature as thou art, so vile a thing as sin is should be committed against him. But of the woful effects of sin, which is God's wrath, we will speak the next time.

SERMON VI:

Woe to us, for we have sinned! - Lamentations 5:16

"Woe unto us that we have sinned."

I DECLARED unto you heretofore, what we are to consider in the state of a natural man, a man that is not new fashioned, new moulded, a man that is not cut off from his own stock, a man that is not ingrafted into Christ; he is the son of sin, he is the son of death. First I shewed you his sinfulness, and now, secondly, I shall shew you his accursedness, that which follows necessarily upon sin unrepented of. I declared before what the nature of sin is: and now I come to shew what the dreadful effects of sin are; I mean the inevitable consequence that follows upon sin, and that is, woe and misery: "Woe unto us that we have sinned." A woe is a short word, but there lieth much in it.

DOCT. Woe and anguish must follow him that continueth sinning against God.

And when we hear this from the minister of God, it is as if we heard that angel, "flying through the midst of heaven, denouncing, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." The ministers of God are his angels; and the same that I now deliver to you, if an angel should now come from heaven, he would deliver no other thing. Therefore consider that it is a voice from heaven, that this woe, woe, woe, shall rest upon the heads, upon the bodies and souls of all them that will not yield unto God, that will not stoop to him, that will be their own masters, and stand it out against him: woe, woe, woe unto them all.

"Woe unto us." It is the voice of the Church in general, not of one man; but "but woe unto us, that we have sinned."

That I may now declare unto you, what these woes are, note by the way, that I speak not to any particular man, but to every man in general. It is not for me to make particular application, do you do that yourselves: "We are all children of wrath by nature:" in our natural condition we are all alike, we are all of one kind, and every kind generates its own kind: it is an hereditary condition, and "till the Son makes us free, we are all subject to this woe. By nature we are all children of wrath, as well as others." Now that I may not speak of these woes in general, I have shewed how "two woes are past and a third woe is coming." God proceeds punctually with us. And are not our proceedings in judiciary courts after this manner? The judge when he pronounceth sentence doth particularize the matter; "Thou shalt return to the place from whence thou camest, thou shalt have thy bolts knocked off, thou shalt be drawn to the place of execution, thou shalt be hanged, thou shalt be cut down, and quartered;" and so he goes on. And this is that which is the witness of justice. Thus it is here, the Spirit of God thinks it not enough to say barely, the state of a sinner is a woful state; but the woes are punctually numbered, and this shall be my practice. Now

1. The first thing that followeth after sin is this: after the committing of sin, there cometh such a condition into the soul that it is defiled, polluted, and becometh abominable. And this is the first woe.

2. The soul being thus defiled and abominable, God loaths it; for God cannot endure to dwell in a filthy and stinking carrion soul, he startles as it were, and seems afraid to come near it, he forsakes it, and cannot endure it. And that is the second woe: first sin defiles it, then God departs from it, there must be a divorce.

3. When God is departed from the soul, then the Devil enters in, he presently comes in, and takes up the room; there will be no emptiness or vacuum. And this is a fearful woe indeed: for as soon as God is departed from a man, he is left to the guidance of the Devil, his own flesh, and the world. There will be no emptiness in the heart: no sooner God departs, but these step in, and take God's place.

4. Then in the fourth place, after all this is done, comes sin and cries for its "wages, which is death." The terrible death which comprehends in it all that bead-roll of curses, which are written in the Book of God; and not only those, but the curses also which are not written, which are so many that they cannot be written. Though the Book of God be a complete book, and the law of God a perfect law, yet here they come short, and are imperfect: for the curses not written shall light upon him, which are so many, as pen and ink cannot set down, nay, the very pen of God cannot express them, so many are the calamities and sorrows that shall light upon the soul of every sinful man.

Now let us take these woes in pieces, one after another.

1. The first woe is the polluting and defiling of the soul by sin. A thing (it may be) that we little think of; but if God once open our eyes, and shew us what a black soul we have within us, and that every sin, every lustful thought, every covetous act, every sin gets a new spot and stain upon the soul, and tumbles it into a new puddle of filth, and then we shall see it, and not till then; for our eyes are carnal, and we cannot see this. If once we did but see our hateful and abominable spots, that every sin tumbles us afresh into the mire: did we see what a black devil we have within us, we would hate and abhor ourselves, as Job did. It would be so foul a sight, that it would make us out of our wits, as it were, to behold it. A man that is but natural, cannot

imagine what a black devil there is within him: but though he seeth it not, yet "he that hath eyes like a flame of fire," seeth our stains and spots.

Our Saviour shews the filthiness of the heart, by that which proceeds out of the mouth: "Those things which proceed out of the mouth, come from the heart." And, verse nineteenth: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. Observe. Of all evils we account evil thoughts the least. This we think strange, what, thoughts defile a man? what, so light a matter as a thought? Can they make any impression? Yes, and defile a man too, leaving such a spot behind them, which nothing but the hot blood of Christ can wash away. So many evil thoughts, so many blasphemies, so many filthy things come from the heart, every one being a new defilement and pollution that a man is made so nasty by it and filthy, that he cannot believe that it is so bad with him, as indeed it is. The apostle having shewn the Corinthians their former life, and exhorted them against itf, goes on: "Let us cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh, and spirit." Mark then, there is a double filthiness, "a filthiness of the flesh, and a filthiness of the spirit." The filthiness of the flesh, that every one acknowledgeth to be filthy carnality, fornication and adultery, &c. These bestial lusts every one knows to be unclean. But then there is a filth of the spirit too, and such are evil thoughts. They are the filth of the spirit. "Corruptio optimi est pessima. The corruption which cleaves to the best thing is worst." The soul is the best thing, the most noble thing; the filthiness which cleaves to it therefore must needs be the greatest. Fleshly filthiness, as adultery, is filthy; but contemplative adultery, to dwell thereon is worse: however such a man may be pure from the filth of the flesh, yet if he delight himself in filthy thoughts, his spirit is abominable in the sight of God: there is a stain by every one of thy impure thoughts left behind. However an actual sin be far greater than the sin of a

thought, yet if that be but once committed, and these are frequently in thee; if thou always lie tumbling in the suds of thy filthy thoughts, thy continuing therein makes thy sin more abominable than David's outward act, which he but once committed. So that we see there is "a filthiness of the spirit, as well as the flesh." In James, chap. 1 ver. 21 we have a word sets out the filthiness of it, which is superfluity. "Lay apart," saith he, "all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness."

First, it is expressed by the name of filthiness, shewing there is nothing so defiles a man as sin.

Then it is called superfluity of naughtiness; but what, is there any naughtiness to be borne with? And what exceeds that, is it superfluity? No, that is not the meaning of the place. By superfluity is meant the excrements of sin. Excrements are the refuse of meat, when the good nourishment is taken away from it. And it is as if he had said: Lay aside filthy, nasty, or excrementitious sin. The word was used in the ceremonies of the Jews, and thereby we may see what was taught concerning sin: "Thou shalt have a place without the camp whither thou shalt go," &c. Though the comparison be homely, yet it shews the filthiness of the sin, that it is a very excrement: "Thou shalt have a paddle, and it shall be that when thou wilt ease thyself, thou shalt dig therewith," &c. "And thou shalt cover that which cometh from thee." And what, did God care for these things? No, it was to teach them a higher matter, as the reason following implies: "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp." God would thereby shew them, that those things at which every man stoppeth his nose, are not so filthy to man, as a sin is unto God. So that you see how the case stands with a sinful man: sin defiles him, it pollutes him.

And then in the next place, it makes God's soul to hate and abhor him. It is true, some sins there are that every man imagineth to be shameful and filthy; but we see all is sin to God, it is filthiness of flesh and spirit. A man may have carnality, fleshly filthiness; peradventure also he may have covetousness, but pride and prodigality that he may get, as he thinks, credit by, that he cannot maintain the reputation of a gentleman without them. A miserable thing, that a man should account that a garnish of the soul, which doth defile and pollute it. If a man should take the excrements of a beast to adorn himself, would not we think him an ass? Well, when we thus defile ourselve by sin, God cannot endure us, he is forced to turn from us, he abhors us; and that is the next woe.

2. When thou hast made thyself such a black soul, such a dunghill, such a sty, then God must be gone, he cannot endure to dwell there: it stands not with his honour, and with the purity of his nature to dwell in such a polluted heart, there must now be a divorce: "Holiness becomes his house for ever. His delight is in the saints." He is king of the saints, he will not be in a sty; when thou hast thus polluted and defiled thy soul, God and thou must presently part: God puts thee off, and thou puttest God off too. We read in that place before alleged, that before they knew Christ, they were "withoutk God in the world," &c. atheists, ἄθεοι. And in chap. 4 ver. 18. "Having their understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." The presence of God is the life of our souls; and we having through sin and ignorance banished God, we become strangers until the time of our ingrafting into Christ; we are aliens from the life of God, whereupon comes a mutual kind of abhorring one another. God abhors us, and we, vile and filthy wretches, abhor God again. There is enmity betwixt God and us, and between all that belongs to God, and all that belongs to us. There is an enmity betwixt God and us, and observe the

expression of it: "If you shall despise my statutes, or if your souls shall abhor my judgments, so that you will not do my commandments," &c. See here how we begin to abhor God; and then for judgment on such persons; "Mym soul shall abhor you." We are not behind hand with God in this abhorring; "My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me." When we begin to abhor God, God's soul also abhors us. When a man hath such a polluted soul, he becomes θεοστυγὴς, a hater of God, and hated of him. When thou hast such a stinking soul, God must needs loath it as a most loathsome thing; and so thou art not behind God neither. Thy filthiness makes God abhor thee, and thou abhorrest him, "Θεοστυγεῖς, haters of God" is one of the titles of natural men drenched in sin. And this is thy case, by hating thou art hated of God.

Nor is this all the enmity. There is enmity also betwixt all that belongs to God, and all that belongs to us. God's children and the wicked have ever an enmity betwixt them, such an enmity as will never be reconciled. It is set down in Proverbs, chap. 29 ver. 27. "An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in his way, is an abomination to the wicked." Just as it is between God and the seed of the serpent, so it is between both the seeds. "A wicked man is an abomination to the just, and an upright man is an abomination to the wicked." There is a pale of abomination set between them: so that this is the second woe. We come now to the third.

3. And the third woe is that which immediately follows, God's leaving of us. When we have polluted ourselves with sin, and God by reason thereof abhors us, and turns from us, then are there others ready presently to take up the room; and so soon as God departs, the Devil steps in and becomes thy God. He was thy God by creation, this by usurpation: he was thy father that would have given thee every good

thing; but now thou art fatherless, or rather worse, thou hast the Devil for thy father, and better is it to be without one. When the Devil is thy father, his works thou must do. When "the Spirit of God departed from Saul, presently the evil spirit entered into him." If the good spirit be gone out, the evil spirit soon comes in: he comes and takes possession, and is therefore called "the God of this world:" and while we are in that state, "weq walk after the course of him that worketh in the children of disobedience." We would account it a terrible thing for ourselves or any of our children to be possessed of a devil; but what it is to be possessed of this devil thou knowest not. It is not half so bad to have a legion possess thy body, as to have but one to possess thy soul. He becomes thy God, and thou must do his work; he will tyrannize over thee. What a fearful thing therefore is this, that as soon as God departs from us and forsakes us, and we him, that the Devil should presently come in his room, and take up the heart? Mark that place in Eph. chap. 2 ver. 2. "Where in times past ye walked according to the course of the world, according," &c. As soon as God leaves a man, what a fearful company assail him? They all concur together, the world, the flesh, and the Devil: these take God's place.

The world is like the tide, when a man hath the tide with him, he hath great advantage of him that rows against the tide.

But here is the Devil too. The world is as a swift current, and besides this comes the Devil and fills the heart, the "prince of the power of the air." While thou wert carried with the world thou wentest with the stream, and hadst the tide with thee; but now the Devil being come, thou hast both wind and tide; and how can he choose but run, whom the Devil drives?

But this is not all: there must be something in thine own disposition too, that it may be completely filled; though there be wind and tide, yet if the ship be a slug, it will not make that haste that another ship will: therefore here is the flesh too, and the fulfilling the desires thereof, which is a quick and nimble vessel, and this makes up the matter. So that if we consider the wind and tide, and lightness of the ship, it will appear how the room is filled: and how woful must the state of that man be? It is a fearful thing to be delivered up unto Satan, but not so fearful as to be delivered up to one's own lusts. But by the way observe this for a ground: God never gives us up, God never forsakes us till we first forsake him. He is still beforehand with us in doing us good; but in point of hurt we ourselves are first, in the point of forsaking we are always beforehand with God. If it should be proposed to thee, whether thou wilt forsake God or the Devil, and thou dost forsake God and choosest the Devil, thou deservest that he should take possession of thee. When a man shall obstinately renew his gross sins, doth he not deserve to be given up? Observe the case in our first parents. God told the woman one thing, the Devil persuades her another; she hearkens to the Devil, and believes him rather than God; and when we shall desire to serve the Devil rather than God, the God that made us, and that made heaven for us, do we not deserve to be given up to him? For "his servants we are whom we obey." And thus we see how fearful a thing it is to be delivered up to ourselves and to the Devils. First they forsake God: God comes and offers himself unto them, I will be thy God, thy Father, thou shalt want nothing: yet notwithstanding Israel "would not hear, they would have none of me." And then if thou wilt have none of me, I will have none of thee, saith God. Then see what follows, God commits the prisoner to himself: "I gave them up to their own heart's lusts," &c. And there is no case so desperate as this, when God shall say: If thou wilt be thine own master, be thine own master. Thus, to be given up to a man's self, is worse than to be given up unto Satan: to

be given up unto Satan may be for thy safety, but there is not a mountain of God's wrath greater, than to give a man up unto himself. We would fain go over the hedges; but when God loves us, "He hedges up our ways." If God love us he will not leave us to ourselves, though we desire it. But when God shall say, Go thy ways, if thou wilt not be kept in, be thy own master, this is a most fearful thing: and this is the third woe. First the soul is polluted with sin; it forsakes God, and God forsakes it: then the world, the flesh, and the Devil, these fill up the room; and then what follows, when these three rule within? But all kinds of sin: and so all kinds of punishment, which is the next woe.

4. And this woe brings in all the curses of Almighty God, an Iliad of evils. Sin calls for its wages, viz. death, death. That is the payment of all: "The wages of sin is death." And this is the next thing which I shall open and explain.

Now in handling hereof, I will first shew how death in general must of necessity follow sin, that thou who hast forsaken the fountain of life, art liable to everlasting death. And for this see some places of Scripture: "The wages of sin is death." Consider then, first, what this wages is. Wages is a thing which must be paid: if you have an hireling, and your hireling receive not his wages, you are sure to hear of it, and God will hear of it too: "Hey which keeps back the wages of the labourer, or the hireling, their cry will come into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." As long as hirelings' wages are unpaid, God's ears are filled with their cries, Pay me my wages, pay me my wages. So sin cries, and it is a dead voice, Pay me my wages, pay me my wages, "the wages of sin is death." And sin never leaves crying, never lets God alone, never gives him rest, till this wages be paid. When Cain had slain Abel, he thought he should never have heard any more on it; but sin hath a voice: "The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me

from the ground." So the Lord saith concerning Sodom: "Because the cry of Sodom is great, and their sin very grievous, therefore I will go down and see, whether they have done according to the cry that is come up into mine ears." As if the Lord had said, It is a loud cry, I can have no rest for it, "therefore I will go down and see," &c. If man had his ears open, he would continually hear sin crying unto God, Pay me my wages, pay me my wages, kill this sinful soul: and though we do not hear it, yet so it is. The dead and doleful sound thereof fills heaven: it makes God say, "I will go down and see," &c. Till sin receive its wages God hath no rest. Again: "Sina taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." I thought sin not to have been so great a matter as it is. We think on a matter of profit or pleasure, and thereupon are enticed to sin; but here is the mischief, sin deceives us. It is a weight, it presses down, it deceives men, it is more than they deemed it to be. The committing of sin is, as it were, running thyself upon the point of God's blade. Sin at first may flatter thee, but it will deceive thee: it is like Joab's kiss to Amasa. "Amasa was not aware of the sword that was in Joab's hand, till he smote it into his ribs that he died." When sin entices thee on by profits and pleasures, thou art not aware that it will slay thee: but thou shalt find "it will be bitterness in the end." A sinner that acts a tragedy in sin, shall have a bloody catastrophe. "Whatc fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed?" Blood and death is the end of the tragedy. "The end of those things is death." "The sting of death is sin." What is sin? "It is the sting of death:" death would not be death, unless sin were in it. Sin is more deadly than death itself; it is sin enableth death to sting, enableth it to hurt and wound us. So that we may look on sin, as the barbarians looked on the viper on Paul's hand: "they expected continually when he would have swollen" and burst. Sin bites like a snake, which is called a fiery serpent, not that the serpent is fiery, but because it puts a man into such a flaming heat by their poison: and such is the sting of sin,

which carries poison in it, that had we but eyes to see our ugliness by it, and how it inflames us, we should continually every day look, when we should burst with it. The apostle useth another metaphor: "Sin when it is accomplished bringeth forth death." ἀποκύει, saith the original, sin goeth, as it were with child, with death. The word is proper to women in labour, who are in torment till they are delivered. Now as if sin were this woman, he useth it in the feminine gender, ἁμαρτία. So it is with sin, sin is in pain, cries out, hath no rest till it be delivered of this dead birth, till it have brought forth death: that is, sin grows great with child with death, and then it not only deserves death, but it produceth and actually brings forth: this is generally so.

Now consider with yourselves, death is a fearful thing. When we come to talk of death, how doth it amaze us? The priests of Nob are brought before Saul for relieving David, and he saith, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech." And this is your case, you shall surely die: death is terrible even to a good man. As appears in Hezekiah, who though he were a good man, yet with how sad a heart doth he entertain the message of death? The news of it affrighted him; it went to his heart, it made him "turn to the wall and weep." How cometh it to pass that we are so careless of death? That we are so full of infidelity, that when the word of God saith, "Thou shalt die Ahimelech," we are not at all moved by it? What, can we think these are fables? Do we think God is not in earnest with us? And by this means we fall into the temptation of Eve, a questioning, whether God's threats are true or not. That which was the deceit of our first parents is ours. Satan disputes not whether sin be lawful or not: whether eating the fruit were unlawful: whether drunkenness, &c. be lawful; he will not deny but it is unlawful. But when God saith, "If thou dost eat, &c. thou shalt die:" he denies it, and saith "ye shall not die." He would hide our eyes from the punishment of sin. Thus we

lost ourselves at the first, and the floods of sin came on in this manner: when we believed not God, when he said, "If thou dost eat thou shalt surely die:" and shall we renew that capital sin of our parents, and think, if we do sin, we shall not die? If any thing in the world will move God to shew us no mercy, it is this, when we slight his judgments, or not believe them. This adds to the height of all our sins, that when God saith, If thou dost live in sin thou shalt die, and yet we will not believe him: that when he shall come and threaten us, as he doth: when he shall curse, and we "shall bless ourselves in our hearts, and say, we shall have peace though we go on," &c. "Theg Lord will not spare that man, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against him." It is no small sin, when we will not believe God: this is as being thirsty before, we now add "drunkenness to our thirst:" that is, when God shall thus pronounce curses, he shall yet bless himself, and say, I hope I shall do well enough for all that. There are two words to that bargain. Then see what follows: "The anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man." We are but now entered into the point; but it would make your hearts ache and throb within you, if you should hear the particulars of it. All that I have done is to persuade you to make a right choice, to take heed of Satan's delusions: "Why will ye die?" "Thereforei cast away your sins, and make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die?" Where the golden candlestick stands, there Christ walks, there he saith, "I am with you." Where the word and sacraments are, there Christ is, and when the word shakes thy heart, take that time, now choose life. "Why will you die?" Consider of the matter: "Moses put before the people life and death, blessing and cursing:" we put life and death before you in a better manner: "hel was a minister of the letter, we of the spirit. Now choose life." But if you will not hearken, but will needs try conclusions with God, therefore, "because you will choose your own conclusions, and will not hearken unto God, because you will needs

try conclusions with him, will not obey him when he calls, therefore he will turn his deaf ear unto you, and when you call and cry, he will not answer." I press this the more, to move you to make a right choice.

But now to turn to the other side, as there is nothing but death for the wages of sin, and as I have shewed you where death is, so give me leave to direct you to the fountain of life. There is life in our blessed Saviour; if we have but an hand of faith to touch him, we shall draw virtue from him to raise us up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. He that "hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life." You have heard of a death that comes by the first Adam and sin, and to that stock of original sin we had from him, we have added a great heap of our own actual sins, and so have "treasuredo up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath." Now here is a great treasure of happiness on the other side in Christ; "have the Son, and have life." The question is now, whether you will choose Christ, and life, or sin, and death? Consider now, the minister stands in God's stead, and beseeches you in his name, he speaks not of himself, but from Christ. When he draws near to thee, with Christ's broken body, and his blood shed, and thou receivest Christ, then, as thy natural life and strength is preserved and increased by these elements, so hast thou also spiritual life by Christ. If a man be kept from nourishment a while, we know what death he must die. If we receive not Christ, we cannot have life, we know that there is life to be had from Christ, and he that shall by a true and lively faith receive Christ, shall have life by him. There is as it were a pair of indentures drawn up between God and a man's soul: there is blood shed, and by it pardon of sin, and life conveyed unto thee on Christ's part. Now if there be faith and repentance on thy part, and thou accept of Christ, as he is offered, then thou mayest say, I "have the Son," and as certainly as I have the bread in my hand, I "shall have

life by him." This I speak but by the way, that the sun might not set in a cloud, that I might not end only in death, but that I might shew that there is a way to recover out of that death, into which we have all naturally precipitated ourselves by our apostacy from God.

SERMON VII:

The Wages of Sin is Death - Romans 6:23

The wages of sin is death.

THE last day, I entered on the declaration of the cursed effects and consequents of sin, and in general shewed that it is the wrath of God; that where sin is, there wrath must follow. As the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians: "As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse." Now all that may be expected from a God highly offended, is comprehended in Scripture by this term, death. Wheresoever sin enters, death must follow: "Death passed over all men, forasmuch as all had sinned:" if we are children of sin, we must be "childrenb of wrath." We are then "children of wrath even as others." Now concerning death in general, I shewed you the last time, that the state of an unconverted man is a dead and desperate estate: he is a slave, it would affright him, if he did but know his own slavery, and what it is that hangs over his head; that there is but a

span betwixt him and death, he could never breathe any free air, he could never be at any rest, he could never be free from fear. The apostle saith, that "Christ came to deliver them that through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." This bondage is a deadly bondage, that when we have done all that we can do, what is the payment of the service? death. And the fear of this deadly bondage, if we were once sensible, if God did open our eyes, and shew us, as he did Belshazzar, our doom written, did we but see it, it would make "our joints loose, and our knees knock one against another." Every day thou livest, thou approachest nearer to this death, to the accomplishment and consummation of it: death without and death within; death in this world and in the world to come.

Not only death thus in gross and in general, but in particular also.

Now to unfold the particulars of death, and to shew you the ingredients of this bitter cup, that we may be weary of our estates, that we may be drawn out of this death, and be made to fly "to the Son, that we may be free indeed;" observe, that death is not here to be understood of a separation of the soul from the body only, but a greater death than that, the death of the soul and body. We have mention made of a first resurrection: "Blessed and happy is he that hath his part in the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power." What is the first resurrection? It is a rising from sin: and what is the second death? it is everlasting damnation. The first death is a death in sin, and the first resurrection is a rising from sin.

And so again for all things, the judgments or troubles that appertain to this death, all a man suffers before. It is not, as fools think, the last blow that fells the tree, but every blow helps forward. It is not the last blow that kills the man, but every blow that goes before makes way

unto it. Every trouble of mind, every anguish, every sickness; all these are so many strokes that shorten our life, and hasten our end, and are as it were so many deaths: therefore, however it is said by the apostle, "it is appointed for all men once to die," yet we see the apostle to the Corinthians, of the great conflicts that he had, saith, "that he was in labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft." "In deaths often;" what is that? That is, however he could die but once, yet these harbingers of death, these stripes, bonds, imprisonments, sicknesses, &c. all of them were as so many deaths, all these were comprehended under this curse, and are parts of death; in as much as he underwent that which was a furtherance to death, he is said to die. So, we read, Pharaoh could say: "Pray unto your God that he would forgive my sins this once, and intreat the Lord that he will take away from me but this death only." Not that the locusts were death, but are said to be so, because they prepared and made way for a natural death. Therefore the great judgments of God are usually in Scripture comprised under this name death. All things that may be expressions of a wrath of an highly provoked God, are comprehended under this name. All the judgments of God that come upon us in this life, or that to come, whether they be spiritual and ghostly, or temporal, are under the name of death.

Now to come to particulars, look particularly on death, and you shall see death begun in this world, and seconded by a death following, the separation of body and soul from God in the world to come.

1. First, in this life he is always a dying man: "Man that is born of a woman," what is he? He is ever spending upon the stock, he is ever wasting like a candle, burning still and spending itself as soon as lighted, till it come to its utter consumption: so he is born to be a dying man, death seizeth upon him as soon as ever it findeth sin in

him. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die:" saith God to Adam, though he lived many years after. How then could this threatening hold true? Yes it did, in regard that presently he fell into a languishing estate, subject and obnoxious to miseries and calamities, the hasteners of it. If a man be condemned to die, suppose he be reprieved, and kept prisoner three or four years, yet we account him but a dead man: and if this man's mind shall be taken up with worldly matters, earthly contentments, purchases or the like, would we not account him a fool or a stupid man, seeing he lightly esteems his condemnation, because the same hour he is not executed? Such is our case, we are, while in our natural condition in this life, dead men, ever tending toward the grave, towards corruption, as the gourd of Jonah, "so soon as ever it begins to sprout forth, there is a worm within," that bites it and causes it to wither. The day that we are born, there is within us the seed of corruption, and that wastes us away with a secret and incurable consumption, that certainly brings death in the end: so that in our very birth begins our progress unto death. A time, a way we have, but it leads unto death. There is a way from the tower to Tyburn, but it is a way to death. Until thou comest to be reconciled unto Christ, every hour tends unto thy death; there is not a day that thou canst truly say, thou livest in, thou art ever posting on to death, death in this world, and eternal death in the world to come.

And as it is thus with us at our coming into the world, so we are to understand it of that little time we have above ground, our days are full of sorrow. But mark when I speak of sorrows here, we must not take them for such afflictions and sorrows as befal God's children, for theirs are blessings unto them: chastisements are tokens of God's love; "For as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten:" saith Christ. Affliction to them is like the dove with an olive-branch in her mouth, to shew that all is well; but take a man that is under the law, and then

every cross, whether it be loss of friends, loss of goods, diseases on his body, all things, every thing to him is a token of God's wrath, not a token of God's love, as it is to God's children; but it is as his impress money, as part of payment of a greater sum, an earnest of the wrath of God, the first part of the payment thereof.

It is the apostles direction, that, among the other armour, we should "get our feet shod," that so we might be able to go through the afflictions we shall meet withal in this life: "Let your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." What, is the shoeing of the feet a part of the armour? Yes: for in the Roman discipline there were things they called galltraps, which were cast in the way before the army, before the horse and men; they had three points, so that which way soever they threw them, there was a point upwards. Now to meet with and prevent this mischief, they had brazen shoes that they might tread upon these galltraps and not be hurt: as we read of Goliah, amongst other armour he had boots of brass. To this it seems the apostle had reference in this metaphorical speech: the meaning is that as we should get the shield of faith and sword of the spirit, so we should have our feet shod, that we might be prepared against all those outward troubles, that we should meet with in the world, which are all of them as so many stings and pricks; all outward crosses I say are so: and what is it that makes all these hurt us? what is it that makes all these as so many deaths unto us but sin? If sin reign in thee and bear rule, that puts a sting into them. It is sin that arms death against us, and it is sin that arms all that goes before death against us. Hast thou been crossed in the loss of thy wife, children, good friends, &c. why the sting of all is from sin, sin it is which makes us feel sorrow. What shall we then do? Why, get thy "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Prepare thyself, get God at peace with thee; and then whatsoever affliction cometh, howsoever it may be a warning piece to another that God's wrath is

coming, yet to thee it is a messenger of peace. Now these outward troubles are the least part of a wicked man's payment, though all these are a part of his death, so long as he remains unreconciled, whatsoever comes upon him whereby he suffers either in himself or in any thing that belongs unto him, they are all tokens of God's wrath, and are the beginnings of his death, in the twenty-sixth of Leviticus, and the twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy, the particulars of it are set down. But this is that I told you the last time, how that the law of God is a perfect law, and nothing is to be added to it, yet the variety of the curses belonging unto a man unreconciled are so many, that the ample book of God cannot contain them: "All the curses which are not written," &c. we read: "Thek Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with emrods, and with a scab, and with itch." See the diversities of plagues, all these are made parts of the curse, The very itch and scab is a part of the payment of God's wrath in hell. "I will send a sword amongst you, which shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant." The book of God comprehends not all the curses that are to light on the wicked. And therefore we find in Zachary, a book, a great folio book, every side whereof was full of curses. "Hem said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying roll, the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof is ten cubits." Here is a big book indeed; but mark what is in it: sure it is not for nought that the Holy Ghost sets down the dimensions of it: there is something questionless in it, the length "thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth ten cubits:" a huge volume. Nor is it a book but a roll, so that the crassitude goeth into the compass, and this is "written thick within and without," and is full of curses against sin. Now for the dimensions of it, compare this place with 1 Kings, chap. 6 ver. 3 and you shall find them the very dimensions of Solomon's porch: a great place where the people were wont to come for the hearing of the word, and not only in that time, but it was continued in the time of Christ and the apostles: for we read how our Saviour walked in

Solomon's porch, and the apostles were in Solomon's porch. So large then was this roll, that it agreed in length and breadth with Solomon's porch, and so many curses were written in it as were able to come in at the church door. It is as if we should see a huge book now, coming in at the church door, that should fill it up. Such a thing was presented unto him, and it was a roll full of curses, and all these curses shall come on those that obey not all the commandments, all shall come upon them and overtake them. "Cursed shalt thou he in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field, cursed in thy basket and in thy store, cursed when thou comest in, and when thou goest forth." Till a man come to receive the promises, till he come to be a son of blessing, till he be in Christ, he is beset so with curses, that if he lie down to sleep, there is a curse on his pillow; if he put his money in his coffer, he lays up a curse with it, which as rust eats it out and cankers it; if he beget a child, he is accursed, there is a curse against his person and his goods, and all that belongs unto him, there is still a curse over his head.

The creditor in this world by the laws of the realm may choose, whether he will have his debtor's person seized on, or his goods and chattels: but not so here, this writ is executed against his person and goods, and all that belongs unto him. So that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." If this be the condition of a wicked man, that his "very blessings be curses," what a woful case is it! There is nothing till he be reconciled to Christ, but hath a curse at the end of it.

Consider that one place in the prophecy of Malachy, where the very blessings are accursed: not only when God sends on him the itch, or botch, or scab, or sword, but in blessings he is accursed: "If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord, I will even send a curse upon you." But how? See how

this curse is threatened: "I will curse your very blessings, yea I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart." Mark, is it not a great blessing that God yet affords the word, that we yet enjoy it; but if we come to hear but formally, to hear it only, and lay it not to heart, God curseth this blessing, yea, "I have cursed it already, saith the Lord." When thou prayest in hypocrisy, thy prayer is a curse to thee. If thou receive the sacrament unworthily, the cup of blessing is a cup of poison, a cup of cursing to thee. Stay not therefore one hour longer quietly in this cursed condition, but fly unto Christ for life and blessing: run to this city of refuge, for otherwise there is a curse at the end of every outward thing that thou enjoyest. "I have cursed these blessings already." It is as sure as if already passed on thee. What a woful thing then it is, think you, to be liable to the curse of God!

2. But what is become of the soul now? Why, if thou didst but see the cursed soul that thou carriest in thy body, it would amaze thee. These outward curses are but flea-bitings to the blow that is given to the soul of an unregenerate man, that deadness of spirit that is within: didst thou but see the curse of God that rests upon the soul of this man, even while he is above ground, it would even astonish thee.

1. Consider there are two kinds of blows that God gives unto the soul of an unregenerate man. The one is a terrible blow. The other, which is the worst of the two, is an insensible blow. The sensible blow is when God lets the conscience out, and makes it fly into the face of a man, when the conscience shall come, and terribly accuse a man for what he hath done. This blow is not so usual as the insensible blow; but this insensible is far more heavy. But as it falls out, that as in this world, sometimes before the glory in heaven, the saints of God have here a glimpse of heaven, and certain communion with God and Christ, certain love tokens, "a white stone, a new name engraven,

which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it:" and this is the testimony of a good conscience, which is hidden joys: privy intercourse is between Christ and them, secret kisses: and as God's children do, as it were, meet with a heaven upon earth sometimes, and are, as we read of Paul, "caught up into the third heaven," which to them is more than all the things in the world besides: so the wicked have sometimes flashes of hell in their consciences. If you had but seen men in the case that I have seen them in, you would say they had an hell within them; they would desire rather, and they have expressed it, to be torn in pieces by wild horses, so they might be freed from the horrors in their consciences. When the conscience recoils and beats back upon itself, as a musket overcharged, it turns a man over and over: and this is a terrible thing. This sometimes God gives men in this world: and mark, where the word is most powerfully preached, there is this froth most raised, which is the cause many desire not to come where the word is taught, because it galls their consciences, and desire the mass rather, because they say, The mass bites not: they desire a dead minister, that would not rub up their consciences, they would not be tormented before the time. They would so, but it shall not be at their choice, God will make them feel here the fire of hell, which they must endure for ever hereafter. This is the sensible blow, when God lets loose the conscience of a wicked man; and he needs no other fire, no other worm to torment, nothing else to plague him: he hath a weapon within him, his own conscience, which if God lets loose, it will be hell enough.

2. But now besides this blow which is not so frequent, there is another more common and more sensible blow. God saith, he is a dead man, and a slave to sin and Satan, and he thinks himself the freest man in the world. God curses and strikes, and he feels it not. This is an insensible blow, and like unto a dead palsy: thou art dead, and yet walkest about, and art merry, though every one that hath his

eyes open seeth death in thy face. O this deadness, this senselessness of heart is the heaviest thing that can befal a sinner in this life. It is the cause the apostle speaks of in the epistle to the Romans, when God delivers up a man "εἰς νοῦν ἀδόκιμον, to a reprobate mind:" and so, in the epistle to the Ephesians, chap. 4 ver. 19 declares such a man to be past feeling; "Who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness even with greediness." Although every sin, as I told you before, is as it were the running a man's self on the point of God's sword, yet these men being past feeling, run on, on, on, to commit sin with greediness, till they come to the very pit of destruction, they run amain to their confusion. When this insensibleness is come upon them, it is not God's goodness that can work upon them. Who art thou that "despisest the riches of God's goodness, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee unto repentance." It is not God's judgments that will move them, they leave no impression. "Andr the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, &c. brass, nor stone and wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." They repented not though they were spared, but worshipped gods which cannot see, nor hear, nor speak, so brutish were they to be led away by stocks and stones. I think the papist gods cannot do it unless it be by cozenage; yet such is their senselessness, that though God's fury be revealed from heaven against papists, such as worship false gods; yet are they so brutish, that they will worship things which can neither hear, nor see, nor walk. "They that made them are like unto them, and so are all they that worship them," as brutish as the stocks themselves: they have no heart to God, but will follow after their puppets and their idols, and such are they also that follow after their "drunkenness, covetousness, &c. Who live in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of riot, that run into all kind of excess;" and marvel that you do not so too. They marvel, that ye that fear

God, can live as ye do; and speak evil of you that be good; call such hypocrites, dissemblers, and I know not what nicknames. This, I say, is a most woful condition; it is that dead blow. When men are not sensible of mercies, of judgments, but run into all excess of sin with greediness: and this is a death begun in this life, even while they are above ground.

But then comes another death, God doth not intend sin shall grow to an infinite weight: "His Spirit shall not always strive with man," but at length God comes and crops him off, and now cometh the consummation of the death begun in this life: now cometh an accursed death.

3. After thou hast lived an accursed life, then cometh an accomplishment of curses.

First, a cursed separation between body and soul, and then of both from God for ever, and this is the last payment. This is that great death which the apostle speaks of, "Who delivered us from that great death." So terrible is that death. This death is but the severing of the body from the soul: this is but the Lord's harbinger, the Lord's serjeant to lay his mace on thee, to bring thee out of this world into a place of everlasting misery, from whence thou shalt never come, till all be satisfied, and this is never.

First, consider the nature of this death, which though every man knoweth, yet few lay to heart. This death, what doth it?

1. It takes the things which thou spentest thy whole life in getting. It robs thee of all the things thou ever hadst: thou hast taken pains to heap and "treasure up goods for many years," presently when this blow is given, all is gone: for honour and preferment, it takes thee from that; pleasure in idle company-keeping, it bars thee of that.

Mark, this is the first thing that death doth, it takes not only away a part of that thou hast, but all, it leaves thee quite naked, as naked as when thou camest into the world: thou thoughtest it was thy happiness to get this and that. Death now begins to unbewitch thee, thou wast bewitched before, when thou didst run after all worldly things: thou wast deceived before, and now it undeceives thee; it makes thee see what a notorious fool thou wast, it unbefools thee. Thou hadst many plots, and many projects, but when thy breath is gone, then without any delay in that very day, saith the psalmist, "all thy thoughts perish," all thy plottings, and projections go away with thy breath: a strange thing, to see a man with Job, the richest man in the east, and yet in the evening, we say, "as poor as Job:" he hath nothing left him now. Now though death takes not all things from thee, yet it takes thee from them all; and so in effect them also from thee; though they remain in thy house, and grounds, yet they are as far removed from thee, as thou from them. All thy goods, all thy books, all thy wealth, all thy friends thou mayest now bid farewell: now adieu for ever, never to see them again. And that is the first thing.

2. Now death rests not there, but cometh "to seize upon thy body." It hath bereaved thee of all that thou possessedst of all thy outward things, they are taken away: now it comes to touch the wicked man's person, and see what then. It toucheth him, it rends his soul from his body: those two loving companions that have so long dwelt together, are now separated. It takes thy soul from thy body: this man doth not deliver up his spirit, as we read of our Saviour: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," or deliver their spirits as Stephen did: but here it is taken from them; it is much against his mind, it is a pulling of himself from himself. This it doth.

3. But then again, when thou art thus pulled asunder, what becomes of the parts separated?

1. First, the body, as soon as the soul is taken from it, hastens to corruption, that must see corruption; yea it becomes so full of corruption, that thy dearest friend cannot then endure to come near unto thee. When the soul is taken from the body, it is observed that of all carcasses that are, man's is the most loathsome, none so odious as that. Abraham loved Sarah well, but when he comes to buy a monument for her, see his expression: "He communes with the men and saith, If it be your mind to sell me the field, that I might bury my dead out of my sight." Though he loved her very well before, yet now she must be buried out of his sight. "It is sown in dishonour," and it is the basest thing that can be: therefore when our Saviour was going near to the place where Lazarus lay, "his sister saith, Lord by this time he stinketh." "Iz have said to corruption, thou art my father," saith Job, "and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." As in the verse before: "The grave is my house, I have made my bed in the darkness." Here then he hath a new kindred, and though before he had affinity with the greatest, yet here he gets a new affinity: "He saith to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister." The worm is our best kindred here; the worm is our best bed; yea worms thy best covering. Thus is it thy father, thy mother, and thy bed: nay, it is thy consumption and destroyer alsob. Thus is it with thy body, it passeth to corruption, that thy best or dearest friend cannot behold it or endure it.

2. But alas! what becomes of thy soul then? Thy soul appears naked, there is no garment to defend it, no proctor appears to plead for it: it is brought singly to the bar, and there it must answer. "It is appointed for all men once to die," but what then? "And after that to come to judgment." "Thed body returns unto the earth from whence

it was taken, but the spirit to God who gave it." All men's spirits, as soon as their bodies and souls are parted, go to God to be disposed of by him where they shall keep their everlasting residence. Consider when thou hearest the bell rung out for a dead man, if thou hadst but the wings of a dove to fly, and couldst fly after him, and appear with him before God's tribunal, to see the account that he must give unto God for all things done in the flesh: and when no account can be given, what a state of misery and horror wouldst thou see him in! and this is a silent kind of judging: the last day of judging shall be with great pomp and solemnity. This is a matter closely carried between God and thyself; but then thou must give an account of all that thou hast received, and then when thou canst not give a good account, then is thy talent taken from thee. Why, saith God, I gave thee learning, how didst thou use it? I gave thee other gifts of mind, how didst thou employ them? God hath given thee wisdom and wealth, moral virtues, meekness, and patience, &c. These are good things, but mark, whatsoever good things thou hadst in this world are now taken from thee. If a man could but see the degrading of the soul, he should see that those moral virtues in which his hope of comfort lay, even these, though they could never bring him to heaven, yet they shall be taken from him. As when a knight is degraded, first his sword is taken from him, then comes one with a hatchet and chops off his golden spurs, and then go Sir Knave. This is the degrading of the soul before the judgment is received: the moral virtues are taken from him, and then see what an ugly soul he hath; he had hope before, now he is without hope: he had some patience in this world, but he made no good use of it; and now his patience is taken from him: and when thou shalt come to a place of torment, and thy hope and patience be taken from thee, what case wilt thou be in then? patience may stay a man up in trouble, and hope may comfort a man up in torment, but both these are taken away. This is a thing

we very seldom think; but did we seriously consider of this first act of the judgment before the sentence, we would not be idle in this world.

3. Then lastly, he is put into an unchangeable estate: so soon as ever death lays God's mace upon him, he is put into an estate of unchangeableness. Such is the terribleness of it, that now, though he yell and groan, and pour out rivers of tears, there is no hope of change.

Consider now what a woful case this is, if some friend of this man's should now come to him, would he not tell him we have often been very merry together, but didst thou know the misery that I am in, thou wouldst be troubled for me: half those tears that I now pour forth would have put me into another place: had I taken the season, but now it is too late. Oh! therefore do thou make use of tears, a little may do it now, hereafter it will be too late.

That is the thing we should now come to speak of, the second death: but think not that I am able to speak of it now: no, that which is everlasting deserves an hour at least in speaking, and an age in thinking of it. Therefore that everlasting torment, horror, and anguish, which God hath reserved for those that make not their peace with him (which is easily done God knows) I shall speak of the next time.

SERMON VIII:

The Second Death - Revelation 21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

THE last day I entered, you know, upon the miserable estate of an unreconciled sinner, at the time of his dissolution, when his soul shall be taken from him, and be presented naked before Christ's tribunal, there to receive according to the works which he hath done in the flesh: and I shewed that the wofulness of that estate consisted in two acts done upon him: the one before he comes to his place, before he is thrust away from God's presence into hell fire; which I shewed you the last day, and did then promise to shew you the other: to wit, the wofulnes of his estate, being once come into his place. The act done to the sinner's soul before he is sent to hell, is the deprivation of his light, the taking away of his talent. For whilst a man is in this world, he hath many good things in him, too good to accompany him to hell: now all these excellent gifts and natural endowments which did adorn a wicked man's soul, before the soul is hurled into hell, must be taken away from him. There is a kind of degradation of the soul, it is depriested as it were, and becomes like a degraded knight that hath his honor taken from him. All the rich talents, and all the rich prizes that were put into the fool's hand, shall be taken from him. Is there any moral virtue? Are there any common graces and natural endowments in the miserable soul? it shall be stripped of all and packed to hell. You that have abused your learning

and gifts that God hath given you, do you think that they shall go with you to hell? No such matter, you shall be very sots and dunces there. All your learning shall be taken from you, and you shall go to hell arrant blockheads. He that had fortitude in this world, shall not carry one drachm of it to hell: all his courage shall then be abased, and his cowardly heart shall faint for fear. Fortitude is a great advantage to a man in distress, but let not the damned soul expect the least advantage: his fortitude which he had whilst he was in the way shall be taken from him. It may be he had patience in this world: now patience is a virtue unfit for hell, therefore shall that be taken from him. A man if he were in most exquisite torment, yet if he had patience it would bear it up with head and shoulders (as we say) but this shall add to his torments, that he shall not have any patience left him, to allay it. A man hath perhaps hope in this world, and as the proverb is, were it not for hope the heart would burst; yet even this too shall be taken away from him, he shall have no hope left him of ever seeing God's face again, or of ever having any more tastes of his favour: and so what hath been said of some, may be said of all his graces and endowments: he shall clean be stripped of all, ere he be sent to hell.

I come now to speak of the place of torment itself, wherein the sinner is to be cast eternally, which is the second act. But think not that I am able to discover the thousandth part of it, no nor any man else: God grant that no soul here present ever come to find by experience what it is. What a woful thing is it; that many men should take more pains to come to this place of torment, than would cost them to go to heaven, that men should willfully run themselves upon the pikes, not considering how painful it is, nor how sharp those pikes are: and this I shall endeavour to my power to set forth unto you. This text declares unto us two things.

1. Who they are for whom this place is provided.

2. The place itself, and the nature of it.

1. For whom the place is provided. The text contains a catalogue of that black roll (though there are many more than are expressed) but here are the grand crimes, the ringleaders to destruction, the mother sins. And here we have in the first place the fearful: whereby is not meant those that are of a timorous nature (for fear simply is not a sin) those that are simply fearful; but such as place their fear on a wrong object, not where it should be: that fear not God, but other things more than God. Such as if affliction and iniquity were put to their choice, will rather choose iniquity than affliction: rather than they will have any cross betide them, rather than they will incur the indignation of a man, rather than they will part with their life and goods for God's cause, will adventure on any thing, "choosing iniquity rather than affliction;" being afraid of what they should not fear, never fearing the great and mighty God: this is the fearful here meant. See how Elihu in Job expresses it: "Thisb hast thou chosen." This, that is, iniquity rather than affliction, to sin rather than to suffer. Christ biddeth us not fear poor vain man, but the omnipotent "God, that is able both to kill, and to cast into hell." The man that feareth his landlord, who is able to turn him out of his house, and doth not fear God, who is able to turn him into hell, this dastardly spirit is one of the captains of those that go to hell, those timorous and cowardly persons, that tremble at the wrath or frowns of men, more than of God. But what is the reason men should thus stand more in fear of men, than of God? Why, it is because they are sensible of what men can do unto their bodies, but they cannot with Moses by faith see what that is that is invisible. They are full of unbelief; for had they faith, they would banish all false fears. See what the Lord saith: "Fear not thou worm Jacob, I will help thee,

saith the Lord." He saith not, Fear not ye men, or thou man, for then perhaps thou mightest be thought to have some power to resist, but "fear not thou worm." A worm (you know) is a poor weak thing, apt to be crushed by every foot; yet be this thy case, be thou a worm, unable to resist the least opposition, yet fear not thou worm. Fear not, why? For "I will help thee, saith the Lord." Couldst thou but believe in God, this would make thee bold; and hadst thou faith thou wouldst not fear. When word was brought to the house of David, that two kings were come up into the land to invade it, it is said, "his heart was moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." But what is the remedy of this fear? See Isaiah, chap. 8 ver. 12. "Fear not their fear, nor be afraid," that was a false and a base fear, "sanctify the Lord in your hearts, and let him be your dread." There is an object of our faith and comfort, and a remedy against fear proposed: "I, even I, am he that comforteth thee, who art thou that shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man that is as grass?" What, art thou one that hast God on thy side? how unworthy art thou of that high favour, if thou fear man? The greatest man that lives cannot shield himself from death, and from a covering of worms, and wilt thou be afraid of a man, and forget the Lord thy Maker? The more thou art taken up with the fear of man, the less thou fearest God; and the more thou rememberest man, the more thou forgettest thy Maker.

You have seen the main, the ringleaders, which are these fearful, faithless, dastardly, unbelieving men.

Now see what the filthy rabble is that followeth after, and they are abominable, murderers, &c. Abominable, that is, unnatural, such as pollute themselves with things not fit to be named, but to be abhorred whether it be by themselves or with others. They are the abominable here meant, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, who were

"set forth to such as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" βδελυγμένοι, such are abominable, being given up to unnatural lust. Let them carry it never so secretly, yet are they here ranked amongst the rest, and shall have their portion in the burning lake.

After these come sorcerers, idolaters, liars: though these may be spoken fairly of by men, yet cannot that shelter them from the wrath of God, they shall likewise have their part in that lake, when they come to a reckoning. If there be, I say, a generation of people that worship these, say what you will of them, when they come to receive their wages, they shall receive their portion in that burning lake with hypocrites: those that make so fair a shew before men, and yet nourish hypocrisy in their hearts, these men, though, in regard of the outward man, they so behave themselves that none can say to them, black is their eye, though they cannot be charged with those notorious things before mentioned; yet if there be nothing but hypocrisy in their hearts, let it be spun with never so fair a web, never so fine a thread, yet they shall have their proportion in the lake, they shall have their part, their portion, &c. Then it seems these of this black guard have a peculiar interest unto this place. And as it is said of Judas, that he was gone "εἰςg τὸν ἴδιον τόπον, to his proper place." So long as a man that is an enemy to Christ, and yields him not obedience, is out of hell, so long is he out of his place. Hell is the place assigned to him, and prepared for him; he hath a share there, and his part and portion he must have, till he is come thither he is but a wanderer. The Evangelist tells us, that the Scribes and Pharisees went about to gain proselytes, and when they had all done, they made them seven times more the children of hell than themselves, filios Gehennæ: so that a father hath not more right in his son, than hell hath in them: he is a vessel of wrath filled top full of iniquity, and a child of the Devil's: so that as we say, the gallows will claim its right, so hell will claim its due. But mistake me not, all

this that I speak concerning hell, is not to terrify and affright men, but by forewarning them to keep them thence. For after I have shewn you the danger, I shall shew a way to escape it, and how the Lord Jesus was given to us to deliver us from this danger: but if you will not hear, but will try conclusions with God, then you must to your proper place, to the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

A lake, it is a river, a flaming river, as Tophet is described to be a lake burning with fire and brimstone, a metaphor taken from the judgment of God on Sodom and Gomorrah, as in that place of St. Jude before mentioned, as also in 2 Pet. chap. 2 ver. 6 where it is said, "God turned the cities of Sodom into ashes, making them an example to all them that should after live ungodly." Mark the judgment of God upon these abominable men, the place where they dwelt is destroyed with fire, and the situation is turned into a lake, full of filthy bituminous stuff called lacus asphaltites, which was made by their burnings. And this is made an instance of the vengeance of God, and an emblem of eternal fire; therefore, said he, "you shall have your portion with Sodom." Nay, shall I speak a greater word (with Christ) and tell you, that though they were so abominable, that the lake was denominated from them, yet it shall be "easier for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you," if you repent not while you may, but go on to despise God's grace. But can there be a greater sin than the sin of Sodom? I answer yes. For make the worst of the sin of Sodom, it is but a sin against nature; but thy impenitency is a sin against grace, and against the Gospel, and therefore deserves a hotter hell, and an higher measure of judgment in this burning pit.

But what is this second death?

2. Sure it hath reference to some first death or other going before. A man would (as it is commonly thought) think that this second death, is opposed to that first death, which is the harbinger to the second, and separates the soul from the body, but it is far otherwise. That, alas, is but a petty thing, and deserves not to be put in the number of deaths. The second death in the text hath relation to the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that hath his portion in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power." The first death is that from whence we are acquitted by the first resurrection, and that is the death; for that is a kind of death (as St. Paul speaking of a wicked and voluptuous widow, saith, she is dead while she liveth) and "the time shall come and now is, when they that are dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;" and again: "Let the dead bury their dead." So that the first resurrection is, when a man, hearing the voice of the minister, is roused up from the sleep of sin and carnal security, and the first death is the opposite thereunto: so that the death of the body is no death at all, for if it were, then this were the third death: for there would be a death of sin, a death of the body, and a death of body and soul: this death of the body is but a flea-biting in comparison of the other two. This second death is the separation of the body and soul from God, and this death is the wages of sin, and God must not, will not lie in arrear to sin, but will pay its wages to the full. All the afflictions a wicked man meeteth withal here, are but as God's press-money, and part of payment of that greater sum: but when he dies, the whole sum comes to be paid: before he did but sip of the cup of God's wrath, but he must then drink up the dregs of it down to the bottom, and this is the second death, it is called death. Now death is a destruction of the parts compounded, a man being compounded of body and soul, both are by this death eternally destroyed. That death (like Sampson pulling down the pillars whereby it was sustained, pulled down the house) draws down the tabernacles of our bodies,

pulls body and soul in sunder. A thing which had little hurt in itself, were it not for the sting of it which makes it fearful: to die is esteemed far worse than to be dead, in regard of the pangs that are in dying, to which death puts an end. This temporal death is in an instant, but this other eternal, whereby we are ever dying, and never dead, for by it we are punished with an everlasting ἀπολεία, and that "from the presence of the Lord by the glory of his power." Than which piece I have no need to add more; for, as much as can be said of men and angels is fully comprehended in it. The apostle terms this a "fearfulk thing indeed," whereon if a man but think, if he hath his wits about him, he would for fear "of it be all his life long subject to bondage." He would scarce draw any free breath, but would still be in bondage and drudgery, till he were delivered. Thus I have declared the nature of the place, and of this second death.

That I may now go farther, know that this lake and this place is the place that the Lord hath provided for his enemies: it is the Lord's slaughter-house; it is called "a place of torments," a place wherein God will shew the accomplishment of his wrath, and revenge upon his enemies. "Thosem mine enemies that would not have me to reign over them, bring them forth, and slay them before my face." Those vessels of wrath, those rebels; the King is enraged, and his wrath is as the "roaring of a lion," which makes all the beasts of the forest to tremble: "Ando where there is the wrath of such a king, the issue thereof must needs be death. The wrath of a king is a messenger of death." How much more fearful is the wrath of the King of kings. God hath sharp arrows, and he sets a wicked man as his butt to shoot at, to shew his strength, and the fierceness of his wrath. See the expression of Job in this case: "The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in me, and the venom thereof hath drunk up my spirits:" in so few words there could not be an higher expression of the wrath of God. First, that God should make thee a butt, and that thou shouldst be

shot at, and that by God's arrows: and then they are not shot by a child, but (as the man is, so is his strength) by the Almighty, by his bow, wherein he draws the arrow to the head. And then again these arrows are poisoned arrows, and such poison as shall drink up all thy soul and spirit: Oh, what a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of such a God: it is a saying of Moses, for it is Moses's psalm: "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? The power of God's anger is unknown." And so in his song, Deut. chap. 32 ver. 22 he sets it out in some measure. "A fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn unto the lowest hell," &c. So that the King being thus provoked, is provoked to curse thee. It is put into the form of thy sentence; this cursing shall be thy lot in hell, it shall be thy very sentence, "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire." There is nothing but cursing: as Job cursed himself, and the day of his birth, so then shall cursing be all thy song: thou wilt curse thyself, that thou didst not hearken to the preacher, that thou wouldst not accept of Christ, and the means of mercy and grace, when it was offered thee: and thou wilt curse the time thou wert acquainted with this man, and that man, and others will curse thee for drawing them to sin: God curses thee, and man curses thee; and God curses not in vain when he curses: others will curse thee, and thou thyself and others; and think then how cursed will be thy condition? All the curses that cannot be thought on, shall rest on the head of an impenitent sinner, to shew God's terrible and just indignation against him. O beloved to deliver us from this curse, Christ the Son of God was "made a curse for us:" the curse is so great, nought else can free us from it. But now that I may rank these punishments of the damned, and bring them for memory's sake into some order, although there be no order there, for it is a place of confusionr, you may consider that the penalties of God's enemies are penalties partly of loss, and partly of sense.

1. Of loss. And that consists in the deprivation of every thing that might administer the least comfort to him; and for this cause hell is termed utter darkness. Now darkness is a privation of all light, so is hell of all comfort, to shew that there is not the least thing that may give thee content, nor is the poorest thing thou canst desire to be had there. Darkness was one of the plagues of Egypt, though there were no kind of sense in it, yet we may think what a plague and vexation it was to them, to sit so long in darkness. The darkness of hell is darker than darkness itself. "They shall never see light," saith the Scripture, they shall not have so much as a glimpse of it: to be cast into this utter darkness, where shall be nothing to administer the least comfort, what an infinite misery will that be? Were it only the loss of the things we now possess and enjoy, of all which death robs us, as pomp, honour, riches, and preferment, this were grievous to a wicked man: these are things death dispossesses a man of, these cannot follow him, nought but thy works accompany thee: thy friends may follow thee to the grave, but there they shall leave thee. To have been happy, and to be miserable, is the greatest woe; to have lived in good fashion, and to be wretched, is the greatest grief. How will this add to the sinner's misery, when he shall say to himself, I had once all good things about me, but have now for my portion nothing but woe: I had a bed of down, but it is now exchanged for a bed of fire: I was once honourable, but now I am full of shame and contempt; this will greatly add to his misery. But all this is nothing, these are but the beginnings of his sorrow in regard of loss: for a man to be rich and wealthy to-day, and to-morrow to be stript of all, and left not worth a groat, to have all swept away, this is a woful case.

2. But if this be so grievous, what is it to lose heaven? Certainly, to lose the highest and greatest good, is the greatest evil, and punishment, that can be inflicted upon a creature. Which makes many divines think, that the penalties of loss are far greater than

those of sense, though they seem not to make that impression. It is another thing to judge of things by sense, than by loss: as for example, a man is greatly troubled with the toothache, and he thinks his case more miserable than any, and thinks no man ever endured so much misery as himself, he judges of his misery by sense: another man is in the consumption, and he hath little or no pain at all; yet if a man come with a right judgment, he will judge his condition far worse than the other's. So take all the pains in hell, though sense may say they are the greatest that can be, yet discreet judgment can say, that the loss of God, the greatest good, is the worst of evils. Now, if thou be a firebrand of hell, thou must be for ever banished from God's presence. Thou base wretch, dost thou think heaven a place for thee? Not so. It is: "without are dogs and sorcerers," &c. Thou art a damned dog, therefore thou must out from God, and from the company of the blessed saints and angels. When Peter saw Moses and Elias with Christ in his transfiguration, though he had but a glimpse of glory, yet he saith, "Itx is good for us to be here." But oh, how infinite good it will be to be in heaven? How shall we be then rapt up with glory, when we shall "be for ever with the Lord, inz whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." On the contrary, how exceeding terrible will it be to be shut out from the presence of God? When God shall say, Avaunt hence, whip out this dog, what doth he here? Let him not defile this room, this is no place for a filthy dog. Oh, the unspeakable horror and dread! Oh, the infinite shame of that man, who is in such a case! But this is not all.

3. There is yet one thing more, the wicked shall not only be banished from God's gracious presence, and cast into hell, but this shall be done in the sight of heaven." The glorious saints of God have continually a sight of God's justice upon sinners, that they may glorify his mercy the more. The Scripture runs much to this purpose:

"If any man worship the beast and his image, the same shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of God and of his holy angels." This in the ninth verse is "the portion of them that worship the beast," that is the pope, "and receive the mark of his name." That is, if any will be an express public or private papist, if any one will be a slave to the pope, see his portion; he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and be banished from the society of holy angels, and be tormented with hell fire in their presence. Oh, what a vexation will this be to the damned, when they shall see others in heaven, and themselves shut out of door? This will cause "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." It will go to their very heart, when they shall see Moses and Aaron, and the prophets, and holy saints in joy and glory, and shall consider and remember, that if they had made use of those means and opportunities of grace, they might have lived in heaven too, whereas now they must be everlastingly tormented in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, and that without any hope of recovery, "Punishedb with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." You know that by the law of Moses, whensoever an offender was to receive his strokes, "The judge was to cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, and he himself was to see it done." So when God comes to give the damned their strokes in hell, (for hell is the place of execution, wherein he "that knows his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes,") he himself will see them beaten in the presence of all his holy angels, and if so, how shameful will their punishment be? when there shall be so many thousand witnesses of it, when they shall be made, as we say, the world's wonder. These are they that shall "rised to everlasting contempt." So in Isaiah, it is said of the damned, "their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched, but they shall be an abhorring to all flesh," and the holy angels and saints shall go forth

and look upon them: those proud ones that scorned God's people here, shall then be abhorred and scorned of them.

4. Add to all this, that he is not only banished from the presence of God for a while, but from all hope of ever seeing God again with comfort. Thy estate is endless and remediless. Whilst thou art here in this life, of a Saul thou mayest become a Paul, and though thou art not yet a beloved son, yet thou mayest come in favour: whilst thou livest under the means of grace, there is yet hope of recovery left thee, it may be this sermon may be the means of thy conversion: but then amongst all thy punishments, this will be one of the greatest, that thou shalt be deprived of all means of recovery, and this shall be another hell to thee in the midst of hell, to think with thyself: I have heard so many sermons and yet have neglected them, I had so many opportunities of grace, and yet have slighted them, this will make the sinner rage, and bite his tongue, and tear himself, to think how that now all means are past. And this is the first penalty, the penalty of loss.

That of the sense succeeds. By the former we are deprived of all the joys and comforts of heaven and earth, of Mount Sion, shut out of "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, deprived of an innumerable company of saints, of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, of God himself the judge of all, and the souls of the saints made perfect." This shall make a sinner curse himself.

Now follows the penalty of torments and sense. When Adam was banished out of Paradise, he had the wide world to walk in still, but it is not so here: thou art not only cast out of heaven, but cast into hell, and art deprived of thy liberty for ever. It is said: "Christ preached to the spirits in prison, them that in the days of Noah were disobedient,

and for this cause are now in prison." Hell is compared to a prison, and a prison indeed it is, and that an odious one. For,

1. Look on thy companions. If a man were to be kept close prisoner, it were a great punishment, but "Go ye cursed," saith God, "into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." To be among such companions is most infinitely miserable, and there is nothing but devils and damned howling ghosts, woful companions: if there be an house possessed with an evil spirit, a man will scarce be hired to live in it, but here the damned spirits, the filthy and cursed host must be thy yoke fellows: suppose there were no torment to suffer, yet to be banished from heaven, and to be tied and yoked to wicked spirits, were a torment sufficient to make the stoutest that ever was, tremble and quake, and be soon weary of it.

2. But it is a place of torment too, a prison where there is a rack, to which thou must be put, and on which thou must be tormented: "I am tormented in this flame," saith Dives. To speak of the torments there, will be matter enough for another hour, but I delight not to dwell on so sad a subject: only this is that which prepares the way to the glad tidings of salvation, therefore I shall a little longer insist upon it. The body and soul, the whole man, shall be there tormented; not the soul only, but even the body too after judgment. Do you think the members of the body, which have been the instruments, shall escape? be raised, and cast into hell to no purpose? Why should God quicken it at the last day, but to break it on the anvil of his wrath, and to make it accompany the soul, as well in torments as in sinning. It is true, the soul is the fountain of all sense, and the body without it hath no sense at all: take away the soul, and you may burn the body, and it will not feel it. Now the soul being the fountain of sense, and the body being united to it, when God shall lay his axe at this root, at this fountain, how dreadful shall it be? How shall the body choose

but suffer too? Should any of us be cast into a fire, what a terrible torment would we account of it? Fire and water, we say, have no mercy; but alas, this fire is nothing to the fire of hell, it is but as painted fire to that which burns for ever and ever. The furnace wherein Nebuchadnezzar commanded those to be thrown that fell not down to the graven image which he had set up, was doubtless at every time a terrible place. Hell is compared to such a furnace; but what shall we think of it, when the king in his wrath shall "command the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual?" Nay, what shall we think of hell, when the King of Heaven shall command it to be heated seventy times seven times hotter than before? When there shall be a fire, and a fire prepared: for so is this fire of Tophet, "It is a pile of much wood." When the King of Heaven shall, as it were, set to work his wisdom, to fit it in the sharpest manner, in procuring such ingredients as may make it rage most, and be most violent: it is a fire prepared for the Devil and his angels, the strongest of creatures, for the punishment of principalities and powers: and if it can master angels, think not but that God hath a fire to roast thy soul. It is the soul that is in hell only till the day of judgment, though the body be not there. A man would think that the soul did not suffer, but philosophy tells us, that the soul suffers mediante corpore, in and by the body: therefore it is a rule in divinity, that whatsoever God doth by means, he can do without means. Though the body be not there, but the soul only, yet God is able, nay doth make the soul as well feel grief, without the body, as he doth by means of the body.

3. But now besides thy fellow-prisoners in that cursed gaol, consider who are thy tormentors, thou that dost continue in impenitency. Now thy tormentors are these three:

1. The Devil.

2. Thyself.

3. God Almighty.

1. The Devil, who is thy deadly enemy, a bloody-minded adversary, a murdering and merciless minded spirit, a murderer from the beginning, a merciless tormentor, who being in plagues and torments, and thereby even at his wits' end, would fain ease himself in tormenting thee. When the Devil, as we read, was dispossessed of a child wherein he was, "he rends and tears, leaves him foaming, that there was little hope of life in him." But now, when a man shall be delivered into the hands of this merciless spirit, when God shall say to the Devil, take him, do what thou wilt with him, do thy worst to him: when thou shalt be thus put into the hands of one that hates thee, and delights in thy ruin, how will he tear thee into pieces? How will he torment thee? In how desperate and wretched a case will thy soul and body be?

2. But the tormentor within thee is far more heavy, painful, and grievous, "that never dying worm" within, the the sting of a guilty and wounded conscience, this, like a sharp dagger, is still stabbing thee, at the very heart. This by a reflecting act upon itself, will cause thee to revenge God's quarrel on thyself; and as a musket overcharged beats back on the shooter, so will it most furiously return upon thee. This is that that smote David, when it is said, "David'sl heart smote him." A man needs no other fire, nor other worm to torment him, than that within him: which, as the worms on the carcass, gnaws on a wretched soul. But there is a greater tormentor than both these behind, and that is,

3. God himself; he is highly offended and enraged at thee, and therefore comes and takes the matter into his own hand, and will himself be executioner of his fury. There is a passage in the

Thessalonians to this purpose, which methinks is more than can be spoken by men or angels: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Mark that God, whom thou hast so highly provoked to wrath, hath a strong hand, and glorious power. He shewed the glory of his power in the making the world, and all things in it; and all that infinite power which he hath manifested in the creation of heaven and earth, shall be engaged in the tormenting of a sinner. Were there a man that should lay a target of brass, or a target of steel on a block, and should then cleave all in sunder at a blow; this would sufficiently manifest his strength: so doth God make manifest his power in crushing thee to pieces. There are still new charges and discharges against sinners, to make his power therein manifest. "What if God, willing to make his power known," saith the apostle, "suffered a while the vessels prepared to destruction?" God will manifest his power by the strength of his stroke on those that rebel against him. Hence proceedeth "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" which is a metaphor taken from one either that hath a great coldness on him, or from the symptoms of a fever.

Add to all that hath been said these two things:

1. The torment shall be everlasting, you shall "desire to die," that your torments may have end: and here you may expect that I should say something of the eternity of the torments of the damned; but I am not able, nor any one else sufficiently to express it: it shall continue ten thousand thousand years, after that an hundred thousand times ten thousand, and yet be no nearer end than at the first beginning. Thou must think of it seriously thyself, and pray to God to reveal it to thy soul, for none else sufficiently can.

2. But besides, as it is everlasting, so is it unabateable. If a man were cast into a fire, the fire coming about him, would in a short time blunt his senses, and take away his feeling, and besides the materials of the fire would soon spend and waste: but it is not so here, here is not the least abatement of the horror, nor the least inch of torment taken away throughout all eternity. It was a poor request of Dives, one would think, that "Lazarus would dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue." A cold comfort, but one drop of water for the present, which would soon be dried, and yet that is denied him, he must have no abatement of his torment. Nor is there any abatement of thy feeling, but thou art kept in full strength; and as long as God is God, shall Tophet burn, and thou feel it.

OBJ. But, may some say, this is preaching indeed, this would affright a man, and make him go hang himself sooner than be converted.

SOL. True, should God let loose the cord of our conscience, it were the way, such would be the terrors of it, to make a man find another cord, did not God restrain him. I desire not by this to hurt you, but to save you. I am a messenger not sent from Abraham, as Dives entreated, but from the God of Abraham, to forewarn you that you come not to that place of torment.

But now, beloved, there is a way to escape this misery, and that is by Jesus Christ. He was for this end called Jesus, "because he saves his people from their sins." And consequently from wrath: which how it is done I shall shew in a word, and that is

1. By Christ Jesus offered for us. And

2. By Christ Jesus offered to us.

By Christ offered for us, he must die for us, and if there be any death more cursed than other, that death must he die; if any more painful, that must he suffer. Thus he undertakes thy cause and suffers what for sin was due to thee.

And then being offered for us, he is offered to us, as we may see in the sacrament, where there are two acts of the minister, the one the breaking the bread, the other the offering it to the people. Thou hast as good warrant to take Christ offered, as thou hast to take the bread and wine, which thou art commanded to receive. Thus I thought good to add something to sweeten the rest, that I might shew that there is a way to be freed from the bitter pains of eternal death.

SERMON IX:

He humbled himself and became obedient unto death - Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

You have heretofore heard that point of Christian doctrine which concerns the knowledge of our misery, and wretched estate by nature. The substance of all is, that we are the children of wrath and disobedience, as well as others. You see then in what state every man stands, before he hath made his peace with God, as long as he stands on terms of rebellion. You see what the Holy Ghost saith: "We were all the sons of disobedience, and children of wrath as well as others." This I tell you, as hath often been declared, not to discourage a sinner, or to drive him to desperation, but because it is fit he should know his estate in which he is. If they will try conclusions with God, if they oppose him, the Lord cometh with a "rod of iron, and will break them in pieces like a potter's vessel;" "Thoseb mine enemies that will not have me to reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me." It is fit every man should know this; this part is only for this end, that it may awaken us; otherwise to what purpose do we preach unto you? Till the law awaken us, we sleek securely in our sins, till the dreadful trumpet of Mount Sinai comes with thundering and lightning: "Awake thou that sleepest," &c. Unless this awaken us, in what case are we? Sinful men are as sleepers, that are a dreaming, as the apostle speaksd. A sleeping sinner will be a dreaming sinner; he never sees things as they are in their proper shape: but he thinks with the church of Laodicea, "That he is rich, and wants nothing; whereas he is poor, miserable, blind and naked." He thinks he shall be admitted into heaven as soon as the proudest: but this is a dream; "As the hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but when he awakes behold he is empty: or as a thirsty man that dreams he drinketh; but awakes, and behold he is faint." Thus it is with us, we think we are entering upon the suburbs of heaven, and yet we are but in a dream, and in a sleep.

Now being thus awaked, consider with thyself what thou hast to do, when the dreadful trumpet of the law hath awakened thee, consider

thy state; if thou sleepest this night in thy sins, perhaps hell fire may be thy portion before the morning. It were better for thee therefore to awake, before the flames of hell fire awake thee. Consider likewise that thou must not be led by thyself, thou must renounce thine own will. Our estates may be pleasing unto us, to enjoy in a dream our heart's lusts here on earth; but consider, unless thou cross thy will here, it shall be crossed hereafter: yea, it shall be the main cross a man shall have in hell, besides the eternal weight of God's wrath, that he can will or desire nothing, but he shall be crossed in it: not the least thing he desires, but he shall have the contrary, world without end: learn then what a woful thing it is to be our own lords, to follow our own lusts and pleasures, see what we shall gain by it: never shalt thou enjoy the least portion of thy will in the world to come; if thou wouldst have but a drop of cold water, thou shalt be crossed in it. There is nothing thou desirest but thou shalt have the opposite to it.

Thus, having truly and plainly shewed our sinfulness, wretchedness, and cursedness by nature, I come unto the second part which I proposed, to wit: Our remedy, or our redemption by Christ. And God forbid that he should create man the best of his visible creatures for destruction: "What gain and profit is there in our blood? God is full of grace and compassion, and he considers that we are but dust." And happy are we that we are but dust, Had we been more glorious creatures, as angels, we had not had the benefit of a saviour. When they rebelled, God considered their metal; and as with an high hand they rebelled, "Sog the Lord reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." They fell without a redeemer; it is well for us that God considereth that we are but dust; "For by Jesus Christ he delivereth us from the wrath to come." It had been better for us never to have been born, than to be born firebrands of hell. But now the point is, that we are "brandsi

plucked out of the fire." It is fit therefore we should know who is our redeemer.

Now, as I have shewed you the last day, it is Jesus Christ: and here consider,

1. That Christ Jesus was offered for us, for the satisfaction of God's justice, and this is his priestly office.

2. As there was no "remission without shedding of blood," therefore after the blood is shed, and the priest offered himself, there comes a second thing, else we are never the better: and that is Christ offered to us: this makes up our comfort. Many talk of the extent of Christ's death and passion, saying, he died sufficiently for us, which is an improper speech: for what comfort were this, that Christ was offered for us, if there were no more? A bare sufficiency in Christ serves not the turn: this were a cold comfort: as if a man that were in debt, and afraid of every serjeant and every sheriff, should be told, Sir, there is money enough in the king's exchequer to discharge all your debts. This is very true, but what is that to him? What comfort hath he by it, unless the king make him an offer to come, and take freely for his discharge? And a cold comfort were it to us to know Christ to be sufficient for us, unless he invite us to take freely of the waters of life, "Ho, every one of you that thirsteth, come you to the waters." Thus, unless Christ be offered to us, as well as for us, we are never the nearer.

Now to make this appear; observe that in every sacrament there are two acts of the minister. The one hath relation to God, a commemoration of the sacrifice, in which respect the ancient fathers called it a sacrifice: the other, the breaking of the bread, and pouring out of the wine; wherein there is a commemoration of the body broken, and the blood shed, not as they are concomitants, the wine

in the bread, as the foolish papists dream, for that were rather a commemoration of his life than of his death, when the blood runs in the veins. The commemoration of Christ's death is made by separation of the blood from the body; and as there is one act of the minister in consecrating by breaking the body, and pouring out the blood, so there is a second act which is ministerial. When the minister saith, "Take, eat, this is my body;" as if Christ were present, and said, "Come, take my body;" thou hast as free an interest to it, as when thou art invited to thy friend's table thou hast a right to the meat before thee. So that as Christ was once offered for thee, so he is, in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, offered to thee: and what now should hinder thee; unless thou art one that will obstinately oppose thy own salvation, and say, "I will not have this man to rule over me," thou canst not miscarry. But if thou wilt be thine own lord, perish in thine infidelity. Here be the keys of the kingdom of heaven given unto God's ministers; unless thou wilfully oppose thine own salvation, and shut the door of salvation which Christ hath opened so wide for thee. See, the ways of God are plain. Christ hath paid a great price for thee; and then, as great as it is, he offers it to thee.

Now for the former of these, which is Christ's satisfaction made unto the Father for us, I made choice of this place of Scripture, which sets it out particularly. Herein two things are to be observed.

1. The person who it is that will thus humble himself. The apostle grounds his exhortation on the fourth verse; where he tells us, we ought not to "look every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." If Christ had looked only on his own things, he might have saved himself a great deal of labour and pains. He being the Son of God, might, as soon as he was born, have challenged a seat with God in glory: he need not have gone per viam, he might be comprehensor

in meta: but he would pass on to his journey's end in a thorny and troublesome way. "Let then the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus;" who minded not his own things, but the good of others.

2. What it was wherein he humbled himself. "He took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient unto the death of the cross." The highest humiliation that can be, that he who is above all praise, whom angels adored, that he should be brought from heaven to earth; and not only be a pilgrim there, but have a sorrowful and pitiful pilgrimage; and at last be cut off by a shameful death from the land of the living. This humiliation hath no parallel.

The depth of the humiliation consists in the height of the person thus humbled; and were not he so high, it could have done us no good. It is no small satisfaction that can appease God's wrath: therefore the apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of Melchisedech, the type of Christ, concludes, "how great this man was."

Consider the invaluable price that was paid for thee, and how great he was who paid it; who being in the form of God, he who was fellow, and fellow-like with God, as good as himself, as great as himself, was thus humbled. It was the second person in the sacred Trinity, he, and no other, that was thus humbled for thee: he was weary for thee, and reviled for thee, sweated and fainted for thee, hungered for thee, and was buffeted for thee. It was he, the second person of the blessed Trinity, in proper speech, without either trope or figure, shed his blood for thee, died for thee; and suffered all these things in his assumed nature, taking on him the form of a servant, though not in his divine. He remaining God alone could not die, but die fain he would for thee; therefore he took thy nature on him, that he might die for thee in that assumed nature. He took not on him the nature of

angels, "but the seed of Abraham." He being the fountain of life, and the prime of our life, "and without shedding of blood" no redemption can be wrought, having not blood to shed as God, therefore took our nature on him; as it is said: "Sacrificen and offering thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast prepared me: then, said I, lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." As if he should have said, Lord, I am not able to accomplish thy will, or to be subject to thee in thy nature; therefore thou hast made me a man, that in the form of a servant I might shew obedience, which I could not while I was in nature equal unto thee. Now consider how great this person is that hath suffered all for thee. "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth:" to have a great prince bound like a thief, arraigned, and executed; the consideration of this state of the person would move a stony heart. "Hep is the Lord of lords, and King of kings."

Amongst men, the father is more honourable than the son, and the son is but a servant, until he be emancipated: but it is not so in the divinity; but the Father and the Son are both alike honourable.

Among men, the son hath the same specifical nature with the father, but not the same individual: but it is not so in the divinity; the Father and the Son have the self same individual nature. "I and my Father are one," therefore there must be an equality. The Pharisees themselves could draw this conclusion, that if he were the Son of God, he was equal with God. "Thereforer the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he said, God was his father, making himself equal with God." A man would think how could that follow? He was but God's son; but God's son must be equal with the father. In making himself God's son, he made himself equal with God: and therefore know, upon this, and by this stands the point of our

redemption. If a pure and holy angel had suffered never so much, it would not have availed for our redemption. It is a price no man nor angel must meddle withal, it will require a greater price. It was God himself that suffered in his assumed nature: he, and no other person; (for we must understand, though Christ took on him the nature of a man, yet not the person of a man) here stands the point, the second person in the Trinity is the suppositum of all this humiliation: and therefore observe when the point of suffering comes, there is a remarkable speech. The Father seemeth to say concerning the Son, that it was against his heart to smite him. The expression was a lively one: it went to his heart to smite one that was his equal, that did him no wrong: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." You know of whom it is spoken by Matthew, "It will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered." "The Lord is ready to break him." The sword was, as it were, unwilling to smite. "The man that is my fellow?" A blow lighting on God's fellow, equal with God, of what value is it? Consider the difference betwixt a man and a man: the state of a prince makes great odds between that is done to him, and that is done to another man. When David would adventure himself into the battle, "Thou shalt," say they, "go no more with us, lest thou quench the light of Israel;" and more fully: "Thouy art worth ten thousand of us." They would not hazard the person of the king in the battle, why? because "thou art worth ten thousand of us." The dignity of a prince is so great, that ten thousand will not countervail the loss of him. If this be the esteem and worth of David, what is the worth of David's Prince? If thus with a king, what with the King of kings, and Lord of lords? This is a great ground of the sufficiency of Christ's suffering. "If the blood of bulls and goats sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?" It is not the offering of the body

only, but he did it "through his eternal spirit." When the martyrs and saints offered themselves a sacrifice, they offered it through the flames of their love, and therefore embraced the stake; and love is described as strong as death: but Christ did not offer his sacrifice with the flames of his love, though love was in him the greatest that ever was; but with the everlasting flames of his Godhead and Deity; with that fire from heaven, which is a consuming fire? He did the deed, that will purge our consciences from dead works. "Takea heed unto yourselves, and to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood:" God hath purchased the Church with his own blood: whose blood? God's blood. The blood of God must be shed. "He who thought it no robbery to be equal with God," must shed his own blood: as Zippora said to Moses: "A bloody husband hast thou been to me." So may Christ say to his Church: A bloody spouse hast thou been to me, that my blood must be shed for thee: "Hadc they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" that is, they would not have crucified God. He that was crucified, was the glorious Lord God. "You denied the Holy One, and killed the Prince of life." Here is the matter, unless the Prince of life had been killed, thou couldst not have life. This the apostle sets down as the ground of all, before he comes to the particularities of his humiliation; and sets down who it was who was thus humbled: he whom the "heaven of heavens could not contain," he must descend into the lowermost parts of the earth; that is a descent indeed. His humiliation appears in this, that he who was thus high became a man; "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In this humiliation consider, I say, these two points.

1. The person who was humbled.

2. The degrees of his humiliation. Some things have regard to the whole course of his life, others to the conclusion or period of his life. All his life from his incarnation to his passion, was a continual thread of humiliation from his cradle to his cross, from his womb to his tomb: so here is set down the humbled life of our blessed Saviour. For I would not have you think his humiliation consisted only in coming to the cross, when they so mercilessly handled him: it cost him more than so: as sinners have the curse of God on them in their life, as well as an accursed death. Though the heat came at the end of the tragedy, yet his whole life was a continual suffering. Consider the degrees of it.

1. He made himself of no reputation, he emptied himself. It was the second person in the Trinity that thus humbled, and emptied himself (not in his divine nature, but his assumed,) of all his transcendent endowments.

Consider the particulars of it, he took on him the form of a servant; was not this a great humiliation? That the second person in the Trinity should stoop so low as to take on him the nature of one, who is not worth the looking on? That he should take dust and ashes upon him. God's greatness is thus expressed: "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things in heaven, and in the earth: What humiliation is that? Compare these two humiliations together. It is an humiliation, to cast but his eye upon the heavens, to look upon the most glorious of all his works, to look upon the angels, but what is man that thou so regardest him? That thou shouldst not only look upon him, but take him up, and make him an inmate under thine own roof? This is a greater abasement, but here is a further degree, Christ during the time of his pilgrimage was content to deprive himself of his glory, that he now enjoys. By reason of his hypostatical union with the

Godhead, he deserves all honour and glory; "Whenf he brought his first begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels worship him." Every knee bows to him that is thus highly exalted. We see Christ crowned with glory and honour, all dominion and power being made subject unto him, yet he for thirty-three years and a half was content to be exiled from his father's court. "Glorify thou me with the glory I had with thee before the world was;" which is expounded in the Proverbs, where the wisdom of God was shewn before the world was framed. "Thenh I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;" this was the work, before the foundation of the world, which God was doing, the Father was glorifying the Son, and the Son was glorifying the Father. The Father took infinite delight in the Son, and the Son took infinite delight in the Father, and the Holy Ghost in them both. To be deprived of such a sight, and such a glory as this, and for thy sake to be banished from that high court, where not to enjoy that fulness of joy, was an emptying of himself: yet all this he did for thee.

2. He minded not his own things; if he had, he might have presently sat at God's right hand, where is fulness of joy for evermore: but his bowels yearned on us, and he took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in shape of a man, that is, as an ordinary man: we know what the nature of servitude is. Every man naturally desires liberty, but Christ that he might make thee free, was content to be bound as an apprentice, and endure a servile estate. Christ both in respect of God and man took on him the form of a servant.

1. For him to be God's servant was an humiliation, though for us, it be the greatest honour to be God's servants. St. Paul makes it his prime epithet: "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ." And David calls himself the servant of the Lord: "O Lord I am thy servant, truly I am thy servant." But it was an humiliation for Christ to become God's

servant, and to take a nature on him, that he might say: "My father is greater than I; behold my Father and I were one," but now taking on me a human nature, I am become his servant: "Behold my servant in whom I am well pleased;" by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. There is much difference in servants. A free servant and a bond servant. A very bondman doth Christ make himself, being man, and accounts it as great an honour as may be, not only to be his father's servant, but his bondman. Can I shew that there is any such humiliation as this? Look on, "Sacrificek and burnt offerings thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me;" these words have relation to that of the Psalmist, "Sacrifice and burnt offerings thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast thou opened;" it is in the margin, mine ears hast thou digged, or hast thou bored. The boring of the ear was an expression of everlasting servitude. Another servant that had not yet his ear bored, might be free at the year of redemption, at the seventh year: but if not, his ear was bored that he might be a servant for ever according to that: "He that loved his service so well as to have his ear bored, is a servant for evermore. Mine ear Lord hast thou bored, I will be thy servant for ever." Christ took on him the form of such a servant; nay Christ was more than an ordinary slave. He was one bound to an everlasting slavery, for he was the son of an handmaid: now the children of an handmaid were not to go forth at the year of jubilee. "Then wife and her children shall be her masters, and he shall go out by himself:" meaning thus: He that was the son of an handmaid, must be bound. Partus sequitur ventrem. Now that Christ was the son of an handmaid, we have Mary's own confession: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, and he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid." Hence David saith, "Op Lord I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid:" I am not only thy servant, but thy bond servant: I am he who was born in thy house: and out of thy house I will never go. Thus is Christ a servant in respect of God.

But it is not only thus, he is not only a servant in regard of God, but he took on him the form of a servant in respect of men too. Look what relations are between men, that have superiority, and subjects; Christ, who was born a free child, yet made himself a servant unto man: he had a reputed father, but a true, and a natural mother: from the twelfth year of his age, till the thirtieth, he went with them, and was subject unto them. No apprentice was more subject to his master in his trade, than he was to his reputed father; he kept him close unto his trade. Look on him out of the family, in the commonwealth: he paid tribute. He might stand upon his privilege: "Of whom do the kings of the earth exact tribute?" They answer, "Of strangers: Then are the children free." If the son of a temporary prince be free, how much more shall the Son of God be free? But yet it behoves us to fulfil all righteousness. He would be a subject unto Cæsar, and in recognition of his subjection he would pay tribute, though he fetched it out of the fish's belly. Hence the apostle tells us, "For this cause pay you tribute, to testify your subjection." Neither was Christ only a servant to them who were in some authority, but generally among men he was in the state of a servant. "Thes son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Not to be a master to command, and have others to attend him; but he came to be a servant; see in what esteem he was had. We account a servant in the next degree unto a beast; for liberty is that whereby a man breathes, and a man were better be dead, than have his liberty took from him; and so Christ was not only a bondman in regard of his Father, but in regard of men. In the estimation of men he was vilified for a bondman: and that will appear by the price for which he was sold. It was thirty pieces of silver. To consider what the price was, is a considerable part of his passion. There is a prophecy cited out of Jeremiah in your books, but it is Zachariah; though I have seen some copies which mentioned neither, but only, "according to the words of the prophet;" it is: "Cast it unto the potter,

a goodly piece that I was priced at of them." He speaks it with disdain; "Andt I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord." There is a place parallel to it, which will expound it clearly; "If an ox shall push a man-servant, or a maid-servant that he die, the owner of the ox shall give to the master of the servant thirty shekels, and the ox shall be stoned." It was the very price that was paid for a slave: thirty shekels, which is three pound fifteen in our money. A base estimation they had of Christ, as if he were a bondman; the same price that was given for a slave that was killed by an ox, for this same price was he sold. In the twelfth book of Josephus, chap. III. "When Ptolomæus Philadelphus would redeem all the Jews which were bondmen, it is set down what he paid for a slave. There is set down a great sum of money, and the number of the slaves: here stands the valuation; divide the number of slaves, and you shall find the quotient for every man one hundred and twenty drachms; four drachms make a shekel, thirty shekels was the ordinary rate cried in the market for the price of a bondman." Thus Christ took on him the form of a bondman, not only God's bondman, but in the estimation of men so despicable, that they valued him at no higher rate than thirty pieces of silver. This is but the beginning and entrance on Christ's humiliation, to be made in the similitude of sinful flesh, and in the verity of true flesh. Christ had all infirmities, as weariness, hunger, thirst, which follow a sinful man, which were not sinful: such a nature he took upon him, and then he became obedient both by active and passive obedience. That which remains of the pains of his life, to the passage of his doleful death, we will speak of the next time.

SERMON X:

He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, Part 2- Philippians 2:5-8

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

IN these words and those that went before, you see there is delivered unto us the point of the humiliation of the Son of God. It stands in this.

1. That he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. God the Son, the second person in the blessed Trinity did assume our dust and ashes, unto the unity of his own sacred person.

2. This human nature being thus assumed, he was content to deprive himself a long time of that estate of glory, which he might have in our human nature always (after its assumption) enjoyed, and in that time was as obedient as the meanest and poorest servant of his father. Nor was he only actively, but passively obedient; "He was obedient unto the death:" He was content to lay down his life for our redemption. And it was not every death that would serve the turn, but it must be death of the cross, the most accursed shameful and painful death,

that which was most suitable, and best able to answer the wrath of God.

First, he humbled himself by taking our nature upon him: "He that thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a man." If it were an abasement for God to look upon heaven the most glorious of his works, how much more to take upon him a clod, or piece of this earth, and unite it to his own sacred person for ever. This was a descending indeed, he descended first that he might ascend. "Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" That is, he descended into the womb of the virgin; and it was a great abasement indeed for him thus to descend: wherefore the Psalmist, speaking of the wonderful framing of the babe in the womb, saith: "Myb substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth." So that we see God descended into the lowermost parts of the earth, and there was he fashioned. A great humiliation it was for him to be thus enclosed. Thus did he humble himself in taking our nature. Had he taken the form of a king upon him, it had been a great humiliation; how much more, when he took on him the form of a servant? "He came not in a state to be ministered unto, but to minister." As we shewed the last day. Nor was he only his father's servant, but a servant of servants, and therein underwent Canaan's curse: "A servant of servants shalt thou be."d Our Saviour became such a servant. He was the author of freedom. "If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed." He, I say, who was the king's son and so the most free, the author of it to all that enjoy any spiritual freedom, became a servant, that we which were servants might be made free.

But besides, it is added here, that he humbled himself. Having taken on him the form of a servant, he humbled himself. Where we may

observe what made the suffering of our Saviour so meritorious: it was because it was active, free and voluntary. Our passions are contrary to our will: we are drawn to it, as it is said of Peter: "When thou art old, they shall lead thee whither thou wouldst not." Peter died the same death our Saviour did, according to the external passion; but they led him, whither he would not. Our Saviour was an actor in it; humbled himself. A bare suffering God regards not so much; but when it is done willingly, and in obedience to God. And as he was obedient in his death, so also in his other passions. In the Gospel according to St. John, whereas the text reads, "he was troubled;" the marginal note hath it, according to the original Greek, ἐαυτὸν ἐτάραξεν, he troubled himself: he was the "author of his own sufferings." He was not humbled as a mere patient; but he humbled himself: and so it is said in Scripture oft, "He gave himself for us," and in all his passive obedience he had an eye to do the will of God. The merit of his passive obedience ariseth from a mixture with his active. This was a great part of his priesthood, his humbling. And how doth he take his priesthood upon him? it was his father's call. "Hej was called unto it as was Aaron. No man," saith the apostle, "taketh this honour upon him, but he that is called." Now Christ being called to it, he did it to follow his call. And thus he did it actively: it was not a bare suffering as those in hell suffer, but according to his father's call. Observe, that place taken out of the Psalm, "I am come to do thy will, O God." What, was it only in its active obedience? No, it was thy will that he should suffer; as the words following in the tenth verse import: "By the which will we are sanctified, and by the body of Jesus Christ once offered:" So that Christ offered up himself to do his father's will; so that his passive obedience was in his active. So, "thereforel doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down." Our Saviour, when he laid down his life, put it off, as a man puts off his cloak, and lays it from him.

They wondered that he was dead so soon, it was because himself laid down his life. His soul then was not dragged or forced out of his body. It was not passive but active obedience. "No man taketh it from me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up. This had I from my Father." They are grossly deceived then, that say Christ's active obedience was not free and voluntary, because he was commanded, which none can deny. Thus Christ's offering was a free-will offering, though it was a most bitter one; yet, this being a part of his Father's will, he went as voluntarily to the pains of the cross, as thou dost to thy dinner, when thou art throughly hungry. "For his meat and his drink was to do his Father's will." And this makes it of so much worth and efficacy, that he did it willingly: see it in the type that went before him, in Isaac; Isaac was grown up, he was no babe, he was able to carry wood enough to burn himself when he went to be sacrificed; and therefore, sure he had strength: if Isaac had pleased, he might have ran away from the old man his father; yet he suffers himself to be bound, and to be laid upon the wood. A true type of our Saviour: his also was a free-will offering, and so a sweet smelling sacrifice unto God. It being the highest active obedience, it presently pacifieth the wrath of his Father. "He humbled himself, and became obedient." This obedience of our Saviour is the matter and ground of our justification. "Asn by the offence of one, judgment came on all unto condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came on all to justification of life." By the obedience of this blessed Saviour many are made righteous, so that now our Saviour's obedience followeth next.

Now this obedience is double. Active or passive.

1. Active; and this was that whereby he did all the will of his Father. The reason why he came into the world, if we look to the place before alleged, will appear: "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he

saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not have, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." When he cometh into the world, saith he, "Lo, I come:" For what? "to do thy will, O God." The reason why he came into the world, was, that he might be obedient unto his father: "Thus it behoveth us," saith he to John, "to fulfil all righteousness." John wondered that he that was pure and spotless, should come to him to be baptized. He knew baptism presupposed some sin or blot, some stain or corruption to be washed off; and therefore it is said, "That there came unto him all the land of Judea to be baptized, confessing their sins." And sure if one who had been but a bare man should have come to John, and say, he had no sin, and yet desired to have been baptized by him, he had no right to baptism: yet our Saviour saith, "Let alone, let it be so, that we may fulfil all righteousness." I have no need indeed in regard of myself: but I have taken upon me the form of a servant; and therefore, what the lowest of them must do: therefore was I circumcised, and therefore was I baptized. "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." And he fulfilled it to the utmost, both in his active and passive obedience.

Now for his active obedience, it had a double τετέλεσται, or consummatum est. First, for his active obedience in the whole course of his life.

"I have glorified thy name, and finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Would you know what it is to glorify God in this world? It is to finish the work which he giveth us to do. Art thou a minister? if thou wouldst glorify God, finish the work he gave thee to do; then mayest thou say, "Glorify thou me with thy glory." But now Christ's work was not all ended when he had finished it; the greatest part was

behind, to wit, his passive obedience: all the works of his life were done; of which actions there Christ is to be understood: but then cometh his passion, and that being finished, there is something to do yet after that; for he was to rise "again to our justification:" but for the oblation of the sacrifice, it was fully finished. If we look upon our blessed Saviour in the whole course of his life. For,

1. Though he lived in a whole world of sin, yet he was free from all manner of sin.

2. He was enriched with all manner of good works, graces and virtue. Christ had both of these. He was free from any spot of sin, though in the midst of a wicked world; and there was nothing in him which could expose him to any temptations. He was continually assaulted, and yet he was spotless. "The Prince of the world came, and yet he found nothing in him." Satan could find nothing in him, whereon to fasten any temptation. "Such an high priest became us who was holy and harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

There is the purity of his nature, he is holy, and in his carriage harmless, he did no man hurt. Undefiled, a pure and innocent Lamb, "a Lamb without blemish, separate from sinners," and could not contract any guilt of sin. Though he conversed with publicans and sinners at the table, yet they could not infect him. "He knew no sin, neither was there guile found in him." Therefore we see when it comes to the point that the Devil would tempt him, yet he himself must needs say, "What have I to do with thee thou Holy One of God?" He is forced to acknowledge him to be so. And so if we look on the place, where he saith, "Is do the will of my Father always," there likewise he shews himself the holy one of God. In a word, as he was thus obedient unto God, so was he subject to men too; to his father in the family, and to Cæsar in the commonwealth:" as he taught, he did:

subjection towards governors was his doctrine, and rather than he would not pay tribute, he would have it out of the fish's belly: to shew a recognition of his subjection unto higher powers, the text tells us, "He went about doing good. This man," say they, "hath done all things well." And at the last cast, when all the quarrels and accusations were brought against him, they could bring nothing that could hold water; that he could boldly challenge them all, as it were: "Which of you can accuse me of sin?" you that pick so many holes in my coat, come forth, spare me not, accuse me; yet at the last he is accounted a just man. Judas himself could acknowledge him to be blameless, and that "he had sinned in betraying his innocent blood." Pilate's wife could say to her husband: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man:" and Pilate himself washed his hands, and would be free from the blood of that innocent person. The thief crucified with him, acquits him; his whole life was a perfect obedience to the law of God. "Christ is the end of the law; Thatu the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us;" not by us, we are not able to fulfil the law; but in us, Christ did it for us: and the Father is better pleased with the thirty-three years' hearty obedience of his Son, than if Adam, and all his posterity had been obedient throughout the whole course of the world: so acceptable was this obedience to God. And thus much of his active obedience.

2. Now for his passive obedience, his suffering. If our Saviour will be a sacrifice, he must be used like one; he must be slain, if he will make satisfaction to his Father for us. He must for our eating sour grapes, have his own teeth set on edge. Consider his humiliation both in life and death; if we look on the service of Jacob, under his uncle Laban, his "service was an hard service, twice seven years did he serve: the drought consumed him by day, and the frost by night, and the sleep departed from his eyes; twenty years' hard service; fourteen years for his two wives, and six years for his cattle." Our Saviour spent thirty-

three years in his hard service; and oft did the sleep depart from his eyes. When Israel came to appear before Pharoah, "Myy days," saith he, "have been one hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of thy servant been." The true Israelite might say more. Jacob's days were few, but as few as they were, they were one hundred and thirty years; but if we look upon our Saviour's days, they were scarce a quarter so many.

And that is our Saviour's humiliation, that he was cut off "in the midst of his days." If we look into the psalm, we shall find it a curse on the "bloody and deceitful man, that he shall not live out half his days." The lively part of a man's age, from Moses's time to this day, in that psalm of Moses, "is three score years and ten." Half this is thirty-five years; and our Saviour is taken off before this thirty-five is expired. He was to take on him all the curses due to sinners, to the bloody and deceitful man: he is cut off and cropt off in the midst of his vigour, he that is that Melchisedech, "thata hath neither beginning nor end of days, was cut off as a branch, lopt off as a twig from the land of the living." He is pulled out, so his days were few, far fewer than Jacob's: he was not suffered to live out half his days: yet if we look upon his days they were evil too; evil enough as few as they were, full of trouble, and full of misery: from his first coming into the world to his last going out.

1. When he did descend into the lowermost part of the earth, He was nine months in the womb of his mother: and if we take the opinion of the schoolmen, he had his full understanding and judgment all that time, the free use of sense and reason, though I do not aver it to be a truth; only I say, if it be so, it makes his humiliation insupportable. What an extreme burden would it be to us to be so long in the womb, and in ripe understanding; therefore there was somewhat in that. But now:

2. Look at his coming forth into the world: though his mother were in her own city, yet he was so despicable, that "there was not room for them at the inn." Our Saviour that should, one would think, have been brought into a stately palace, was fain to have his lodging among the beasts, and a cratch for his cradle. The wise men, when they came to worship him, found him in no better case: and what a disgrace was it, instead of a palace, the king of the east should find our Saviour in a cratch.

3. And now when eight days are over, he must have his skin cut off, he must be circumcised, and give the first payment or earnest of his blood. How painful and irksome a thing circumcision was, appears by that story in Gen. chap. 34. Where the sons of Jacob offering the Shechemites the condition of circumcision, and they accepting it, it was so troublesome a thing, that by reason of their soreness and weakness by it, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, slew a whole city. The pain was so great that they could not manage their weapons, therefore two men slew thousands of them. Our blessed Saviour was thus served, when the eight days were over he was thus made sore, and this was the first effusion of his blood.

4. After the eight days are over, then come the forty days, and then he must be carried a long journey to be offered up to the Lord, and his mother, as if she had brought an unclean and impure thing into the world, must be cleansed and purified. And then she came to offer a sacrifice according to the law of the Lord. "A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons:" but was this the law? It were good if the law were looked into. The law is this: "Shed shall bring a lamb, or if she be not able to bring a lamb, then two turtles, or two young pigeons. If she be not able;" but the margin hath it, "If her hand cannot reach to a lamb," if she be so poor that she cannot offer a lamb. As if the text should have said, Alas, poor woman, poor lady, all she had was not

able to reach to a lamb, so poor was she: doubtless her heart was as large as another's, but she was not able to offer a lamb, and is therefore content with two turtles.

5. Hence we may conceive in what state our Saviour lived, till he came into the ministry, questionless in a poor house: and he made many a hungry meal, when his mother was not worth a lamb. All that they had, must be by hard labour.

6. Now our Saviour, notwithstanding after he had travelled that weary journey to Jerusalem, must return again, and be subject to his parents: but how? Even as a servant in his trade. They had not bread to spare, but what was gotten by hard laborious work. At his father's trade, I say; for so it is said of him, "Is not this the carpenter?" It is put in the nominative case, "The carpenter." And whereas this is cast as a curse on our first parents, and their seed, "Thatf in the sweat of their brows they should eat their bread." Our Saviour must undergo this curse too: he must work hard for his living: with his own hands he must get a living for himself, and his poor mother by a laborious trade. No wonder if he went many a morning without his breakfast, and made many a hungry meal, that lived in so poor a house, and by so poor a trade.

7. If we come now to the time he lived after he came from his father and mother, that same three years when he shewed himself more publicly in the world, and you shall find him subject to those dangers, difficulties, and distresses which accompany evil days. He was a pilgrim, and had no abode. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." He was a diligent preacher of the Gospel, although he had neither prebend nor parsonage; and he had nothing of his own, but

was relieved often by the charity of certain devout and religious women.

2. Besides, all the reproaches that could be cast on a man, were laid on him; "This man is a wine-bibber, and a glutton; a friend of publicans and sinners." And again, "Doi we not say well, thou art a Samaritan?" that is, a heretick. He was a caster out of devils. And therein they denied not, but he did good, but see the villainy of it: he was a good witch, as we call them, and though he did good, yet it was by the help of Belzebub: when he drew near his death, the text saith: "They accuse him of many things." Few things are expressed, yet a great many comprehended in these words; those that are expressed, are heinous and notorious crimes. First, against the first table, they accuse him of blasphemy, and therefore condemn him in the ecclesiastical court: "Do you hear his blasphemy?" say they. Then against the second table, they post him to the civil court, and there they lay to his charge high treason against Cæsar: for he, say they, "thatm maketh himself a king, is an enemy unto Cæsar:" and yet the "innocent lamb," for all this, "openedo not his mouth." Insomuch that Pilate wondered he spake not a word in his own defence; and the reason was, because he came to suffer, and to have all these slanders and reproaches put upon him, not to excuse himself.

3. He led a life subject to dangers, when he went amongst his own people to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. They bring him upon an high hill, to the brow thereof, with a purpose to cast him down, and break his neck. Others threaten to kill him too. The Devil here follows him with temptations: even to idolatry itself. Theq Devil himself tempts him forty days, and then left him: not as if he would not return and tempt him no more, but as St. Luke renders it, "The Devil left him for a season." Not as if he intended to leave him quite, but to come and try him again. The scribes and pharisees they tempt

him too, and prove him with hard questions; which if he could not answer, they would proclaim him an insufficient man, and all the people would have laughed him to scorn. Nor was this all only in the exercise of his ministry. All his life was as it were paved with temptations, every step was as it were a gin and trap to ensnare him.

4. Add to all this, that he was not like us; he knew when, and by what death he should die: he knew in all the time of his suffering what he should suffer, and what should come upon him at his death. If any of us should know that he must die a cursed, shameful, and painful death, and knew when it should be, it would mar all our mirth, and put us to our dumps in the midst of our jollity. Our Saviour in the midst of all his joy on earth, saith, "I have a baptism to be baptized with:" he knew the cruel death, which he should suffer on the cross. And how is he pained, "till it be accomplished." The pains of it run through all his life, and might well make his whole life uncomfortable unto him. In the twelfth of John, ver. 23 a little before the Passover, saith he, "The hour is come that the Son of man shall be glorified:" and then, verse twenty-seventh: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." When the time was drawing nigh, some five or six days before, the consideration of it troubled him, though he knew he should be glorified, yet the fright of it enwrapt him with fear. "Now is my soul troubled; what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." Such a kind of life did our Saviour lead: few, but evil were his days. As evil as few, he had no comfort in them.

Come we now to the point of his death, the last thing; and those things that did touch him therein, are the curse, shame, and pain of it. If there were any death more accursed, he must die that death: if any death more shameful, or more painful than other, he must die that. All these do concur in the death of our Saviour, which he

suffered in that death of the cross. It was the most accursed, most shameful, and most painful death as could be devised.

First, for the accursedness of it, there was no death that had a more peculiar curse on it than this. Howsoever all deaths are accursed, when they light on one that is without Christ; but his death had a legal curse: and this was the curse annexed to the cross; a type of that real curse. Now the type of a real curse was, "hanging on the tree: thou shalt bury him that day, for he that is hanged on a tree is accursed by God." So the Son of God was made a curse for us, alluding unto this. And here we see the blessed Son of God, he in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed: the fountain of all blessedness: we see him stand in so cursed a condition, to be made as it were as an anathema, the highest degree of cursing that may be.

Secondly, consider the shame of it. There is a place in the best of orators that expresses the detestableness and shame of this death of the cross: "Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum; scelus, verberari; prope parricidium, necari: quid dicam in crucem tollere?" See what a gradation there is, it is hardly to be expressed in English: "It is a great fault to bind a citizen of Rome and a gentleman, what is it to beat him? What to crucify him?" His eloquence failed him there, as being unable to express the detestableness of it, and therefore the chief "captainy was afraid because he had bound Paul, after he had heard he was a freeman of Rome." But then it is worse to beat him; but what was it to crucify him? Our blessed Saviour went through all these indignities. First "they come against him with swords and with staves, as against a thief." They sold him for a base price. They beat him with rods, pricked him, and after all they crucified him. Consider then the shame of it: he that was to be crucified was stripped naked, as naked as ever he came out of his mother's womb: however the painters may lie in it. And was not this a shame thus to be stripped

before thousands? Wherefore it was a custom among the Romans, that the greatest king, if he were baptized, was to be stripped naked, which they did as a memorial of the shame of our Saviour. So shameful a thing it was, that they thought him unworthy to suffer within the walls. "Christ, that he might sanctify the people, suffered without the walls. Let us go with him out of the camp bearing his reproach." He was a man unfit to suffer within the walls. Pilate thought he would meet with them, when they were so violent to have him crucified, and therefore he joins Barabbas with him, the vilest thief in the country, and a murderer: so that Peter cast this in their teeth, "That they preferred a murderer before him. He was reckoned with the transgressors," as it was prophesied of him before. "They crucify him between two thieves," as if he had been the captain of them. Pilate thought by naming of Barabbas, to have saved Christ; but so enraged was their blind malice, that they preferred the release of Barabbas, before the exemption of Christ. Wherefore, as St. Luke saith, "Pilateb released unto them him, that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

Thirdly, consider the pain of the cross, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the sorrows of death." Not meaning there were sorrows that Christ endured after his death, but it is meant of the sorrows that accompanied his death. It was the most dolorous death that ever could be endured. We scarce know what crucifying is. The Christian emperors, in honour of our Saviour banished that kind of suffering, that none after him might suffer it: But yet it is fit we should know what it was, since it was so terrible a thing. And here, as the apostle said to the Galatians, "Suppose you see Christ crucified before your face at present." The manner of it was thus.

First there was a long beam, on which the party was to be stretched, and there was a cross beam on which the hands were to be stretched: they pulled them up upon the cross before they fastened them; they pulled him to his utmost length. And this is that the psalmist speaks of: "You might tell all my bones." His ribs were so stretched, as that they even pierced the flesh: conceive him now thus stretched with his hands and feet nailed to the wood: the stretching of Christ on the cross, was such a thing as the working of the rack. Imagine him before your eyes thus represented. Your sins crucified him: being thus stretched upon the cross to his full length, the hands and the feet were fastened, and nailed to the wood. It is no small torment to have the hands bored, especially if we behold the place, it was through the lower part of the hand where the veins and sinews all met together: it is a place that is full of sense, consider withal the bigness of the nails: "They have digged my hands," to shew the bigness of the spikes: for the original bears it, "They digged him." Believe not the painters: "Our Saviour had four nails: Not one through both feet, as they describe it, but two through his hands, and two through his feet:" and that you may the better comprehend it, you must know that "toward the lower part of the cross, there went along a ledge or threshold whereto his feet were nailed," otherwise the flesh would have rent by reason of the nails, if he had hung by the hands alone.

Then comes the lifting up; as the serpent was lift up, so must Christ be lift. As when a man is stretched to the full length, and should be with a jerk put up; it is like a strapado, as it were the unjointing of a man; and this is that the psalmist speaks of, "All my bones are out of joint." Consider withal the time how long it was. St. Mark saith, "It was the third hour, and they crucified him." In St. John it is the sixth hour, but the ancient and best copies have the third hour, and so hath Nonnus. The ninth hour he gave up the ghost: so that it was six

long hours by the clock that our Saviour did hang upon the cross. And it was not with him as with other men, in whom extremity of pains disannul sense, and blunt pains, because they have not a perfect apprehension; but Christ was in his perfect sense all the while. All that the Jews could do, could not take away his life from him, till he would himself: and therefore it is said, thatg immediately before he gave up the ghost he cried with a loud voice; whereas others are wont at that time to be so weak, that they can scarce be heard to groan: but never was Christ stronger, nor never cried louder than when he gave up the ghost, this of itself made the centurion as soon as he heard it conclude, "certainly this man was the Son of God." How doth he gather this from his crying? thus, for a man to be in his full strength, and cry out so strongly, and immediately to give up the ghost, this is a great miracle: "Truly this man was the Son of God." This adds unto the greatness of his torment, that he had his full and perfect sense: that he was six full hours thus on the rack, and the extremity of pain took not away his sense. He was as strong at the last as at the first.

These things seriously weighed, Oh! how do they aggravate the depth of his humiliation? Seriously weigh them: they are miserable and lamentable matters; yet in these lie our comfort. Through these words is there a passage open for us into the kingdom of heaven: When he had overcome the terrors of death, he opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers: these were now but the outside of his sufferings, which did belong to man for his sins. He suffered not only bodily sufferings, but sufferings in soul, and that he did in a most unknown and incomprehensible manner; but now may some say,

OBJ. Did Christ suffer the pains and torments of hell?

SOL. No, he suffered those things that such an innocent lamb might suffer, but he could not suffer the pains of hell. The reason is, because one thing which makes hell to be hell, is the gnawing worm of an accusing conscience. Now Christ had no such worm. He had so clear a conscience, as that he could not be stung with any such evil.

Another great torment in hell is desperation, arising from the apprehension of the perpetuity of their torments, which makes them curse and blaspheme God, and carry an inexpressible hatred against him; but Christ could not do so; he could not hate God: God forbid that Christ should be liable to these passions.

But it is certain God the Father made an immediate impression of pains upon his soul; his soul did immediately suffer: look on him in the garden, he was not yet touched nor troubled by men, and yet he fell in a sweat: consider the season of the year; this was then, when they that were within doors were glad to keep close by the fire, he thus did sweat in the garden, when others freezed within; this was much: but to sweat blood, thick blood, clotted, congealed blood, (for so the word will bear it,) not like that in his veins, and yet it came through his garments, and fell to the ground: this is a thing not to be comprehended. Our blessed Saviour encountering with his Father, he falls a trembling, and is overwhelmed, as it were, with the wrath, beseeching God intensively, saying, "Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me;" thou mayest give free pardon; which affections in Christ are such a thing as puzzles us all: we must not say Christ did forget for what he came; but he did not remember: these words proceeded from the seat of passion, which while it is disturbed, reason suspends its acts. Christ had passions, though no impurity in them. As take a clear phial full of water from the fountain, and shake it, it may be frothy, yet it will be clean water still. Christ did not forget, only he had the suspension of his faculties for a time. As a

man in a sleep thinks not what he is to do in the morning, and yet he is said properly to forget. "Hek cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was contented to be forsaken for a time, that thou mightest not be forsaken everlastingly, and this was no faint prayer: if you will read the place in the psalm: "He cried out unto God:" and it is said: "Who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears." He cried to the Almighty, he made God's own heart to pity: he would breakm, yet his heart is repenting, and rolled together, so that he sent an angel to support and comfort him, those strong cries are expressed with a more forcible word, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" Consider how it was with Christ before any earthly hand had touched him, when he beseeched God for his life: this shews the wonderful suffering of Christ; and for that point, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" consider it was not with Christ as with the fathers, they suffered a great deal of punishment and taches, and would not be delivered, yet Christ was more courageous than they all. He had a spirit of fortitude, he was anointed above his fellows, and yet he quivers: "Our fathers cried unto thee, they trusted in thee, and were not consumed; they were delivered: but I am a worm, and no man." I can find no shadow of comfort. Lord, why art thou so angry with me? this speech came not from the upper part of the soul, the seat of reason, but from the lower part, the seat of passion: "My God, my God," these were not words of desperation. He held fast to God; "Why hast thou forsaken me?" these are words of sense: thus you see the price is paid, and what a bitter thing sin is. God will not suffer his justice to be swallowed up by mercy. It must be satisfied; and our Saviour, if he will be a mediator, must make payment to the uttermost farthing: consider what a time this was, when our Saviour suffered: the sun withdraws his beams, the earth shakes and trembles: "What aileth thee, O thou sun to be darkened, and thou

earth to tremble?" was it not to shew his mourning for the death of its maker? The soul of Christ was dark within, and it is fit that all the world should be hung in black for the death of the King of kings. But mark, when he comes to deliver up his life, and to give up the ghost, "The vail of the temple rent in twain," and that was the ninth hour, which in the Acts is called the "hour of prayer;" it was at three o'clock in the afternoon. Hence it is said, "Let the lifting up of my hands be as the evening sacrifice." The priest was killing the Lamb at that time, there was a vail that severed the Holy of holies, it was between the place of oblations, and the Holy of holies, which signifies the kingdom of heaven. As soon as Christ died, the vail rent, and heaven was open, the priest saw that which was before hidden. Our Saviour, saith the apostle, entered through the vail of his flesh unto his Father, and fit it was, that the vail should give place when Christ comes to enter: but what becomes of Christ's soul now? his soul and body were pulled asunder, and through the vail of his flesh, as it were with blood about his ears, he entered the Holy of holies unto God, saying, Lord, here am I in my blood; and here is blood "that speaks better things than the blood of Abel;" that cries for vengeance, this for blessing and expiation of our sins.

SERMON XI:

But to as Many as Received Him - John 1:12

But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

HAVING heretofore declared unto you the woful estate and condition wherein we stand by nature, I proceeded to the remedy, that God of his infinite mercy hath provided for the recovery of miserable sinners from the wrath to come. And therein I proposed two things, that our Saviour, that was to advance us, and raise us out of this condition, when we had lost ourselves in Adam, did both deliver us from the punishment, which we had deserved, and also translate it upon his own person. He did "his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree." We having eaten sour grapes, he was to have his teeth set on edge; we accounted him smitten of God, and buffeted; but we had sinned, and he was beaten. That when the Lord in his wrath was ready to smite us, he underwent the dint of God's sword, and stood betwixt the blow and us; the blow lighted on him that was equal with God, and deserved not to be beaten. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." The sword was unwilling to strike him; and thus being smitten he became a propitiation for our sins: "The chastisement of our peace was on him." He offered himself a sacrifice: here are two things considerable:

1. How Christ was offered for us.

2. How he is offered to us.

First, for us, and so he offered up himself a "Sacrifice, a sweet smelling sacrifice unto God." Mark the point is, he is not only the sacrifice, but the sacrificer. "He offered up himself," saith the apostle; he was the priest, and it was part of his priesthood to offer up himself. The sacrifices in the old law that typified him, were only sufferers. The poor beasts were only passive: but our Saviour, he

must be an actor in the business. He was active in all that he suffered. He did it in obedience to his Father's will, yet he was an agent in all his passionsc. He groaned in spirit, and was troubled; the Greek is ἐτάραξεν ἐαυτὸν, or (as it is in the margin) "He troubled himself." With us in our passions it is otherwise: we are mere sufferers. Our Saviour was a conqueror over all his passions, and therefore unless he would trouble himself, none else could trouble him: unless he would lay down his life, none could take it from him; unless he would give his cheek to be smitten, the Jews had no power to smite it. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not my face from shame and spitting." In all these we should consider our Saviour, not as a sacrifice only, but a sacrificer also; an actor in all this business: their wicked hands were not more ready to smite, than he was to give his face to be smitten, and all to shew that it was a voluntary sacrifice. He did all himself; "Hee humbled himself unto the death." And now by all this we see what we have gotten: we have gotten a remedy and satisfaction for sins. That precious blood of that immaculate Lamb takes away the sins of the world, because it is the Lamb of God, under which else the world would have eternally groaned.

OBJ. But doth this Lamb of God take away all the sins of the world?

SOL. It doth not actually take away all the sins of the world, but virtually. It hath power to do it if it be rightly applied, the sacrifice hath such virtue in it, that if all the world would take it, and apply it, it would expiate, and remove the sins of the whole world: but it is here, as with medicines, they do not help, being prepared, but being applied; rhubarb purgeth choler, yet not unless applied, &c. In Exodus there is mention made of a golden altar: Christ is this golden altar, to shew that his blood is most precious: "Wef are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ." He

is that golden altar mentioned in the Revelation, which stands before the throne. He was likewise to be a brazen altar; for so much was to be put upon him, that unless he were of brass, and had infinite strength, he would have sunk under the burden. It is Job's metaphor: Job in his passion saith: "Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh brass?" If Christ's flesh had not been brass, if he had not been this brazen altar, he could never have gone through these: now he is prepared for us a sacrifice for sin. "Forh what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," for sin, make a stop there, "condemned sin in the flesh." This same for sin hath not reference to condemned. To condemn sin for sin is not good sense; but the words depend on this: "God sent his Son," that is, God sent his Son to be a sacrifice for sin, περὶ ἁμαρτίας, as the word is translated, "a sacrifice for sin." It was impossible the law should save us: not because of any imperfection, or failing in the law, but because our weakness is such, as that we could not perform the conditions: therefore God was not tied to promises; by reason then of the weakness of our flesh, rather than we should perish, "God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in that flesh of his condemned all our sins;" we need not look that sin should be condemned in us, when he bare our sins on the tree, then were our sins condemned; therefore it is said: "When he had made his soul an offering for sin:" that is in the original, when he had made his soul sin, then he "sawl his seed."

We come now to the second thing, if Christ be offered for us, yet unless he offer him to us: unless any man may have interest in him, it is nothing worth. Here then stands the mystery of the Gospel; Christ, when he comes to offer himself to us, he finds not a whit in us that is to be respected; nothing. And that is the ground of all disturbance to ignorant consciences; for there is naturally in men pride and ignorance, they think they may not meddle with Christ, through

God's mercy, unless they bring something, unless they have something of their own to lay down. This is to buy Christ, to barter betwixt Christ and the soul: but salvation is a free gift of God. As the apostle speaks, Christ is freely given unto thee, when thou hadst nothing of worth in thee. Faith, when it comes, empties thee of all that is in thee: to whom is the Gospel preached? to the dead. Now before Christ quicken thee, thou art stark dead, rotting in thy sins. Here is the point then, when there is no manner of goodness in thee, in the world. "In me," saith St. Paul, "that is, in my flesh there is no good thing." When I have been the most outrageous sinner, I may lay hold on Christ. Christ comes and offers himself to thee.

Now when Christ offers, the other part of the relation holds, we may take. We have an interest to accept what he proffers. Consider it by an example: if one give me a million, and I receive it not, I am never the richer: and so if God offer me his Son, and with him all things, I am nothing the better, if I receive him not. That he is born and given, what is that to us? unless we can say, "To us a child is born, to us a Son is given." Faith comes with a naked hand to receive that which is given; we must empty ourselves of what is in us. Consider thy estate, the Lord sets down how it is with us, when he comes to look upon us:: "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee, when thou wert in thy blood, live." Why is this set down? It is to shew how God finds nothing in us, when he comes to shew mercy. He finds nothing in us that is lovely, when he comes to bestow his Son upon us. For it is said, "Thato Christ loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." He doth first cast his eyes upon us when we are unwashed; as I may say, unwashed, and unblessed: "When no eye pitied thee, and thou wast cast out into the open field; when thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, live:" when he comes to making up of the match: "Then I washed thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I

anointed thee with oil: I cloathed thee also with embroidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skins." That is, when Christ comes to cast his affections on us, and to wed us unto himself, he finds us polluted and naked, not with a rag on us. Full of filth, just nothing have we, he takes us with nothing; nay, we are worse than nothing. So that here is the point; what ground is there whereby a man that is dead, and hath no goodness in him, (make him as ill as can be imagined,) what ground hath he to receive Christ? Yes, "To as many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God." First, the receiving of Christ, and then comes believing. It is the receiving of this gift, that is the means, whereby Christ is offered to us. The apostle joining the first and second Adam together, makes the benefit we have by the second to lie in the point of receivingq.

OBJ. If it be a free gift, why is faith required?

SOL. Because faith takes away nothing from the gift. If a man give a beggar an alms, and he reach out his hand to receive it, his reaching out the hand makes the gift never the less, because the hand is not a worker, but an instrument in receiving the free gift. "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace hath abounded unto many in Jesus Christ." And "Ifs by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they that receive abundance of grace shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ:" here is the point then, God is well pleased, and therefore sends to us. Wilt thou have my Son? with him thou shalt have abundance of grace, and everlasting life, and my love too. There is no creature in this place, but this shall be made good unto, if he can find in his heart to take Christ, thou shalt have a warrant to receive him. Now to receive Christ, is to believe in his name, and to draw near unto him. The word receiving, is a taking with the hand, with free entertainment; as immediately before the text. It is not so properly receiving, as

entertaining. He came to his own, and his own received him not; they were like the foolish Gadarenes, that preferred their pigs before Christ; they would rather have his room than his company: and so, when Christ comes, and thou hast rather be a freeman, as thou thinkest, and wilt not have him to reign over thee, then thy case is lamentable: then self-will, self-have. The only point is, whether we come to Christ, or he come to us, there is a drawing near. If thou comest to Christ he will not put thee back; if Christ come to thee by any good motion, if thou shut not the door against him, thou shalt not miss him: "Beholdu, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me." The Lord by the knock of his mouth, by the sword that comes out of his mouth, would fain come in, and be familiar with thee. If thou wilt not let him in, is it not good reason that, as in the Canticlesy, he withdraw himself? If he see thy sins, and would fain come in, what an encouragement hast thou to open? "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Canst thou have a better word from thy prince than this? When he holdeth out his golden sceptre, if thou takest hold on it, thou art safe; otherwise thou art a dead man: thou canst not have a greater security; all the point is, faith is a drawing near unto Christ, and unbelief is a going from him: the Gospel is preached "to those that are afar off, and to those that are near." "Hea came to preach peace to you that are afar off, and to them that are nigh." Who were they that were afar off? they were those that had "uncircumcision in the flesh, without Christ, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, ἄθεοι, those that had no hope;" to these Christ came; these that were afar off, by faith drew near: that expression is a singular one, "Now the just shall live by faith;" what is that? "but if any man draw back," that is, if any man be an unbeliever, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Faith makes a man come, and draw near to Christ. It is a shamefaced bashfulness, that makes a man draw back; it is unbelief, if any draw

back, and to believe is to go on with boldness; "We are not of them which draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." What an excellent encouragement is this, "to come with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may find help in time of need?" So that now let thy estate be what it will, if thou wilt not hold off, but dost entertain Christ, "thoughc thy sins be as red as scarlet," be not discouraged, "they shall be made as white as wool." The very sinner against the Holy Ghost is invited; and why is that unpardonable? Can any sin be so great as to overtop the value of Christ's blood? There is not so much wretchedness in the heart of man, as there is grace, goodness and mercy in Christ: but then it is unpardonable; Why? Because it is the nature of the disease, that will not suffer the plaster to stick on. "It counts the blood of the covenant, wherewith we should be sanctified, an unholy thing." If this sinner would not pluck off the plaster, and tread it under foot, he should be saved: but this is it, when God is liberal, and Christ is free, we have not the heart to take him at his word and come. To open this word, this is the point of all, this is the free preaching of the Gospel indeed; when a man hath nothing desirable in him, but is stark naught, and stark dead, and is not worth the taking up, that yet he may challenge Christ, and be sure of all. Unless thou hast Christ thou hast nothing by promise, not so much as a bit of bread by promise; if thou hast it, it is by providence; "All the promises of God are in him," that is, Christ, "yea, and amen:" "yef are the children of the promise in Christ," but you have nothing till you be in Christ.

The question is, What must I do in this case? What encouragement shall I have in my rags, when I am abominable, worth nothing?

There are certain things that are preparations to a promise; such as are commands, precepts, entreaties, which encourage them to it; and then comes a proposition: I being a believer, shall have eternal life; if

Christ be mine, I may challenge forgiveness of sins, the favour of God, and everlasting life: but how is faith wrought? believe not that foolish conceit that is too common in the world; that faith is only a strong persuasion that God is my God, and my sins are forgiven; this is a foolish thing, a fancy, a dream, unless it be grounded on the word of God. It is but a dream, else that will lead thee unto a fool's paradise. Nothing can uphold faith, but the word of God: here is the point; I being as bad as can be, what ground have I out of the word of God, of an unbeliever to be made a believer? Now we must not take every text, but such only as may be appliable to a dead man, one that hath no goodness in him, that is yet out of Christ; we were all swimming at liberty till this word catched us in; we never thought of the business before, till we were thus taken. Now there are certain degrees to get faith in us.

1. The first word is a general proclamation, whereby Christ gives any one leave to come and take him. Christ is not only a fountain sealed, as in the Canticles, but a "fountain open for sin and for uncleanness," as in Zachariah: so that now, when he keeps open house, he makes proclamation that none shall be shut out. He puts none back; sins, not the greatest that can be, can keep thee back: this is the first thing; and to confirm it, we have our Saviour's own proclamation: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come you to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." A strange contradiction, one would think; what! buy, and yet without money, and without price. The reason is, because there is a certain thing which fools esteem a price, which is none; "Ih counsel thee to buy of me gold which is tried in the fire:" Why? How must this be done? Truly thus; whensoever a sinner comes to Christ to have his sins pardoned, and to be a subject of Christ's kingdom, thou must not then be as thou wast, but thou must be changed. Thou must not live as thou didst before, in the

state of rebellion. Now to leave sin is not worth a rush, it is not a sufficient price; but yet we see a fool will esteem his own baubles: I must lay down my lusts, I must lay down my covetousness, intemperance, &c. and a man thinks it a great matter thus to do; and to leave the freedom that he had before, though it be a matter of nothing. When a rebel receives his pardon, is the king's pardon abridged, because he must live like a subject hereafter? Why should he also seek for the benefit of a subject? This is said in respect of the foolish conceit of man, who thinks it a great price to forsake his corruptions. Again, with the same loud voice, Christ cried when he offered himself a sacrifice for sin: he cried at the time of the great feast, that all should come. "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." In the last of the Revelations, there is a quicunque vult, that is it I pressed: it is a place worth gold. And these are the places which being applied, make you of strangers, to draw near: but now these are not appliable to a man before he hath grace; every one cannot apply them. Never forget that place while you live; it is the close of God's holy book, and the sealing up of his holy book. What is that? It is in Revelations, chap. 22 ver. 17. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, come, and let him that is a thirsty come, and drink of the water of life freely." Whosoever will, let him come: what wouldst thou have more? Hast thou no will to Christ? No will to salvation? then it is pity thou shouldst be saved. No man can be saved against his will, nor blessed against his will: if thou wilt not have Christ, if thou wilt try conclusions with God, then go further, and fare worse; but whosoever will, let him come. Oh! but I have a will: why, then thou hast a warrant; take Christ.

OBJ. But, O sir, you are a great patron of free will: What? doth it all lie in a man's will? Will you make the matter of taking Christ lie there?

SOL. I say, if thou seest thou hast a will, then thou hast a warrant; I say not that this will comes from thyself. It is not a blind faith will do thee good; the word of God works faith in thee, thou hast not a will to it born in thee. It is not a flower that grows in thine own garden, but is planted by God; "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." What? Will Christ offer violence to the will, and draw a man against his will? No, there is no such meaning. It is expounded in the sixty-fifth verse; "No man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." By this Christ sheweth what he meant. If thou hast a will to come, thank the Father for it; for of him, as in the Philippians, we have both the will and the deed. Take for example that general proclamation in the book of Ezra, "Whatever Jew would, might be free." So said the king that had power to make them free; "Who is there among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the God of Israel." Then we read: "Thenm rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priest, and the Levites, with all them whose Spirit God had raised up to go up." Observe here, though the proclamation were general, yet the raising up of the will was from the Spirit of the Lord. We must not by any means take our will for a ground: the will cometh from God; but if thou hast the will, thou hast a warrant. Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely without covenanting: say not, if thou hadst but a measure of faith, and such a measure of humiliation; for that were to compound with Christ: away with that; "whosoever will, let him come." Christ keeps open house; "Whosoever will, let him come: whosoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out." If thou hast a heart to come to him, he hath a willing heart to receive thee; as it was with the prodigal son, the Father stays not till he comes to him, but runs to meet him: he is swift to shew mercy, and to meet us, though we come slowly on towards him. But this is not all, there is a second gracious word that is preached to a man, not yet in the state

of grace. A man that keeps open house, he seldom invites any particularly; but if he come, he shall be welcome. Christ, he keeps open house; but some are so fearful, and so modest, that unless they have a special invitation, they are ashamed to come to Christ; they reason thus: If my case were an ordinary man's, I should come; but I am so vile and wretched, that I am ashamed to come; my sins have been so many, and so heavy, that I am not able to bear so great a weight; they are more in number than the hairs of my head; and yet farther, alas they are crying ones too. But hearken, here is a second word; dost thou think thy case more heavy, because thou art out of measure sinful. Lo, it pleaseth God to send thee a special invitation, who findest thyself discouraged with the great bulk and burden of thy sins. Though all apply it not to this use; "Come unto me all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You, of all others, are they that Christ looks for. Those that can walk bolt upright in their sins, that desire to live and die in them, they will not look upon me, and I will not look upon them; they scorn me, and I scorn them: but you, that are heavy laden, and feel the burden of your sins, are invited by Christ. Let not Satan then cozen you of the comfort of this word; that which Christ makes the latch to open the door to let himself in, we do usually by our foolishness make the bolt to shut him out. Let thy wound be never so great, thou hast a warrant to come, and be cured: be of good comfort then, as it was said to blind Bartimeus, so it is to thee; "Lop, he calleth thee." When Christ bids thee come, and gives thee his word, that he will heal thee, come, let not the Devil, or thy corruptions hinder thee, or make thee stay back; haste thee to this city of refuge, he hath engaged his word for thee, and he will ease thee. But now, after all these there is a

Third word, that though Christ keeps open house, so that who will, may freely come; and though he sends special invitations to them that are most bashful, because their case is extraordinary: what do

you think now, that Christ will come with his soldiers, and destroy those that do not come in? He might do it, when he is so free, and invites thee, and thou turnest it back again into his hand: but yet here is another word of comfort, Christ doth not only send a messenger to invite thee, who hast no goodness in thee, but he falls to beseeching and entreating thee; and that is a third word, whereby faith is wrought in an unbeliever; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;" observe the place, "We pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled unto God." This is the most admirable word that ever could be spoken unto a sinner. Alas! thou mayest say, I am afraid that God will not be friends with me; why? he would have thee to be friends with him: do not then, with the papists, make such an austere God, as though he might not be spoken unto, as though thou mightest not presume thyself, but must make friends unto him; "Wer have not an high priest that is not touched with our infirmities." Will the papists tell me, I am bold if I go to God, or lay hands on Christ? I am not more bold than welcome; "Let us go with boldness to the throne of grace." We are commanded to it. Do not think but that he had bowels to weep over Jerusalem, and he carried the same into heaven; when thou liest groaning before him, he will not spurn thee. We pray you and beseech you to be friends; therefore in this case make no doubt, it is God's good pleasure to entreat thee, and therefore thou hast warrant enough. Christ wept over Jerusalem, and he is as ready to embrace thee. You have now three words to make a man of an unbeliever, a believer: is there, or can there be more than these; open house-keeping, special invitations, entreaties and beseechings? Yet there is more than all this; which if thou hast not a heart of stone, it will make thee believe, or make thee rue it. And that is,

4. When God seeth all these things will not work with us, but we are slow of heart to believe, then he quickens us; and there comes a word

of command. God chargeth, and commands thee to come; and then if thou breakest his command, be it to thy peril. It is the greatest sin, that can be committed. Thou wilt not draw near to God, because thou art a sinner; thou now committest a greater sin, than before, thou returnest back Christ unto God, thou biddest him take his commodity into his hand again, thou wilt not believe: and this is an heinous crime; "And when the Spirit shall come, it shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not in me." This is that great sin he shall convince the world of, "because they believe not in him. Of all sins, this was the most notorious; this makes us keep all other sins in possession: it is not only one particular sin, but it fastens all other sins upon us, be they never so many. When faith comes, it will out them, but till then they remain in thee; where there is no commandment, there is no sin. How could it be a sin in not believing, if I were not commanded so to do: but you shall hear more than so. When the apostle speaks of excluding rejoicing under the law; "Whereu is boasting, then, saith he? it is excluded: By what law, by the law of works? No, but by the law of faith:" there is a law of works, and a law of faith. God doth not only give thee leave to come, and take him, and draw near unto him, but he commands thee; there is a law: by the breach of that law of faith thou art made guilty of a high sin. There is a full testimony of this; "And this is the commandment, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ." If a man should ask, may I love my neighbour? would you not think him a fool? because he must do it, he is commanded. So should a poor soul come, and say to me, may I believe? thou fool, thou must believe. God hath laid a command upon thee, it is not left to thy choice: the same commandment that bids thee love thy brother, bids thee to believe on Christ. To entreaty is added God's command; and therefore, if thou shalt argue, what warrant have I to believe? Why, God enjoins it thee, and commands it. As the impotent man said, so mayest thou: "He that healed me,

said unto me, take up thy bed, and walk." This is the very key of the Gospel, and this is the way to turn it right. When being thus clean naked, we have as it were a cable put in our hands, to draw ourselves out of this flesh and blood.

5. The last thing is, if keeping open house, special invitations, entreaties and commands will not serve the turn, then Christ waxeth angry; what, to be scorned, when he proffered mercy, and as it were, invite all sorts, and compel them to come in by his preachers, and by a peremptory command? Then he falls a threatening; "We are not of those which draw back unto perdition;" if thou wilt not come upon this command, thou shalt be damned; "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Christ commands them to go into the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, unto every soul this Gospel which I speak. If you will not hear, and believe; if you will not take God at his word, you shall be damned; "Hez that believeth not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Here is an iron scourge to drive thee, thou that art so slow of heart to believe. In Psalm 78 where is set down God's mercy unto the Israelites: afterwards comes one plague upon another; it is said, "They believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." A like passage to this out of the ninety-fifth Psalm, is applied, in Hebrews, chap. 3 ver. 2 to unbelievers. And the reason of God's wrath mentioned in the seventy-eighth Psalm, is said to have been the unbelief of the people; "The Lord heard this, and was wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob, and against Israel." Why was this? because they believed not in him, because they trusted not in his salvation. Nothing will more provoke God to anger, than when he is liberal and gracious, and we are straitened in ourselves, harden our hearts, and not trust him: never forget this sermon, while you live; this is the net that Christ hath to draw you out of the world. I shall hereafter tell you what faith is, which is to receive Christ, and

to believe in his name: but that will require a more particular explication. And on that I shall enter the next time.

SERMON XII:

You Were Sealed With the Holy Spirit of Promise - Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

THE last time I entered on the declaration of that main point, and part of religion, which is the foundation of all our hopes and comfort, namely, the offering of Christ unto us; that as he did offer himself a sacrifice to his Father for us upon the cross, so that which is the basis, ground and foundation of our comfort is, that he offereth himself unto us. And here comes in that gracious gift of the Father which closes in with God: that as God saith, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given:" So there is grace given us to receive him. And as the greatest gift doth not enrich a man, unless he accept it, and receive it; so this is our case, God offers his Son unto us, as an earnest of his love: if we will not receive him, we cannot be the better for him: if we refuse him, and turn God's commodity, which he offers

us, back upon his hand, then God storms, and his wrath abides on us for evermore. That it is his good pleasure that we should receive Christ, it is no doubt, we have his word for it: all the point is, how we may receive him, and that is by faith.

And in this text is declared, how faith is wrought, and that is by the word of truth; "In whom also you trusted, after you had heard the word of truth." Now after this faith, there cometh a sealing by the Spirit of God; "In whom also, after you believed, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise." Now lest a man should through ignorance and indiscretion, be misled and deceived, there is faith, and there is feeling. Where this is not feeling I mean, I say not, that there is no faith; no: for feeling is an after thing, and comes after faith. If we have faith, we live by it; "But after you believed, you were sealed." You see then faith is that, whereby we receive Jesus Christ; "And to as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, to as many as believe on his name." The blood of Christ is that which cureth our souls, but, as I told you, it is by application. A medicine heals not by being prepared, but being applied: so, the blood of Christ shed for us, unless applied to us, doth us no good. In Heb. chap. 12 it is called "The blood of sprinkling:" and that in the fifty-first Psalm, hath relation to it, where he saith, "Purge me with hyssop." In the Passover there was blood to be shed, not to be spilt, but to be shed: and then to be gathered up again, and put into a basin, and when they had so done, they were to take a bunch of hyssop and dip and sprinkle, &c. Faith is this bunch of hyssop that dips itself, as it were, into the basin of Christ's blood, and our souls are purged by being sprinkled with it. In Leviticus there was a bird to escape alive; but see the preparation for it: "You shall take it, and the scarlet, and the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and shall dip them, and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed, &c. And then you shall sprinkle on him that is to be cleansed from

the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field." We are thus let loose, cleansed, and freed, but how? Unless we are dipped, as the living bird was in the blood of the dead bird, there is no escaping, unless we are dipped in the blood of Jesus Christ, this dead bird, and sprinkled with this hyssop, we cannot be freed.

So that now to come to that great matter, without which Christ profiteth us nothing, which is faith. The well is deep, and this is the bucket with which we must draw. This is the hand by which we must put on Christ: "As many as are baptized put on Christ." Thus must we be made ready: we must be thus clothed upon, and by this hand attire ourselves with the sun of righteousness. Wherefore I declared unto you that this faith must not be a bare conceit, floating in the brain; not a device of our own. The Devil taking hold on this, would soon lead a man into a fool's paradise. To say I am God's child, and sure I shall be saved, I am persuaded so; this the Devil would say amen to, and would be glad to rock men asleep in such conceits. Such are like the foolish virgins, "that went to buy oil for their lamps;" and were persuaded they should come soon enough to enter with the bridegroom; but their persuasion was groundless, and they were shut out. So such groundless persuasions and assurances in a man's soul, that he is the child of God, and shall go to heaven, is not faith; thou mayest carry this assurance to hell with thee: this faith is not faith; "for faith comes by hearing," and that not of every word or fancy, but by hearing the word of truth. Faith must not go a jot further than the word of God goeth. If thou hast an apprehension, but no warrant for it out of the word of God, it is not faith, for it is said, "After you heard the word of truth you believed." So that we must have some ground for it out of the word of truth, otherwise it is presumption, mere conceits, fancy, and not faith.

Now I shewed unto you the last time, how this might be; for while a man is an unbeliever, he is wholly defiled with sin, he is in a most loathsome condition; he is in his blood, filthy, and no eye pities him. And may one fasten comfort on one in such a condition, on a dead man? And this I shewed you was our case: when faith comes to us, it finds no good thing in us, it finds us stark naked, and stark naught: yet there is a word for all this to draw us unto Christ, from that miserable ocean in which we are swimming unto perdition, if God catch us not in his net. Hearken we therefore to God's call: there is such a thing as this calling. God calls thee and would change thy condition, and therefore offers thee his Son. Wilt thou have my Son? Wilt thou yield unto me? Wilt thou be reconciled unto me? Wilt thou come unto me? And this may be preached to the veriest rebel that is. It is the only word whereby faith is wrought. It is not by finding such and such things in us beforehand; no, God finds us as bad as bad may be, when he proffers Christ unto us. He finds us ugly and filthy, and afterwards washes us, and makes us good. It is not because I found this or that good thing in thee, that I give thee interest in my Son, take it not on this ground. No, he loved us first, and when we were defiled he washed us from our sins in his own blood. Now there is a double love of God towards his creatures.

1. Of commiseration.

2. Of complacency.

That of commiseration is a fruit of love which tenders and pities the miserable state of another.

But now there is another love of complacency, which ariseth from a likeness between the qualities and manners of persons, for like will to like: and this love God never hath but to his saints after conversion, when they have his image enstamped in them, and are

reformed in their understandings and wills, resembling them in both, then, and not till then bears he this love towards them. Before, he loves them with the love of pity: and so God loved the world, that is, with the love of commiseration, that he sent his only Son, that whosoever believed in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. And therefore he said in the prophet Isaiah: "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them."

Now we come to the point of acceptation: the word is free, and it requires nothing but what may consist with the freest gift that may be given. Although here be something that a man may startle at.

OBJ. Is there not required a condition of faith, and a condition of obedience?

SOL. Neither of these, according to our common understanding, do hinder the fulness and freedom of the grace of the Gospel.

1. Not faith, because faith is such a condition, as requires only an empty hand to receive a gift freely given. Now doth that hinder the freeness of the gift, to say, you must take it? Why, this is requisite to the freest gift that can be given. If a man would give something to a beggar, if he would not reach out his hand and take it, let him go without it, it is a free gift still; so that the condition of faith is such a condition as requires nothing but an empty hand, to receive Christ.

2. Obedience hinders it not. I am required, may some say, to be a new man, a new creature, to lead a new life: I must alter my course: and is not this a great clog and burden? And do you account this free? When I must crucify lusts, mortify passions, &c. Is this free, when a man must renounce his own will? Yes; it is as free, as free may be; as I shewed you the last time. The very touching, and accepting of Christ implies an abnegation of former sinfulness, and a

going off from other courses that are contrary to him. If the king give a pardon to a notorious rebel for treason, so that now he must live obedient as a subject, the king need not in regard of himself to have given the pardon; if he give it, it takes not from its freeness, that he must live like a subject afterwards; the very acceptance of the pardon implies it.

But now to declare faith, and to open the mystery thereof. Faith is a great thing, it is our life; our life stands in the practice of it: that as in the offering of Christ for us, there is given him a name above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow:" as, I say, in the purchasing of redemption, so in the point of acceptation; God hath given unto this poor virtue of faith a name above all names. Faith indeed, as it is a virtue, is poor and mean, and comes far short of love: and therefore by the apostle, love is many degrees preferred before faith, because love fills the heart, and faith is but a bare hand, it lets all things fall, that it may fill itself with Christ. It is said of the virgin Mary, "that God did respect the low estate of his handmaid:" so God respects the low estate of faith, that nothing is required, but a bare empty hand, which hath nothing to bring with it, though it be never so weak, yet if it have a hand to receive, it is "ἰσότιμος πίστις, a like precious faith," that of the poorest believer, and the greatest saint.

Now that we may come unto the point, without any more going backwards. In the words read, there is the point of faith, and a thing God confirms it withal, a seal: "In whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed." Faith is of itself a thing unsealed: the sealing with the Holy Spirit of promise is a point beyond faith; it is a point of feeling, and not only of believing of God's word, but a sensible feeling of the spirit: a believing in my soul, accompanied with joy

unspeakable, and full of glory: of which sealing we shall speak more hereafter. Observe for the first.

1. The object of it; "in whom you trusted." We speak of faith now as it justifies, as it apprehends Christ for its object: for otherwise faith hath as large an extent as all God's word. Faith hath a hand to receive, whatsoever God hath a mouth to speak. What is the object? "He in whom you trusted." It is a wonder to see how many are deceived, who make the forgiveness of sins to be the proper object of faith. A man may call, as long as he lives, for forgiveness of sins, yet, unless there be the first act, to lay hold on Christ, in vain doth he expect forgiveness of sins. Until thou dost accept Christ for thy King and Saviour, thou hast no promise. We are never children of the promise, till we are found in him. The proper and immediate object of faith is, first Christ, and then God the Father by him: for faith must have Christ for its object. I must believe in none else but God, in and through Christ. Now that this is so, we may see in that famous place, 1 Peter, chap. 3 ver. 21. When he had spoken of the precious blood of Christ, "the Lamb without blemish," he goes on, and shews, "that he was manifested in those last times, for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised up Christ from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." There is no true believing in God the Father, but by the Son. The proper object of hope, and faith, is God, and he that doth believe, or hope, or trust in any thing else, there is idolatry in it; we believe in God by him: so that the primary object of faith is Christ. "Ye are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." What is my faith then? If thou wilt be the child of God, receive, hold Christ Jesus, accept him for thy Saviour, and for thy Lord: he is the proper object of thy faith. Again, you must have Christ Jesus, and him crucified, that should be the highest knowledge in our account, "to know Christ and him crucified," and by it to accept him. Hereupon the apostle to the Romans, when he

speaks of faith, makes the object of it Christ, and Christ crucified: "Whomh God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." Whatsoever then thou findest in Christ, is an object of thy faith. The point is, "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood," that is, he who receiveth me, and makes me as his meat and drink, "dwelleth in me and I in him." Compare this, Romans, chap. 3 ver. 25 with Romans, chap. 5 ver. 9 for it is worth comparing. We are said to be "justified by his blood, Romans, chap. 5 ver. 9. "by faith in his blood," Romans, chap. 3 ver. 25. Now both these come to one, and they resolve the point, and clear the question, whether faith in itself, as a virtue doth justify, or in respect of its object? surely it is in respect of the object. You that have skill in philosophy, know, that heat, considered as a quality, its effects are not so great; but if considered as an instrument, it transcends the sphere of its own activity; it doth wonders; for it is the principle of generation, and many other strange effects. So here, take faith as a virtue, and it is far short of love: but consider it as an instrument, whereby Christ is applied, and it transcends, it works wonders, beyond its proper sphere: for the meanest thing it lays hold on, is the Son of God. "He that hath the Son, hath life." Some would think this an hard kind of speech, when we are justified by faith, we are justified by Christ, apprehended by faith: and yet that place is clear, to be justified by his blood: and faith in his blood becomes one faith. As if a man should say, I was cured by going to the bath: so faith comes unto Christ; faith is the legs. A man is not said properly to be cured, by going to the bath, nor justified by coming to Christ by the legs of faith: but the applying of the bath, the coming to Christ, and applying of his virtue, to make him the object of my faith, this is the way to be justified. As it is not the making and preparing of a plaster, that cures, but the applying it; so that this concludes this point, that the true object of faith is Christ crucified, and God the Father in, and

by him. Here then is the point, thou must not look for any comfort in faith, till thou hast Christ; and to think thou shalt ever have any benefit by God, till thou hast Christ, thou deceivest thyself. It is impossible for a man to receive nourishment by his bread and drink, till he partake of it in the substance: so thou must partake of Christ, before thou canst receive any nourishment by him. Christ saith not, thou must have forgiveness of sins, or thou must have my Father's favour, but take my body and blood, take me crucified. Buy the field, and the treasure is thine: but thou hast nothing to do with the treasure, till thou gettest the field. This is preferment enough, to have the Lord's promise to Abraham: "I am thy exceeding great reward: I am my well beloved's, and my well beloved is mine." There is a spiritual match betwixt Christ and thee: there are many, who are matched with Christ, and yet know not how rich they are: when a man reckons of what he shall get by Christ only, when all his thoughts are on that, he marrieth the portion, and not the person: thou must set thy love on Christ's person, and then having him, all that he hath is thine: how rich Christ is, so rich art thou: he must first be thine. "He that hath the Son, hath life," but the Son must first be had. Is there any now in this congregation, who is so hardhearted, as to refuse such a gift as this? When God shall give thee his Son, if thou wilt take him, is there any so prophane, as with Esau to sell his birthright. To pursue the poor pedling things of this life, and refuse salvation, so high a gift? A gift which is not given to angels, they think it an honour to wait at the Lord's table: they have not this precious food given to them; they never taste it: and therefore many Christians, on serious consideration, would not change their estate for the estate of angels. Why? Because hereby Christ is my husband, I am wedded to him, he is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, which privilege the angels are not capable of. Our nature is advanced above the angelical nature: for we shall sit and judge the world with Christ, judge the twelve tribes of Israel: and what an high preferment

is this? Nay, observe this, and take it for a rule. Never beg of God pardon for thy sins, till thou hast done this one thing, namely, accepted of Christ from God's hands. For thou never canst confidently ask any thing till thou hast him: "for all the promises of God are in him, yea, and amen." This may serve for the object of faith: to shew that the primary object is Christ crucified, and God by him. We come now to declare;

2. The acts of faith what they are, and there is some intricacy in that too: there is much ado made in what part, and power of the soul faith is: we must not proportionate the act of faith according to our own fancy. For it is no faith, but as it hath relation to the word: now look, how is the word presented: "After you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." Now the word is presented under a double respect.

1. It is presented sub ratione veri; "after you had heard the word of truth;" and there comes in the understanding.

2. Then sub ratione boni, as a good word, that so we should lay hold on it, and here comes in the will. For the will, we say, challenges that which is good, for its object: now the Gospel of salvation is a good word, "it is glad tidings worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And now as the word is presented, as a good word, so must my act of faith be answerable unto it. See the act of faith answering hereto: "Thesen all died in faith, not having received the promises." What did their faith to them? It made them "see the promises afar off, and they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." So that by comparing place with place, it appears that first this Gospel was presented as the word of truth, they were persuaded of it. It is the first act of faith, to

persuade men of the truth of the word: and then, as it is a good word, they embraced it: these are the two arms of faith; as true, it persuades me; as good, I embrace it. We must not now be too curious in bringing in philosophical disputes, whether one virtue may reside in two faculties; whether faith may reside in the understanding, and the will. The truth is, these things are not yet agreed upon; and shall we trouble ourselves with things not yet decided in the schools, as, whether the practical understanding and the will be distinct faculties or no? The word of God requires that I should believe with my whole heart: as Philip told the Eunuch, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." If with the heart; but with what faculties, may you say? Why, I tell thee, believe with thy whole heart: and what! shall I piece and divide the heart, when the whole is required? Now, to come to those two: the word is presented,

1. As a true word.

2. Then as a good word; a word like gospel, like salvation.

1. As a true word. And the act of faith answering thereto, is called in Scripture γνῶσις and ἐπίγνωσις, knowledge and acknowledgment.

1. Knowledge, that is a thing requisite: why? because, if there be a remedy able to cure a man's disease, if he do not know it, what is he the better for it? Knowledge is so essential unto faith, that without it there can be no faith. In John, chap. 17 ver. 3 the terms are confounded, the one put for the other: "This is life eternal, to know thee to be the true God; and whom thou hast sent:" to know thee, that is, to believe in thee; because knowledge is so essential to belief, as one cannot be without the other: thou canst not believe what thou hast never heard of: "I know," saith Job, "that my Redeemer liveth;" that is, I believe he liveth. And hereupon it is said, "Byr his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Knowledge is an

act, primarily requisite to faith; to be justified by his knowledge is to be justified by faith in his blood. This then is the first thing, that I know it to be as true as gospel; then comes the acknowledgment.

2. The acknowledgment. "We know, and are assured that thou art that Christ." This is an assurance; I say not the assurance of my salvation, for that is another kind of thing: but an assurance that God will keep touch with, &c. will not delude me, but that if I take his Son, I shall have life, I shall have his favour. When God illuminates me, I find all things in him; when I have him, I am made. When the understanding clearly apprehends this, then comes the next word, it is the Gospel of salvation, there being a knowing, and acknowledging, the act of the understanding: then comes the will, and it being,

2. Propounded as a good word; then follows,

1. Acceptation.

2. Affiance.

1. Acceptation, which receives Christ; "As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Then a man resolves, I will take God on his word: thereupon follows,

A resting or relying on God, which is a proper act of faith. I need no other place than Romans: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: But how shall they call on him, on whom they have not believed?" that is, on whom they have not reposed their confidence. Mark the apostle: "How shall they call on him, on whom they have not believed?" That faith which was the antecedent, must be in the conclusion; therefore our faith is a relying on God: and so in

this place this trust is made the same with faith, as it is in the text, "in whom you trusted, after you had received the word of truth:" for our trust and belief there is the self same word,—Nimium ne crede colori: this credo is to have a great confidence in fleeting and fading things; and so it is in justifying faith. "With respect to the unshaken truths of the incorruptible and unchangeable word of his, which liveth and abideth for ever." If I have a knowledge of God, and acknowledgment of him, and from my knowing, my will is conformed to accept Christ; and if when I have accepted him, I will not part from him: this is faith, and if thou hast this faith, thou wilt never perish. Suppose thou never hadst one day of comfort all thy life long, yet my life for thine thou art saved. Perhaps by reason of thy ignorance thou hast no feeling, yet if thou consent, thou art justified; it is the consent makes the match. If thou consent to the Father, and take Christ the Son, know it, or know it not, thou hast him: though thou knowest not, whether thy sins are forgiven; yet as long as thou keepest thy hold, all the Devil's temptations shall never drive thee from him; thou art justified, and in a safe case, though ignorance and other things in thee cause thee not to feel it, if thou layest hold on him for his sake, thou art apprehended.

OBJ. Now then this is an easy matter, you will say.

SOL. No so easy a matter as you guess it to be. It were easy indeed, were there nothing but saying the word to make man and wife; there are terms and conditions to be agreed upon. God casts not his Son away, he looks there shall be conditions on thy side; he must be thy king, and head, if thou wilt have him to be thy husband. But what shall I get by him then, saith the wife? Get? there is no end of thy getting. "All is thine, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, life," &c. "Thou art Christ's and Christ is God's." Every man will take Christ thus for the better; but there is somewhat else in the match. If thou wilt have

him, thou must take him for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer. Indeed there are precious things provided for you; "Itz is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." You shall be heirs with Christ, but for the present, while you are in the Church militant, you must take up your cross; you must not look for great things in this world: in this world you must have tribulation, you must deny yourselves, and your own wills. What? would you have Christ the wife, and you the husband? No, if you think so, you mistake the match. Christ must be the husband and the head; and as the wife promises to obey her husband, to stick to her husband in sickness and in health, and to forsake all others; so Christ asketh, wilt thou have me? if thou wilt, thou must take me on these terms, thou must take my cross with me, thou must deny thine own will; yea, it may be thine own life also. Let a Christian consider all these things, these are the words, and these are the benefits, and then compare them together; and then if he can say, I will have Christ however, for I shall be a saver by him: I will take him with all faults, and I know I shall make a good bargain, therefore I will have him on any terms, come what will; when a man can have his will so perpendicularly bent on Christ, that he will have him, though he leave his skin behind him: there is a true acceptation of him. We must not here distinguish with the schools about velleities, a general wishing and woulding, and true desires after Christ: wishers and woulders never thrive; but there must be a resolution to follow Christ through thick and thin, never to part with him: a direct will is here required. And therefore Christ bids us consider beforehand what it will cost us. "If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, wife and children, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Do not think that our Saviour here would discourage men from love. Doth the love teach us hatred? The phrase in the Hebrew is "loving less," as it is said, "Jacobb have I loved, and Esau have I hated:" that is, loved less. If a man hath two wives, one beloved, and the other hated, and they have borne

children, both the beloved and the hated: by the hated is not meant, that the man hated one wife, but, less loved her than the other. So "if any man come to me, and hate not father and mother;" that is, if he love not all less than me; and that it is so, we may see it expounded by our Saviour. "He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me." There Christ expounds it. He that will follow Christ in calm weather and not in a storm, is not worthy of him; "Whichd of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" What is that to the purpose? "So likewise whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." It is a small matter to begin to be a Christian, unless you consider what it will cost you; "Dof you think it a small matter to be a king's son?" think not on so great a business without consideration what it will cost you. It will be the denying of your own wills. You must be content to follow naked Christ nakedly; follow him in his persecution and tribulation, in his death and suffering, if thou will be conformable to him in glory. When this case comes, it makes many draw back, as the rich man in the Gospel, when he must forsake all, he drew back. When troubles arise, many are offended; so when it comes to a point of parting, they go back.

Now we come to speak one word of the sealing of the text. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." This sealing, which is a point of feeling, is a distinct thing of itself from faith; no part of faith. If I have faith, I am sure of life, though I never have the other: these are two seals. We put our seals to the counterpart that is drawn betwixt God and us.

The first seal is our faith. I have nothing but God's word, and indeed I have no feeling, yet I venture my salvation, and trust God upon his bare word. I will pawn all upon it; "He that hath received his

testimony," that is, in effect, he that believeth, saith John, "hath set to his seal that God is true." If men doubt, and trust God no further than they see him, it is not faith. But when God gives me a good word, though I am in as much distress as ever, yet I trust, though it be contrary to all sense, or outward seeming, yet I put to my seal, and trust him still.

Then comes God's counterpart. God being thus honoured, that I believe his word, though contrary to all sense and feeling, even his bare word; then God sets to his seal, and now the word comes to particularizing. Before it was in general, now it comes and singles out a man; "Say thou unto my soul, that I am thy salvation," that is, as I did apply the generality of God's word unto mine own case to bear me up against sense, and feeling: then comes the Spirit of God, and not only delivers generalities, but saith unto my soul, "I am thy salvation." This is called in Scripture a manifestation, when God manifests himself unto us; as in Isaiah, chap. 60 ver. 16. "Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer," that is, when we have made particular application by faith, God will put to his seal, that I shall know that God is my strength and my salvation: I shall know it; "He that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will manifest myself unto him." Christ comes and draws the curtains, and looks on with the gracious aspect of his blessed countenance. When this comes, it cheers the heart, and then there are secret love-tokens pass betwixt Christ and his beloved. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows, save he that receives it;" that is, there is a particular intimation that I shall know of myself more than any other; more than all the world beside: "Itl is such a joy as the stranger is not made partaker of," such joy as is glorious and unspeakable, such peace as

passethn all understanding. One minute of such joy surpasseth all the joy in the world besides.

Now consider, sure there is such a thing as this joy, or else do you think the Scripture would talk of it, and of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, "by whom we know the things that are freely given us of God." There is a generation in the world, that hath this joy, though you that know it not, do not, nor cannot believe it; there is a righteous generation that have it: and why dost thou not try to get it? do as they do, and thou mayest obtain it likewise; "Thep secrets of the Lord are revealed to them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant." These are hidden comforts; do you think God will give this joy to those that care not for him? No, the way is to seek God, and to labour to fear him. The secrets of the Lord are revealed to such, and such only as fear him; do as they do, and follow their example, and thou mayest have it likewise.

OBJ. Many have served Christ long, and have not found it.

SOL. It is long of themselves; you are straitened in your own bowels, or else, open your mouths wide, and God will fill them. No wonder that we are so barren of these comforts, when we be straitened in ourselves. There is a thing wondrously wanting amongst us, and that is meditation. If we could give ourselves to it, and go up with Moses to the mount, to confer with God, and seriously think of the price of Christ's death, and of the joys of heaven, and the privileges of a Christian; if we could frequently meditate on these, we should have these sealing comforts every day, at least oftener. This hath need to be much pressed upon us; the neglect of this makes lean souls. He that is frequent in that, hath these sealing days often. Couldst thou have a parley with God in private, and have thy heart rejoice with the comforts of another day; even whilst thou art thinking of these

things, Christ would be in the midst of thee. Many of the saints of God have but little of this, because they spend but few hours in meditation. And thus, as this hour would give leave, have we proceeded in this point.

SERMON XIII:

Not Discerning the Lord's Body - 1 Corinthians 11:29

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

I HAVE heretofore declared unto you the ground of our salvation, and have represented unto you, first, Christ offered for us, and secondly, Christ offered to us. Now it hath pleased Almighty God, not only to teach us this by his word; but because we are slow of heart to believe and conceive the things we hear, it pleases his glorious wisdom, to add to his word his sacraments, that so what we have heard with our ears, we may see with our eyes, being represented by signs.

There is a visible voice whereby God speaks to the eyes: and therefore we find in Exodus, chap. 4 ver. 8. God bids Moses that he should use signs, saying, "It shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign." Signs you know are the object of the eye, and yet see, they have, as it were, a visible voice, which speaks to the eye. Now God is pleased to give us these signs for the helping,

1. Of our understanding: The eye and the ear are the two learned senses as we call them, through which, all knowledge is conveyed into the soul: and therefore, that we may have a more particular knowledge of Christ, God hath not only by his ministery given us

audible voices, but visible also in his sacraments, by which, as by certain glasses, he represents to us the mystery of Christ Jesus offered for us, and offered to us. And hence is it that Paul calls the eyes to witness, as well as the ears: "O ye foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified amongst you!" That is, before whose eyes Christ hath been crucified, not by hear-say only, but evidently before your eyes, not in any foolish crucifix, with the papists, but in the blessed sacrament, wherein he is so represented, as if his soul were before our eyes poured out to death: so that by these sacraments, heavenly things are, as it were, clothed in earthly garments, and this is the first reason, viz. to help our understanding: but besides he doth it,

2. To help our memory; we are apt to forget those wonderful things Christ hath wrought for us. And therefore, verses 24, and 25 of this chapter, we are bid to eat his body, and drink his blood in remembrance of him. To take the signs as tokens of him; the sacrament is, as it were, a monument and pillar raised up, to the end, that whenever we see it, we should remember the Lord's death until he come. It is said, that Absalom in his life time had taken, and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale; for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He would fain be remembered, but he had no child, whereby he might live, after he was dead: therefore he raises it, and calls it after his own name, "Absalom's place, as it is this day:" that so, as often as any came that way, they might remember him. Christ doth thus by his sacrament and erects it as a monument for the remembrance of his death, and, as it were, calls it by his own name, saying, "This is my body, and this is my blood:" that whenever we see them, we may call to mind, Christ offered for us, and to us. But that I may apply this my doctrine to the ears also, know that,

3. These signs are for the strengthening of our faith, and therefore it is considered as a seal. "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." It helps our understanding by being a sign, and is a confirmation, a seal, by virtue whereof Christ is passed, and made over to us, so that we have as true an interest and right to him, as to our meat and drink: yea, he becomes as effectually ours, for every purpose in our spiritual life, as our meat and drink doth for our corporal. To which end these elements are changed spiritually in their natures; not in substance, but in use, so that which was but now a common bread, becomes as far different as heaven is from earth, being altered in its use. For instance, the wax whereby the king passes over an inheritance to us, and by which conveyances of our estates are made, that wax is but as another piece of wax differing nothing from that which is in the shop, till the king hath stamped it with his seal: but being once sealed, one would not give it for all the wax in the kingdom, for now it serves to another use; so is it here in these elements; but still know, the difference is not in the matter, or substance, but in the use. And this is the reason why this blessed bread and wine is termed a communion, namely, because it is an instrument whereby Christ instates me into himself, and whereby I have fellowship, and communion with him.

In the words then we have these particulars, viz.

1. A sin. If any man shall presume to eat that bread, or drink that cup unworthily. It is a dangerous thing, a great sin to eat and drink at the Lord's table in an unworthy manner.

2. A punishment. He eats and drinks damnation, or judgment unto himself. So that now what was ordained to life, and appointed to be a seal and confirmation of God's love and favor is now changed and

become a seal and confirmation of God's anger and indignation. The unworthy receiving of it makes it prove clean contrary to what it was intended.

3. A reason; because he discerns not the Lord's body, but takes them as ordinary things, deeming the elements not different from the bread and wine which we have at our tables, not knowing that they are the dishes wherein Christ is served in unto us, that by these the greatest gift is given us, and nourishment conveyed, for the maintenance of our spiritual life. This life was given us in baptism, but in and by these signs is conveyed spiritual nourishment for the continuance and maintenance of it, for the strengthening of our faith, and making us daily stronger and stronger to fight the Lord's battles: now, when we discern not this, nor by the eye of faith see Christ Jesus, crucified for us, and by these elements conveyed unto us, but take them hand over head without any consideration, we receive them unworthily, and a fearful indignity is offered unto Christ, which he will certainly revenge. I will then

1. Shew in general what it is to eat worthily.

2. What it is to eat judgment; and then

3. I will come to the particulars, how this sin may be avoided, and what the particulars are wherein the sin consists.

1. Concerning the first, What it is to eat unworthily.

OBJ. And here may some say, is there any of us who can avouch that he eats and drinks at the Lord's table worthily? is there any so presumptuous as to say, that he is worthy to eat Christ's flesh, and drink his blood? As for bodily food and entertainment, we are unworthy to present them to him; the centurion could say, "I am not

worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof:" How then comes this to pass, that he which eats and drinks the Lord's body unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself? If we are not worthy to present bodily food unto him; can we be worthy to receive spiritual from him?

SOL. But here understand what is set down; worthiness is not always taken for a matter of merit, or proportion of worth between the person giving and receiving; but in Scripture it is often taken for that which is meet, fitting, and beseeming; and in this sense the apostle uses it: "If it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me." If it be meet: the word in the original is ἄξιον, or worthy, which is here rightly translated meet; so in that sermon of St. John Baptist: "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" that is, fruits beseeming amendment of life. And in this sense are we said "to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory." Worthy of God, that is, worthy of that calling God hath imparted to us. And therefore to use the similitude as I have elsewhere, if the king should vouchsafe to come into a subject's house, and find all things fit and beseeming so great a majesty, that subject may be said to give the king worthy entertainment; not that a subject is worthy to entertain his prince: but the meaning is, he provided all things, which were meet and fit for the entertainment of him. So is it here: if we prepare ourselves with such spiritual ornaments to entertain the King of Glory, as are requisite for those who approach his table, though our performances come far short of the worth of his presence; yet we may be said to eat his body, and drink his blood worthily. When the king in the Gospel had prepared his feast, two sorts of guests there were, who were unworthy.

1. Those that made light of the invitation, who had their excuses, when they should come to the feast; one must go to his farm, another

to try his oxen, &c.

2. Others there were who came, and yet were unworthy guests, for coming unpreparedly; for in the midst of the feast the king comes in to view his guests, and beholds a man that did not refuse to come, but yet came without his wedding garment, and so came unworthily for not coming preparedly. Ye see then there may be an unworthiness in those that do come, since they come unfitted and in a dress unbeseeming such a banquet. They are unworthy receivers of the Lord's body, and he accounts it an irreverent usage of him. In like manner may some say touching the ministery of the word; May I not read a good sermon at home with as much profit? What needs all this stir? Why, here is the advantage and privilege you get in the public ministery of the word: God himself comes down, as a king amongst us, he views his guests, and considers, who comes with his wedding garment, who comes preparedly. Christ comes and looks on us, and where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he hath promised to be in the midst of them. He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, the ministers of his word; he takes a special view of those that come and frequent his ordinances, and is ready ever to reward them. You see then what it is to eat worthily; it is to do it with that reverence, that is requisite where the King of Heaven is master of the feast. Now this being the sin, unmannerliness, and unprepared approaching his table: we come to the second thing, viz.

2. The punishment: and that is a terrible one: "He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself:" damnation, that is somewhat hard, the word in the margin is better, κρῖμα, judgment. True, there are such as so come, that they deserve to eat condemnation to themselves, as openly profane ones, in whom it is high treason, being God's vowed enemies, to take his privy seal, and put it to so vile a use: this, I say, deserves damnation; but then

others there are that have faith and repentance, and a portion in Christ, yet coming unworthily to this feast, eat judgment to themselves: that is, a judgment of chastisement. There is a twofold judgment.

1. One of revenge: for such a person that puts God's seal to a wrong evidence, having no faith to make Christ his portion: in such a one it is high treason to put forth his hand to this tree of life.

2. Another of chastisement, for such a one as hath repentance, and yet comes too unmannerly, and carries himself too carelesly at the Lord's table: at this the apostle aims in the text; not at that judgment of condemnation, but at a judgment to prevent damnation; and this appears in the words following, where we shall find the apostle recounting up the particulars of this judgment of chastisement: "For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep." Mark what is the judgment, he eats: why this? he is cast upon his bed of sickness, into a consumption perchance, or some other corporal disease; a cause physicians seldom or never look into: they look to agues, colds, or the like; they never once conjecture that their unworthy eating at the Lord's table cast them into the disease, and was the principal cause of the malady. Nay, death itself too often is the punishment of such bold attempts, so that all the physicians in the world cannot cure them. And thus God inflicts temporal judgments to free them from eternal, as appears farther in the thirty-second verse: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;" that is, we undergo a judgment of chastisement, to prevent the judgment of condemnation: which, though it be a sharp and bitter pill, yet by the mercy of God we eat that whereby damnation is prevented. This judgment of condemnation is the portion of the profane person, who dares to meddle with that which belongs not to him, against whom

the angel of the Lord with a flaming sword stands to keep the way of this tree of life. Those that come that have faith, yet coming unpreparedly, they eat judgment too, yet by God's mercy it is that which preserves them from the damnation of the soul.

Now before I come to the particulars, note how careful God is, that spiritual exercises shoul be spiritually performed. He is very angry, when he sees a spiritual duty carnally undertaken. "For this cause many are sick," that is, because you that are believers, have faith, repentance, and a portion in your Saviour, come irreverently, come unpreparedly, perform a spiritual work so carnally. We have precedents hereof in Scripture: and chiefly two: first, for circumcision. At the the twenty-first verse, God sent Moses on a message into Egypt, and in the twenty-fourth verse, the text saith: "It came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him." This is very strange, this hath no dependance on that which goes before: a strange accident, God sought to kill, although he, but a little before, had sent him into Egypt, and told him he would be with him. Why? what should he do then? how should the message be done, and fulfilled? But what was the reason hereof? It is not expressed, yet we may gather from the following words, that it was by reason his son was uncircumcised, for verse 25. "Zippora took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband hast thou been unto me:" God would have smitten him for the neglect of the sacrament of circumcision. Another instance we have for the passover in Hezekiah's time. "A multitude of the people, yea many of Ephraim and Manasseth, Issachar and Zebulon had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written." There were many likewise in the congregation that were not sanctified; and therefore God punished them. It is not set down in what manner God punished them, yet by the consequent it may be gathered that it was

by sickness, for the next words are to that effect: "Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his father, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary; and the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people." So that you see for this God smites a person, and it is to be feared lest judgments temporal fall on the whole nation for this fault; that he even smites not a few of the people to death. But we pass from this, and come to the particulars.

3. The particulars of this offence, and wherein it consists, that a man comes unworthily, that so we may know whether we are guilty of the crime. Know therefore that there are two sorts, that come to the communion.

First, those to whom the business doth not belong, that have nothing to do with the thing, as openly profane ones.

Secondly, such as have interest in the matter, but yet come unpreparedly, and in an unbeseeming manner; the former take part in the sign, but enjoy not the thing signified: and the latter coming unpreparedly, depart without the comfort which otherwise they might have. Now mark to whom Christ would say, if he were now coming to judgment in the clouds, to whom I say, if he were now coming in the clouds, he would say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;" to them he would likewise say, Come to my table, come to this banquet, partake of my body and blood; and to as many as he would say, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting flames," to so many would he say, Go you from my table, come not near.

Now there are two sorts of people, to whom, if the Lord Jesus were coming in the clouds to judgment, he would say, "Depart into

everlasting flames;" and those are these that "know not him, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Now to these sorts of people Christ would say, if he were on earth, Depart from my table, meddle not with those mysteries. And they are,

1. Those that know not God: and indeed it is a most unworthy thing for an ignorant man to come to God's table. Know, whoever thou art, that art such an one, that it belongs not to thee, it was appointed for an understanding people. The Lord invites not fools and blockheads to his mysteries. God will not know them that know not him. If thou knowest not what the signs are, or the relation of them, to the thing signified, hast no insight, or understanding of the mysteries: know that it is to no other purpose to thee to come to the sacrament, than if thou wentest to a mass, to see the gesticulations, elevations, or if thou wentest to see a play, not knowing to what end and purpose it was done. Such a one is not a friend of God, but an enemy that shall be destroyed in everlasting fire, that knows not him. Deceive not then yourselves, but seriously weigh it, and consider what a judgment falls on us for this. What an unworthy thing is it, when as in one month's space, or less, if a man had any care, he might learn as much as would bring him to heaven. What saith the apostle? "Some have not the knowledge of God, I speak this to your shame." And a shameful thing it is indeed, when the knowledge of the principles of Christian religion may be had in so short a space, to be so grossly ignorant, as commonly many are. It is a most unworthy and a shameful thing to think the knowledge of Christ not worth thus much pains. Thou that carest not for the knowledge of God's ways, what hast thou to do to take his word into thy mouth, to tread in his courts? I doubt not but very many here too are but babes in Christ. An ignorant person then cannot possibly come worthily; for we are to come with faith; and faith cannot be without knowledge. And hence are they joined both together: "Byo his knowledge shall my righteous

servant justify many." By his knowledge, not subjective, but objective, the knowledge of him: if thou knowest not him, his nature, and offices, the end of his offering himself, and wilt be still a mere ignoramus, come not to God's table, go to Nebuchadnezzar, and feed with him amongst the beasts, thou hast nothing to do here: nay the very beasts among whom he fed will upraid thee; "Forq the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib:" but thou art like stupid Israel, which did neither know, nor consider. This is the first sort.

2. The second are those, that obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have wit enough, and can talk of religion fast enough; but where is the obedience is required? I know the Lord gives me the proffer of Christ Jesus; can I cast down my proud will, and submit it, lay down my stately plumes, and take him, not only as my priest, to sacrifice himself for me, but as my Lord, and my King to be guided, governed, and ruled by him? when such a one comes that hath not the power of grace in him, who is filled with nothing but rebellion and profaneness; when such a one comes, and presumes to sit down at God's table: it is a most unworthy act; it is more fit that such a one should feed amongst the swine, than eat the body, and drink the blood of his Saviour. Nor is it an unworthy act for these only, but also for civil honest persons, though civility be a good stock whereon the science of grace may be grafted: but if a man had nothing besides what nature and education can teach, what moral philosophy can store us with, we have nothing to do at this table of the Lord. How can I dare presume to eat Christ's body, and drink Christ's blood, that am not acquainted with God, know not the principles of religion, and will not be swayed by him, nor be obedient unto his Gospel? These are the particulars then, which make a man an unworthy receiver: first, when he is an ignorant person; and secondly, when he will not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, such persons are to be

discarded and cashiered; they eat the judgment of condemnation unto themselves.

But there are, as I shewed you, a second sort, that come, that have interest in the business; such as have knowledge, grace and faith in Christ, and shall taste of the new wine with Christ, in the world to come, and be with Christ, which notwithstanding may eat and drink unworthily, and come unpreparedly, and irreverently: whereby they lose that comfort that otherwise they might have: and these, though they eat not the judgment of condemnation, yet they do the judgment of chastisement: they put God's seal to a blank, but the former sort put it to a false instrument: they put it to a blank, I say, and by that means lose much comfort, yea, temporal life itself too, perchance. They eat a judgment of chastisement; by putting it thus to a blank they taste God's displeasure in sickness, weakness and death; but I will shew you how you may avoid this: why, come worthily. Fit yourselves to the purpose, set to it, and thou shalt see, one communion will even bring thee to heaven. I say, if that thou couldst but at one communion fit thyself to come worthily, thou wouldst find exceeding comfort in it. Try the Lord once, and see what a mighty increase of grace this will bring unto thee. That you may know how you may come worthily, there are three things requisite to every worthy receiver at the Lord's table.

1. Some things are requisite before the action be enterprised, or else I shall come very unworthily.

2. Some at the time, and in the very act of receiving.

3. Others after the communion is ended. Many will be persuaded that there is some preparation to be used beforehand, but never do as much as dream of any after: whereas if a man neglect this, the Lord's meat is, as it were, lost in us.

I. As for those things, which are requisite before we come to the Lord's table, they are these.

1. A consideration, what need I have of the sacrament. Is there any such necessity of it? Examine then, what need have I to eat my meat and receive my drink? When we see God brings this before us, let us reason thus with ourselves; it is as needful for the nourishment of my soul to receive the sacrament, as for my body to take meat and drink. This is that whereby we are spiritually strengthened and enabled to hold out to the last. And here I will not stand to dispute the case, whether a man may fall from grace, or not. And no doubt, but he may: yet I say not, that he doth. I say, no doubt but he may; and why? There is such an opposition, and antipathy betwixt the flesh and the spirit, that did not God refresh the spirit now and then, it might be overborne by the bulk of our corruptions. Now God's ordinances are appointed to keep it in heart, and refresh it, as the sick spouse was "staid with apples, and comforted with flagons." And God hath appointed his sacrament of the Lord's supper to strengthen, and continue that life, which we received in baptism, as by spiritual nourishment. In baptism our stock of life is given us; by the sacrament of the holy eucharist it is confirmed and continued. If a child be born only, and after birth not nourished; there is none but will know what a death such a soul will die. It will quickly perish by famine. So it is here, unless Christ be pleased to nourish that life, which he hath breathed into me in baptism, and by his ordinances to give me a new supply and addition of grace; I am a dead man, I am gone for ever, upon this ground, that I receive not the never perishing food, that endureth (as Christ who is himself that meat teacheth us) unto "everlasting life." Therefore upon examination, being conscious, and privy to the weakness of my faith, to the manifold imperfections of my spirit, to my want of knowledge, the frailty of my memory, my often doubtings, the dangers of relapsing,

and falling back in my Christian progress, I cannot but apprehend, that it is no needless thing for me to come both often, and preparedly, to the Lord's table.

2. The next action requisite before my coming to the sacrament, is the whetting of my appetite, and preparing of my stomach; I must come with an hungry desire, as a man that comes to his meat, that would live and be strong: we think meat very ill bestowed on him, that hath no stomach: unless we eat Christ's body, and drink his blood, we can have no spiritual life. All the question, and the main business is, whether I come hungry, and thirsty, or not, as an hungry and thirsty man, with an appetite after his meat, and liquor; longing after Christ, "as the hart after the water brooks." When a man comes dully, and as children that play with their meat, cares not whether he eats or not; when a man comes, I say, without an appetite, it is time for God to take it away from him. It is an unworthy coming to come with an unprepared stomach, and without whetting our faith, to feed on Christ Jesus crucified.

3. The third action requisite to a worthy comer, is cleansing of himself. I would fain come, may a man say, to the Lord's table, having such need of it, as I have, and having such an appetite, and desire to feed on Christ; but I am to come before a great King, therefore I must "wash mine hands in innocency." In the Gospel according to St. Mark, the Jews found fault with Christ's disciples, because they came with unclean or common hands. For so the word signifies, and is so used by the apostles as equivalent thereunto. "I have learned to call nothing common or unclean." Now when I come to meet the Lord in his ordinances, I must "putx off my feet, for the place where I stand is holy." "Wash your hands you sinners, and purify your hearts you double minded." The purifying of the soul is that which is required of every worthy communicant. We come now

not to receive life, but strength; and that it may strengthen us, we must of necessity cleanse ourselves. A stomach over clogged with choler, whatever meat may be taken into it, it turns it into its own nature: so is it here, unless the vessel be clean, quodcunque infundis, acescit. Christ Jesus, the purest thing in the world, is to come into my soul, as into a sanctuary, and shall not I fit, trim and garnish it to receive him, but leave it as a pig-sty? Know therefore, that thou comest unworthily when thou comest with unwashed hands. The people were to be sanctified when they came to receive the law. And so must we, if we will receive the benefit from the business in hand. But I cannot stand on all. I pass from this therefore, to the second thing I proposed; and that was,

II. Those things which were required of us in the action. And there we have the acts of the minister in the administration: I must not look on these as idle ceremonies, but as real representations, otherwise we take God's name in vain. I must look upon the minister, who represents the person of Christ, and by the eyes of faith see Christ himself offered for me, when I see the bread broken, the wine poured out. Whosoever, therefore, thou art, who wouldst worthily partake of Christ at the holy table, behold him offered to thee, when the minister bids thee take, and eat; take, and drink. And when the minister bids thee take, know that in as good earnest as the minister offers thee the bread and wine, the Lord offers thee his Son, Christ Jesus. Take Christ my Son, dead, and crucified for thee. Consider, when thou seest the minister set the bread and wine apart, how God from all eternity set apart his Son for us: if we have not done this, we must do it. See the manner of the setting apart of the lamb, which was a type of Christ; "In the tenth day of the month they shall take unto them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers:" this lamb was to be "set apart and taken out of the flock." And in the fifth verse: "It must be a lamb without blemish: then you

shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month." From the tenth day to the fourteenth it was to be kept: this typified that Lamb of God, that was so set apart. Then was the Lamb to be killed: by whom? by all the congregation of Israelb. And thus was Christ to be singled out, and to be slain: Every mother's son had a hand in killing this Lamb of God. He is set apart to suffer for sinners, picked out as a single deer; which being designed to the game, the hounds will follow only, and no other. Thus was Christ hunted to death by one sorrow after another, till he gave up the ghost upon the cross. In the Gospel according to St. John, we read how the people took "branches of palm trees," and went forth to meet Christ, and that was the day the lamb was set apart; and he was so set apart, till the Jews' passover. This concerns me, saith Christ. Christ saw himself typified in the lamb that was set apart: observe then on that very day, "Father," saith he, "deliver me from that hour." On that very day in the lamb he saw himself to be sacrificed by all the congregation of Israel. We were all of us actors in the business; not one here, but had a hand in the offering up of the Son of God, in killing Christ Jesus.

Thus for these actions of the minister, the setting apart of the bread and of the wine. Then follows the breaking of the bread, and the pouring out of the wine. At the breaking of the bread, consider Christ's flesh torn asunder, all the lashes which made such scratches in his flesh, the ruptures which were made by the nails, and the spear that pierced his side. The breaking of him by his Father; the word signifies, crushing him to powder: "God would break him," saith the prophet, "even to powder." At the consideration hereof how should our faith, be stirred and set awake! Thou takest God's name in vain, if with a dull eye thou canst see things, and not take it to heart.

The next action is the pouring out of the wine: "This is my blood," saith Christ, "drink you all of this." Dost thou see the wine poured

out? at that very instant, consider how much blood Christ spilt, how much he poured forth: and that not only in the very time of his passion, when he hung upon the cross, when-the spears pierced his sides, when the nails bored, and digged his hands and feet: but that which he shed in the garden in the cold winter time, when he shed great drops, great clots of blood, thickest blood that pierced his garment, and ran down upon the ground. Consider how much blood he lost, when he was whipped, and lashed: when the spear came to the very pericardium; thus let us weigh his torments, and it will be a means to make us much affected with his sufferings for us.

But this is not all, there is another thing yet in the blood: this was but the outward part of his sufferings. Yet some there are, who are against Christ's sufferings in his soul; if it were so, say they, then something either in the sacrifices of the old Testament or in the new Testament, should signify it. Whatever such persons object against it, I am sure there was as much in the sacrifices of the old Testament, as could possibly be in a type to signify it. Now that I may make this to appear, know that in every sacrifice, there were two parts, or two things considerable, and those were the body and the blood: the whole was to be made a sacrifice, viz. both body and blood; the body was to be burned, the blood to be poured forth: now nothing in a beast can signify the sufferings of Christ in soul, better than the pouring out of the blood. The blood was the life, and this is that which had a relation to the soul, and was therefore, as in the same place appears, poured out as an atonement for the soul. And to this in our common prayers there is an allusion, viz. "Grant us gracious Lord so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood." And in Isaiah, chap. 53 ver. 12 the metaphor holds: "He poured out his soul unto death for us." So that whatever some have fondly thought, it is evident and

manifest that Christ suffered both in soul and body: both soul and body were made an offering for sin, in the fashion of sin who knew no sin. I should have gone further, but the time cuts me off.

SERMON XIV:

Mercy and Grace in our Time of Need - Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

IN handling heretofore the doctrine of the conversion of a sinner, I declared and shewed you what man's misery was, and what that great hope of mercy is that the Lord proposeth to the greatest sinner in the world. I shewed unto you the means whereby we may be made partakers of Christ; and that was by the grace of faith, which doth let fall all other things in a man's self, and comes with an open and empty hand, to lay hold on Christ, and fill itself with him. I shewed you also the acts of faith as it jusfies.

And now, because it is a point of high moment, wherein all our comfort stands, and in which it lies, I thought good to resume it all again, so far as may concern our practice, that we may see what the work of God's Spirit is from the first to the last, and the conversion of a sinner from the corruptions and pollutions of the flesh in which he

wallowed; and to this purpose have I chosen this place of Scripture, wherein we are encouraged by God's blessed word, that whatever we are, though accursed, and the greatest sinners in the world; and that whatever we want, we should come to God's throne of grace.

And we are to think that whatever sins are or have been committed, and though our sins are never so great, yet that they are not so great as the infiniteness of God's mercy; especially having such, not only an Intercessor, but Advocate to plead the right of our cause, so that Christ comes, and he pleads payment; and that however our debts are great, and we run far in score, yet he is our ransom: and therefore now God's justice being satisfied, why should not his mercy have place and free course? This is the great comfort that a Christian hath, that he may come freely, and boldly to God, because he comes but as for an acquittance of what is already paid. As a debtor will appear boldly before his creditor, when he knows his debt is discharged, he will not then be afraid to look him in the face. Now we may come and say, Blessed Father, the debt is paid, I pray give me pardon of my sins, give me my acquittance. And this is that boldness and access spoken of: "In whom we have access by faith."

Now that I may not spend too much time needlessly, come we to the ground and matter in the words: wherein there is,

1. A preparative grace.

2. The act itself whereby we are made partakers of the grace of God.

First, the preparatives are two, the law and the Gospel, and wrought by them.

The first preparative.

1. Wrought by the law. The law works in a time of great need, or rather by the operative power of the law convincing us of sin, we are made sensible of our need and deep poverty: this is the first preparative, for a man to be brought to see he stands in great need of God's mercy, and Christ's blood; so that the sinner cries out, Lord, I stand in great want of mercy. His eyes being thus opened, he is no longer a stranger at home, but he sees the case is wondrous hard with him; so that he concludes, unless. God be merciful unto me in Christ, I am lost and undone for ever. This is the first preparative; and till we come to it, we can never approach the throne of grace. The second is,

2. Wrought by the Gospel: I see I stand in great need; but by this second preparative we see a throne of grace set up, and that adds comfort unto me. If God had only a throne and seat of justice, I were utterly undone; I see my debt is extremely great; but the Gospel reveals unto me, that God of his infinite mercy, hath erected a throne of grace, a city of refuge, that finding myself in need, my soul may fly unto.

And now to fit us for this, God's blessed Spirit works by his word, to open unto us the rigour and strictness of the law, and our wants; to enlighten our understandings, that we stand in great need; to win our affection, and open the Gospel and its comforts.

Therefore, first for the time of need, the law reveals unto us our woful condition, to be born in sin, as the Pharisee said, and yet not able to see it. Every man may say in generalities, I am a sinner; yet to say, and know himself to be such a sinner as indeed he is, to stand in such need; that he cannot do. This one would think to be a matter of sense, but unless God's Spirit open our eyes, we can never see ourselves to be such sinners as we are; or else what is the reason that

the child of God cries out more against his sin and the weight thereof after his conversion, than he did before? What, are his sins greater or more, than they were formerly? No, but his light is greater; his eyes are opened, and now he sees more clearly what sin is. When the sun shines, and its rays come in, what a number of motes do we discover, which before we saw not? Not as if the sun-beams made them, or the sun raised the dust; no, there are here as many motes, and as much dust flying about, as if the sun shined here: what is the matter then; why this; the sun discovers them to us. So that here is the point, our sins in our souls are as motes in the air, and are not more than they were before conversion; but we cannot see them, till the glorious beams of God's Spirit shine upon us. The sight of sin, and of the danger that comes by it, is the work of God's Spirit. The Spirit discovers sin unto us; "When the spirit cometh, he shall convince the world of sin:" the word is ἐλέγξει, the Spirit shall convince them: and the same word is used where faith is said to be "the evidence of things not seen," ἔλεγχος. Heretofore we had a slight imagination of our sins; but to have our mouth stopped, and to be convinced, is not a work of flesh and blood, but of "God's Spirit." Till we are awakened by his Spirit, we cannot see, nor feel, the mountains and heaps of sins, that lie upon our souls. Thoue art dead in sin. Thou art in bondage; and to know it is a work of the Spirit, not of nature. The spirit of bondage, what is that? Why, however we are all bondmen, until the Son hath made us free, in a woful estate, slaves to sin and Satan; yet till God's Spirit convince us, and shew it us, and make us know it, we shall sleep secure, are not afraid, but think ourselves the freest men in the world, and see not this to be a time of need. This therefore is the first preparative, when God brings his people by Mount Sinai: "For you are not come unto the mountain that may be touched, and that burned by fire, nor unto the blackness, and darkness, and tempest:" so, Mountg Sinai is made a figure of the law, which begets bondage. Not that mount which might be touched, and

that burned with fire, where was the sound of the trumpet, and voice of words, such a sound as never before was heard, nor never will be till one day we shall hear the same. The sound of the trumpet which sounded at the delivery of the law, in Exodus, where it is described; for when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, that Moses heard, it was such a noise, a great noise at first, but it grew higher and higher, and at last it came to that height that it was almost incomprehensible; then Moses spake: and what spake he? The Holy Ghost sets not down what he spake in that place. Look in Hebrews: "Soi terrible was the voice, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake," such a kind of lightning and loud voice this was; the Lord commands such a voice as this: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." When God shall sound with the voice of the trumpet of his holy word, of his law, and shew thee that thou art a traitorous rebel, and there is an execution gone out against thee, body and goods: when God sounds thus to a deaf ear of a carnal man, then cometh the spirit of bondage of necessity on him, which shews that we have a time of need. The law must have this operation before thou comest to the throne of grace. None will fly to the city of refuge, till the revenger of blood be hard at his heels: nor any to Christ till he sees his want: thus the Lord makes us know our need by turning the edge of his axe towards us. Offenders, when they are brought to the bar at Westminster for treason, have the edge of the axe turned from them; but when they have received the sentence of condemnation, and are carried back to the tower, the edge of the axe is turned towards them. Thus is it here; the law turns the edge of God's axe towards us; and therefore it is said of St. Peter's hearers: "Thatl they were pricked to the heart." The law puts the point of God's sword to our very breasts as it were, and brings us to see that we stand in great need of a pardon. This is the first preparative; when God enlightens our minds to see our

dangerous estate; and then there must of necessity follow fear, and desire to be rid of this condition; for the will and affections always follow the temper of the mind: and hence, when a man hath a false persuasion that he is in a good case, that he is safe and well, what works it but pride, presumption, confidence and security? So on the contrary, when this persuasion appears to be delusion, contrary effects must follow. If a man be in health and jollity, and on a sudden be proclaimed a traitor, that he must lose his life and goods, is it possible it should be thus, and he not wrought on, nor have any alteration? So when news comes from the law, that thou art a dead man, and everlastingly must perish, the law then works wrath, that is, it manifests unto us the wrath of God. When it is thus, there follows a shaking and trembling, and it is impossible but with Moses thou shouldest "exceedingly quake and tremble."

2. For all this, there is a throne of grace erected; God hath not forgotten to be merciful, though thy sins be never so great: this is the next preparative for faith, namely, the discovery and acknowledgment of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. We see in Ezra: "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; we have trespassed;" what then? must we be the subjects of God's wrath? No: yet notwithstanding though we have committed this great offence, "there is hope in Israel concerning this thing." What, though we have provoked God to indignation, must we be the matter of his wrath to work on? No: there is balm in Gilead. "Isn there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" What though then we are sick to death? yet there is an help in time of need. And this knowledge of the people, that there is a throne of grace, is the first comfort comes to a miserable and sinful soul. A man that hath a deadly disease, though the physician do him no good which he hath

made use of, yet this he comforts himself in, when he sees a physician that hath cured the same disease, he sees then there is some hope. Thus it is with a sinful soul. When the welcome news of the Gospel comes, after the law hath discovered his disease, and says, Be not discouraged, there is a throne of grace prepared for thee: God hath a seat of justice to deal with rebels and open traitors; but if thou art weary of thy estate, if thou wilt submit to God, take Christ for thy King, and cast down all thy weapons, if thou wilt live like a subject, he hath prepared a throne of grace for thee. Christ is thy attorney in the court to plead for thee; he is not as the papists made him, so stout, and one that takes such state on him, as that a man may not come near him. This is the highest injury that can be offered to Christ, to think that any creature hath more mercy and pity than he hath: it is to rob Christ of the fairest flower in his garden, when we rob him of his mercy and pity. Mark that place, that we may not think him austere: "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with our infirmities, with the feeling of our infirmities."

Christ is no hard hearted man: when you were his enemies he loved you, insomuch that he humbled himself, and suffered death, even the death of the cross for you. And he hath the self same bowels in heaven that he had on earth; he wept over Jerusalem, and the self same weeping heart carried he to heaven with him, the self same weeping eyes: believe not then the papists, that he is so hard hearted, or so stately, and that his mother is more ready to speak for us; fie on it. This is to pervert the Gospel, and make Christ no Christ. "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest." Alas, poor soul, saith Christ, what the malice of the Devil is, I know by mine own experience in the flesh; for "Christ was tempted in all things according to us, sin only excepted." I know what the

temptations of the world are; but whereas we have three enemies, the Devil, the world, and the flesh, only the two former were his. Christ had the temptations of the world and the Devil, not of the corrupt flesh; for he had no corrupt flesh: a man that hath been himself in terrible tempests on the sea, when he sees a storm, out of his own experience he pities those that are in it; whereas others are not a jot moved: for he hath seen that consternation of mind, which on every side appeared; that plurima mortis imago: whereas others, having not been there, lay not their miseries to heart. Christ having fostered himself, and being tempted as it were, is sensible of our miseries; and therefore never count it boldness to come boldly to him, that gives thee this encouragement; "Come boldly to the throne of grace." We must understand that all this is before faith, we must

1. Know that we have a need.

2. That there is a throne of grace, when God enlightens my conscience, and encourages me to come. And thus having spoken of the preparatives, I come to the work, the main thing itself. Now this is,

2. The act, coming; this coming is believing; as the feet which carry a man to the place he would be in; his feet carry him nearer and nearer. If a man cannot be cured but by the bath, his feet must carry him thither. Now faith is the legs of the soul, the feet that carry us unto Christ: whereas we are afar off, and draw back as all unbelievers; now by believing we draw near. Now as unbelievers draw back, so believers draw forward; and therefore, to come to Christ and to believe in him are the self-same thing: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Coming is there made an act of faith, and the same thing with it: the one is the explication of the other; thy coming to Christ is thy

believing in him, When thou hearest of a throne of grace, and seest the Lord of glory stretching out his golden sceptre, come and touch it, take the benefit of the king's pardon. If a man know there is such a throne of grace, he must come unto it; and now begins faith to work.

And that thou mayest understand it the better, know that faith then begins first to work, when thou settest the first step towards the throne of grace. And this is the hour in which salvation is come unto thy house. "None can come to me," saith Christ, "except my Father draw him." If thou seest a virtue to come from Christ, and to draw thee as an adamant, and thou feelest that loadstone working on thee, then begins faith: it makes thee draw near to Christ, whereas before thou wert a stranger: till then thou art like thy grandfather Adam, thou runnest away, and thinkest thyself most secure, when thou wast farthest from God; but now thou seest no comfort, unless thou draw nigh unto him; as the apostle saith: "It is he that worketh in us the will and the deed;" this must be wrought in us by God.

First, a will, then the deed; and then it is not only, I would do such a thing, but I do it: God works not only the will of coming, but the deed of coming; and all his acts are acts of faith, and have a promise; God makes no promise, till we be in Christ; till we have faith, we are no heirs of the promise; when a man sets his face towards Jerusalem, and begins to set himself to go to Christ, all he doth then hath the promise; not a tear now that he sheds but is precious, God puts it into his bottle; not a cup of cold water, that now he gives, but shall have a great reward; this is a blessed thing, when every thing we do hath a promise annexed to it, when every step we step hath a promise made to it. Now when the will is the first thing that is wrought in us; this is that which makes the act of faith, that is, I have a will, a resolution to do this: and the apostle makes it more than the very deed itself, as I may so say: "Fors this is expedient for you, who

have begun before not only to do, but to be forward." So we translate it, but look in the margin, and it is rendered to be willing, τὸ θέλειν, as the Greek hath it; as if the will were more than the deed itself; for a man to come unwillingly, it is nothing worth; the ground work is the will, which is a greater matter than the deed. Nothing more separates a man from Christ, than to say, "I will not have this man to reign over me." But if thou canst frame thy will that it shall go perpendicularly on the object, and accept Christ on the terms offered, that is faith; and that hath the promise. And therefore the Scripture compares it to conjunction with Christ. And as in the sacrament, we spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood; the conjunction is between Christ and his Church. And therefore the Scripture compares our conjunction by faith to the mystery of wedlock. What makes a marriage? it is consent. Wilt thou have this man to be thy husband? she answers, I will; that expression makes the marriage. The knot is knit by this mutual pledging of troth, all other things are but subsequents of it. So God saith, Wilt thou have my Son? Thou shalt have with him all his wealth, though for a time thou must go bare, and fare hard; yet thou shalt have a kingdom: when a man considers deliberately, here is the loss, I must deny myself, and obey him, but I shall have a kingdom, God's blessing, and peace of conscience; all things considered, casting the best with the worst, then the resolution is, "this is a true saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." I will take him on any terms, be they never so hard, for I shall be a saver in the end: when we take Christ, as it were, with all his faults; such his cross, and the afflictions of the Gospel seem to our carnal apprehensions: though to St. Paul these were the chief, indeed the only matter of his boasting: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

When, I say, we can thus take, Christ, this is the will which God requires. There is another comparison in Scripture, it is compared to hunger and thirst. Believing was expressed by coming. Believing is expressed by hungering and thirsting. So when I see such a will and desire after Christ, that I hunger and thirst after him, that a hungry man longeth not more for bread, nor the hart thirsteth more for the water-brooks, than my soul doth for Christ; why then there is a promise made unto us; and a promise is never made unto us, till we be in Christy. We find promises in them all; "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, they shall be filled." Consider here what the nature of hunger and thirst is; "they shall be filled," which implies they were empty before, but now they shall be filled. Suppose now I am not filled with Christ, what, am I without him? No, I want him; yet there is a blessing to the hungry and thirsty, and there is no blessing without faith. If we be not heirs of the faith, we cannot be heirs of the blessing. Dost thou find in thyself an hungering and thirsting after Christ? Thou art blessed, this faith will save thee. Now faith will say, I am wonderfully pained, faint, and even starved, that I cannot be filled with Christ; yet be content man, thou shalt be filled with him; in the mean while thou hast him, and hast blessedness with him, and shalt be blessed. It is said: "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." Mark how the apostle distinguishes these two things; thou believest on the name of Christ, yet sayest thou, though I believe, I am not sure of my salvation, I do not know it. Why, let not that much trouble thee, that is a consequent of it, and that assurance will follow after; therefore you should not confound it with believing: "These things have I written unto you that ye might know:" then there is a conclusion to be deduced from the premisses, so that a man may

have full hold of Christ, and yet not be fully assured of his salvation. So then here is the will, which is the first thing.

But the Lord works the deed also. And whereas it is said that God takes the will for the deed, the place had need be well understood: when we say God takes the will for the deed, it is not always true, unless it be thus understood. When a man hath done to the utmost of his power what he is able, hath endeavoured by all means, then God will take the will for the deed; but if there be ability in me, and I do not as much as I am able, I do not my utmost endeavour, then God will not take it; but now God works the will and the deed; when a man comes to the throne of grace, and sets forward in his journey towards God, the first thing he doth is to come to the throne of grace with Christ in his arms, and then having fast hold on Christ, he hastens and delays not, having hold as Joab on the horns of the altar. He hastens, he sees it is no time to delay, he sees it is now a time of need; and need, as the old proverb is, makes the old wife trot. Is it not need to make haste (when the pursuer of blood follows) to the city of refuge? who would make delays and demurs, and not run as fast as his legs would carry him? As soon as I apprehend my need, and see the golden sceptre stretched out, then I come with might and main with Christ in my arms, and present him to the Father, and this is the approaching and drawing near in the text, to the throne of grace.

But now when I am come thither, what do I say there? What, shall I come and say nothing? The prodigal son resolved to go to his father, and say, "I will up and go," there is the will; "and say," there is his speech. The believer is not like to the son that said to his father, I will go, but went not; and when his father bids him come, he will come; he will not only say so, but will draw near, and then he hath a promise: "He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." But when

we come thither, what must we do? why we must take unto ourselves words, according to the prophet's expression: "Taked unto you words, and go unto the Lord, and say, Take away all our iniquities, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." When he comes to the throne of grace, the thing that he doth, is, he presents unto the Father Christ, bleeding, gasping, dying, buried, and conquering death; and when he presents Christ to him, he opens his case, and confesses his sin to the full, and says, Lord, this is my case: as a beggar when he comes to ask an alms of you, he will make a preface, and tell you his extremity; Sir, I am in great want, I have not tasted a bit of bread in so many days, and unless you help me by your charity, I am utterly undone. Now when these two concur, that there is true need in the beggar, and liberality in him, of whom he begs, it encourages the beggar to be importunate, and he prevails; you may know when the beggar hath need by his tone, accent or language: the needy beggar's tone and accent is different from the sturdy beggar's that hath no need; but yet, though the beggar be in great misery, if he see a churlish Nabal go by him, he hath no heart to beg, and follows him not, nor begs so hard, because he hath but litttle hope to attain any thing from him. But I say, let both these meet together; first, that the beggar is in great need, then, that he of whom he begs is very liberal, it makes him beg hard; but now cannot he pray without book? Think not that I speak against praying by the book; you are deceived if you think so; but there must be words taken to us besides, which perhaps a book will not yield us. A beggar's need will make him speak, and he will not hide his sores; but if he hath any sore more ugly or worse than another, he will uncover it; Good sir, behold my woful and distressed case, he lays all open to provoke pity. So, when thou comest before God in confession, canst thou not find out words to open thyself to Almighty God, not one word whereby thou mayest unlap thy sores, and beseech him to look on thee with an eye of pity? I must not mince my sins, but amplify and

aggravate them, that God may be moved to pardon me; till we do thus, we cannot expect that God should forgive us. A great ado there is about auricular confession, but it is a mere babble; it were better to cry out our sins at the high cross, than to confess in a priest's ear. Thou whisperest in the priest's ear; what if he never tell it, or if he do, art thou the better? Come and pour out thy heart and soul before Almighty God, confess thyself to him as David did, for that hath a promise made to it: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." Why so? Why, one main cause why we should confess sin, is to justify God. When a sinner confesses, I am a child of wrath, and of death; if thou castest me into hell, as justly thou mayest, I have received but my due; when a man does thus (as the king's attorney may frame a bill of indictment against himself) he justifies Almighty God. He gives God the honour of that justice, which at the present he executes in pouring horror into the conscience of the sinner, and hath farther in store in providing the lake of fire and brimstone for the impenitent. Thus did David: "Against thee, against thee," &c. Now when we have thus aggravated our misery, comes the other part of begging, to cry for mercy with earnestness, and here is the power of the Spirit. It is one thing for a man to pray, and another thing for a man to say a prayer, but to pray and cry for mercy, as David did, in good earnest, to wrestle with God, to say, Lord, my life lies in it, I will never give thee over, I will not go with a denial; this is termed συναγωίζεσθαι, this is the work of God's Spirit. I named you a place where the apostle exhorts, "but ye, beloved, build up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost;" there is the prayer of the faithful, to pray in the Holy Ghost. And in the Ephesians we read of an armour provided for all the parts of a man's body, yet will not serve the turn, unless prayer come in as the chief: "Prayingg always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all

perseverance." This is the prayer of faith, that procures forgiveness of sins; we must pray in faith, and in the Spirit; that is the language, which God understands. He knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, and knoweth none else but that: many men are wonderously deceived in that which they call the spirit of prayer. One thinks it is a faculty to set out one's desires in fair words, shewing earnestness, and speaking much in an extemporary prayer. This we think commendable, yet this is not the spirit of prayer. One that shall never come to heaven, may be more ready in this, than the child of God; for it is a matter of skill and exercise; the spirit of prayer is another thing. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." What shall we think then, that the Holy Ghost groans or speaks in prayer? No: but it makes us groan, and though we speak not a word, yet it so enlarges our hearts, as that we send up a volley of sighs and groans which reach the throne of grace. And this is the spirit of prayer, when with these sighs and groans I beg, as it were, for my life. This is that ardent affection the Scripture speaks of. A cold prayer will never get forgiveness of sins; it is the prayer of faith which prevails. The prayer of the people availeth much, if it be ἐργουμένη, fervent. In the ancient churches those that were possessed with an evil spirit, were called ἐνεργούμενοι, because that caught them up, and made them do actions not suitable to their nature; prayer is a fire from heaven, which if thou hast it, will carry all heaven before it; there is nothing in the world so strong as a Christian thus praying: prayers that are kindled with such a zeal, are compared to Jacob's wrestling with the angel, whereby he had power over the angel. The prophet expounds what this wrestling was, "he wept and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with him." This is the wrestling with God, when thou fillest heaven with thy sighs and sobs, and bedewest thy couch with thy tears as David did; and hast thy

resolution with Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." God loves this kind of boldness in a beggar, that he will not go away without an answer. As the poor widow in the parable that would not give over her suit, so that the judge, though he feared not God, nor cared for man, by reason of her importunity, granted her desire. Mark the other thing in the apostle, he bids us pray with the Spirit, and with perseverance; and he that cometh thus hath a promise made to it: "He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Call on me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee;" it is set down fully: "Ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." One would think this were idem per idem, but it is not so. He bids us "ask and it shall be given, seek and you shall find." There is a promise annexed to asking, seeking and knocking, but it is also proved by universal experience; for every one that asketh, &c. It is every man's case, never any man did it yet, that hath lost his labour, in not attaining what he asked. If thou hast it not yet, thou shalt have it in the end; it is so fair a petition to ask, to have thy sins pardoned, that God would be friends with thee, and that Christ would make thee love him: and that God would be thy God, that God delights in it. This is the point then; suppose God answer not presently, yet knock still, seek still; that is perseverance, the thing whereby it is distinguished from temporary asking. The hypocrite will pray in a time of need and adversity, but his prayer is not constant: "Willl the hypocrite always call upon God?" If they come and seek God, and he will not answer, as Saul did, they will try the Devil. God would not answer Saul, and he presently goes to the Devil. It is not so with God's children; they pray, and pray, and wait still; they pray with the Spirit, and with perseverance; God deals not always alike with his children, but differently, sometimes he makes them wait his leisure. "I said I would confess my sins," says David, "and my transgressions,

and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." So Daniel, chap. 9 ver. 21. "When he set himself to seek God, even while he was speaking and praying, the man Gabriel appeared unto him, and touched him about the time of the evening oblation." Before the word was out of his mouth God was at his heart, and presently sends him a dispatch. The like we see in Isaiah, chap. 65 ver. 24 mark what a promise there is; "It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." This is a great encouragement; but it may be God will not always do this, and what is the reason? Why, he hath a wonderful great delight to be wrestled withal, and to hear the words of his own Spirit; nothing is more delightful to him than this, when the Spirit is earnest, and will not give over. "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." It is said in the Canticles, "honeyo is under the lips of the Church." Why so? it is because there is no honey sweeter to the palate, than spiritual prayer to God. And therefore God delays to answer thee, because he would have more of it. If the musicians come and play at our doors, or windows, if we delight not in their music, we throw them out money presently, that they may be gone; but if the music please us, we forbear to give them money, because we would keep them longer, for we like the music. So the Lord loves and delights in the sweet words of his children: and therefore puts them off, and answers them not presently: but God's children, let him deny them never so long, yet they will never leave knocking and begging; they will pray, and they will wait still, till they receive an answer. Many will pray to God, as prayer is a duty, but few use it as a means to attain a blessing. Those who come to God in the use of it as a means to attain what they would have, they will pray, and not give over; they will expect an answer, and never give over petitioning till they receive it.

SERMON XV:

Peace with God through Christ - Romans 5:1

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

HAVING declared unto you the nature of faith, and that point which concerns the practice of it in our near approach unto God; I am now come to show unto you the fruits and benefits Christians receive from this mother-grace; and that the apostle sets down in these words.

He sets down,

1. The mother-grace itself, together with its principal benefit, justification, or reconciliation with God: that whereas we were afar off, we are made near; and of enemies, made friends of God. Then,

2. There are the daughters or handmaids of this grace. For when we are justified by faith, then,

1. We have peace with God; the peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding; then,

2. We have free access by faith unto the throne of grace, so that we need not look for any other mediators. Christ hath made way for us to God, so that we may go boldly to the throne of grace, and find help at any time of need.

3. There follows a joyful hope, that a Christian hath by it, a taste of heaven, before he come to enjoy it. "We rejoice in hope," saith the apostle; hope being as firm a thing as faith, faith makes things absent as present; hope hath patience with it, and would have us wait. We shall be sure of it, but yet we must wait patiently.

4. Not only rejoicing in hope, but even in that which spoils a natural man's joy, as in crosses, troubles, afflictions; for even these are made the matter of this man's joy, not delectable objects only. Not in time to come after afflictions, but in afflictions; so as that which spoils the joy of a natural man, is fuel to kindle this man's joy.

Now concerning justification by faith; though it be an ordinary point, yet there is nothing more needs explication, than to know how a man shall be justified by faith. It is easily spoken, hardly explicated; therefore in this mother-grace, I shall shew you,

1. What faith is, that doth justify. And,

2. What this justification is. For it is not so easy a matter neither.

1. Concerning the nature of faith, I have spoken sufficiently already wherein it consists; but yet notwithstanding, there is a certain thing as like this faith as may be, and yet comes short of it. Many there are who are like the foolish virgins, that thought they were well enough, and thought they should come time enough. So many think verily that they have faith; yea, and perchance go with such a persuasion to their very graves, and think they have grace, and that they labour

after Christ, and lay hold on him, and are free from worldly pollutions, so as that they have a taste and relish of the joy of the world to come, and yet are carried all this while in a fool's paradise, and think there is no fear of their safety; never knowing that they are castaways, till they come to the gates of hell, and find themselves by woful experience shut out of heaven. And their case is woful, that are thus deceived. Know then, that it is not every faith that justifies a man; a man may have faith, and yet not be justified. The faith that justifies, is the faith of God's elect. There is a faith that may belong to them that are not God's elect, but that faith does not justify. In the epistle of Timothy, that faith which justifies must be a faith unfeignedb. Now here is the skill of a Christian to try what that faith is, which justifies him. Now this justifying faith is not every work of God's Spirit in a man's heart: for there are supernatural operations of the Spirit in a man's heart, that are but temporary, that carry him not thorough, and therefore are ineffectual: but the "end of this faith is the salvation of our souls." We read in the Scripture of apostacy, and falling back. Now they cannot be apostates, that were never in the way of truth. This being an accident, we must have a subject for it; now there is a certain kind of people that have supernatural workings; some that are drawn up and down with every wind of doctrine; these are they that have this cold and temporary faith; temporary, because in the end it discovers itself to be a thing not constant and permanent. We read in John, chap. 11 ver. 26 that "they that are born of God," that is, that live and believe in Christ, "never see death," shall never perish eternally; but yet we must know withal, that there may be conceptions that will never come to the birth, to a right and perfect delivery. And thus it may be in the soul of a man, there may be conceptions that will never come to a ripe birth; but let a man be born of God, and come to perfection of birth, and the case is clear, he shall never see death. "He that liveth and believeth in me,

shall not see death." And this is made a point of faith: believest thou this?

There is another thing called conception, and that is, certain dispositions to a birth, that come not to full perfection. True, a child that is born and liveth, is as perfectly alive as he that liveth an hundred years: yet I say, there are conceptions that come not to a birth. Now, the faith that justifies, is a living faith: there is a certain kind of dead faith; this is a feigned, that an unfeigned faith; "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Dost thou think a dead faith can make a living soul? It is against reason. A man cannot live by a dead thing, not by a dead faith. Now a dead faith there is. A faith that doth not work is a dead faith. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works and by his works was faith made perfect?" for verse 26. "As the body without the spirit is dead," or without breath is dead, "so faith without works is dead also." See how the apostle compares it, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The apostle makes not works the form of faith, as the soul is the form of the man: but as the body without the spirit is dead, so that faith, that worketh not, that hath no tokens of life, is dead; but then doth not the other word strike home? Faith wrought with his works. It seems here is, as the papists say, fides informis, and works make it up as the ἐντελέχεια of it. But compare this with the other places of the Scripture and the difficulty will be cleared, for instance weigh that place, 2 Cor. chap. 12 ver. 9 where the apostle prayed to God, that the messenger of Satan might be removed from him; and he said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." What? Does our weakness make God's strength more perfect, to which nothing can be added? No, it is, my strength and the perfection of it, is made known in the weakness of the means that I made use of for the delivery of man's soul from death. So here the excellency and

perfection of our faith is made known by works; when I see that it is not an idle, but a working faith, then I say it is made perfect by the work: when it is a dead faith, that puts not a man on work, never believe that will make a living soul. In St. Jude's epistle, ver. 20 it hath another epithet, viz. "the most holy faith:" not holy only, but most holy. That faith which must bring a man to know God the holy of holies, must be most holy. It is said, that "God dwells in our hearts by faith." Now God and faith dwelling in a heart together, that heart must needs be pure and clean. Faith makes the heart pure: it were a most dishonourable thing to entertain God in a sty, a filthy and unclean heart: but if faith dwell there, it makes a fit house for the habitation of the King of Saints, therefore it purifieth the heart. Well then, dost thou think thy sins are forgiven thee: and that thou hast a strong faith, and yet art as profane, and as filthy as ever? How can it be? It is a most holy faith that justifieth, it is not a faith that will suffer a man to lie on a dunghill, or in the gutter with the hog. There may be a faith, which is somewhat like this, but it is but temporary, and cometh short of it.

But now there is another thing which distinguishes it: it is the peculiar work of faith. "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but the new creature;" and again: "Neitherh circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but faith which worketh by love." It is twice set down. Now what is a new creature? Why, he that hath such a faith, as works by love: not a dead faith, but a faith that works; but how does it work? it not only abstains from evil, and does some good acts, which a temporary may do, but it is such a faith as works by love. The love of God constrains him, and he so loveth God, as that he hates evil for God's sake; the other does it not out of love to God: all the love he hath, is self-love: he serves his own turn on God rather than hath any true love to serve him.

Now that we may the better distinguish between these two, I shall endeavour to shew you how far one may go farther, than the other. I know not a more difficult point than this, nor a case more to be cut by a thread, than this; it being a point of conscience; therefore, first, I declared unto you the nature of faith; how God first works the will and the deed, and that there is a hungering and thirsting after Christ. First, I say, there is a will and desire to be made partaker of Christ and his righteousness; then there is the deed too. We are not only wishers and woulders, but do actually approach unto the throne of grace, and there lay hold on Christ, touch the golden sceptre, which he holdeth out unto us; but,

OBJ. Now you will ask, Is there not an earnest and good desire in a temporary faith, a desire unfeigned?

SOL. Yes, there may be for a time, a greater and more vehement desire in a temporary, than in a true believer, than in the elect themselves, all their life.

OBJ. Where is the difference then? I thought all had been well with me, when I had such a desire, as I could scarce be at rest, till it were accomplished.

SOL. I answer, beloved, it is a hard matter to tell you the difference: but you must consider,

1. From whence this desire flows; whether it come from an accidental cause; as if by accident my heart is made more soft, and I more sensible of my condition, or whether my nature be changed; to give you an instance in iron: when iron is put into the forge it is softened, and as soon as it is taken forth, we say it is time to strike while the iron is hot; the fire hath made a change in it, it is malleable, the hammer is able to work on it; but let the fire be gone, and it is as

hard as before; nay, we say steel is harder, so that there is no change in the nature of iron, it is hard still, redit ad ingenium, it goes back into its own estate. If it be softened, it is by an accidental cause; so here, as long as the temporary faith is in the furnace of afflictions, when God shall let loose the cord of his conscience, and makes him see that there is no way for salvation but by Christ, then the sense of his torture will make him desire with all the veins in his heart to have Christ. See a singular example of this temporary desire in Psalm 78 ver. 34. "When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned and inquired early after God." So Proverbs, chap. 1 ver. 27. "When their fear was on them as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind: when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me," not with a feigned desire, but in truth and reality they desire relief; "they remembered then that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer;" they saw a redeemer when he was slaying of them, and they believed that God would free them, though it was but temporary: "nevertheless they flattered him with their mouths, and lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Observe then this was but a temporary case, a temporary change; there was no new creature, no new nature wrought: but being in the furnace of affliction, as long as the fire was hot they were pliable; they were not steadfast in his covenant. Let this be an admonition to them that think they never can have true faith, till God slay them. I am not of that opinion. God sometimes useth this means, but it is not so necessary, as that it cannot be otherwise; and to speak truly, I had rather have faith that comes another way: the difference is this, the temporary believers will have Christ while God is slaying of them, whilst they are in the furnace of afflictions: but the other in cold blood, when God's hand is not on them. The true believer is sick of love, and when he hath no affliction, nor God's hand on him, with the apostle, "he accounts all things dung and dross for the excellency of

the knowledge of Christ Jesus." There is an ardent desire, when this external cause draws not. If when thou art out of the forge, thou hast thy heart softened, and findest this work of grace and faith to drive thee to Christ, thou hast a faith unfeigned, and so the faith of God's elect.

Again, there is not only this desire in him who hath a temporary faith; but having understood the word, he so desires it, that when he knows there is no having Christ, nor happiness or salvation by him, unless he deny himself, and part from his evil ways, being persuaded of this, out of self-love he would have Christ; and seeing these be the terms, that he must turn a new leaf, and lead a new life, or go to hell, therefore he will do this too; this is much: yet I say, he doth this too; but how shall this be proved? most evidently in 2 Peter, chap. 2 ver. 20. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end with them is worse than the beginning." Here is that apostacy, and here is the subject of the temporary faith. "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them;" this was a temporary conversion, as "Ephraim, like a broken bow, turned back in the day of battle." Observe what they did; they were like the foolish virgins, they kept their maiden-heads in respect of the pollutions of the world; they lived very civilly, they escaped the pollutions of the world, and no man could challenge them of any filthy act: they knew that Christ was King of saints, and had the knowledge of him: they knew that it was not fit that the King of glory and holiness should be attended on by the black guard, that they must have sanctity that will follow him; and therefore they laboured to be fit to attend him: they escaped the pollutions of the world, but yet it continues not: Why so? "For it happened to them according to the true proverb, the dog is

returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." Mark, the dog turns again to his own vomit. This proceeds from some pang in his stomach, that enforceth that filthy beast to disgorge itself, that it may have some ease; but he quickly gathers it up again, as soon as the pang is over. Some there are, that would be content to hide their iniquity under their tongues, as Job speaksm, but there comes a pang sometimes, a pang in their consciences, which forceth them to vomit up their sweet bits again but well, the fit is gone; and being gone, they, like the filthy dog, return to their vomit again, considering the pleasure which they took in that filthy thing: that they did disgorge themselves, was but from that pang and present pinch, not from the loathing or hatred of the thing, and therefore they return again unto it.

By the way then take notice of the filthiness of sin; how filthy is it, that the Lord compares it to the vomit of a dog? Then there follows another comparison of it: it is as the sow that is washed, and returns to her wallowing in the mire: see another loathsome resemblance of this temporary faith; the sow was washed, but how? her swinish nature was not washed from her; as long as the sow is kept from the mire, in a fair meadow with the sheep, she looks as sleek and clean as they: she was washed; there is an external change, but her nature remained: bring the sow and the sheep to a puddle, the sheep will not go in, because it hath no swinish nature; but the other, retaining its swinish nature, though before in outward appearance, as clean as the sheep was, yet she goes again to her wallowing in the mire. There may be the casting away of a man's sins, and yet no new creature wrought in him. That I may show this to you, take this example. A man known to be as covetous a man as liveth, he loveth his money as well as his God; yet perchance this man is brought in danger of the law, and must be hanged for some misdemeanour committed; this man, to save his life, will part with all he hath: what, is his

disposition changed? no, not a whit; he is as covetous as before, he is the same man, he doth it to save his life, and to this end he is content to part with his money. The same mind had those in the Acts of the apostles, who in a storm cast their wares into the sea with their own hands, ἑκὼν ἀεκόντι γε θύμῳ· willingly, and yet half unwillingly; for the saving of their lives they would part with these things, yet it was with a great deal of repining and reluctancy. As we read of Phaltiel, when his wife was taken from him, he followed behind weeping, till they bid him be gone, and return back. So these men forsake their sins, and hate them, but it is but imperfectly; they part with them, but they part weeping. Well, at this parting there may be a great deal of joy; it may taste not only the sweetness of the word of God, but because they are in a disposition and way to salvation, they may have some kind of feeling of the joys, and taste of the powers of the world to come; as the apostle speaks: "Itp is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," &c. There is a supernatural work wrought in them, and they have tasted the good word of the Lord; they begin to have some hope, and rejoice in the glory of the world to come. What is the difference then? here is a tasting; but as it is in John, it is not said, he that tastes my flesh, and tastes my blood; but "he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, hath eternal life." There is a difference betwixt tasting and drinking, there may be a tasting without drinking; and the textr saith, when they gave Christ vinegar, he tasted thereof, but would not drink. He that can take a full draught of Christ crucified, he shall never thirst, but shall be as a springing fountain that springeth up to everlasting life; but it shall not be so with him that doth but taste. The vintner goes round the cellar, and tastes every vessel; he takes it into his mouth, and spits it out again, and yet knows by the tasting, whether it be good or bad; the wine goeth but to his palate, it reaches not the stomach. So a temporary believer tastes and feels what an excellent thing it is to

have communion with Christ, and to be made partaker of his glory; but he does but taste it. Look in Hosea, chap. 5 ver. 15 where we have another instance of this temporary believer: ye would think they sought in a good sort, and in as good a manner as one could desire: well, but how did they seek him? It was only upon occasion, in time of affliction: "I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early;" and again, the Lord complains of them notwithstanding: "They will in their affliction seek me early." Was not this a fair returning? "Come," say they, "let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us." What a deal of comfort did they seem to gather from the ways of the Lord! But see what follows: "Ot Ephraim, saith the Lord, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away:" that is, it is but a temporary thing, wrought by affliction, which will not abide. As when a wicked man on his death bed desires that God would spare him and restore him to his health, and that he would become a new man, all this comes but from the terrors of death; for it oft proves, that if God restores him he becomes as bad, if not worse, than ever he was before. But that I may not hold you too long;

2. Take this for another difference: that God's children can as earnestly desire grace as mercy; the temporary desire mercy, but never desire grace. The believer desires grace to have his nature healed, to hate his former conversation. The temporary never had, nor never will have this desire; should one come to the temporary believer, and tell him God will be merciful unto him, you may go on, and take your fill of sin, you shall be sure of mercy; he would like this well, and think it the welcomest news as could be, because he only fears damnation, and self-love makes him only desire freedom from that; but now the child of God hates sin, though there were no hell,

judge nor tormentor; he begs as hard of God for grace, as for mercy, and would do so, were there no punishment. His nature being changed, he desireth grace, as well as mercy, which the temporary never does.

3. The last mark is from the words of the apostle: "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." Love and the new creature puts God's children on work; their hearts are first altered, and changed by being made new creatures. As the Scripture saith, his flesh is circumcised, he is a dead man; dead, not, as formerly, in trespasses and sins, but dead unto them. Deadness argueth impotency of doing those things which a living man doth; he cannot walk, &c. The temporary will not sin for fear of afterclaps, but this man cannot sin, his heart is changed, he is dead to sin; we see how both abstain from sin, but the temper and disposition is not alike. The temporary believer perchance commits not the sin, but he could find in his heart to do it; he saith not with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against my God?" The other saith, I could do this evil well enough, but I will not. "Thou canst not bear those that are evil," saith Christ in his epistle to the church of Ephesus. This was her great commendation. Now he that is born of God cannot sin, there is that seed, that spring in him, that for his life he cannot sin, but it turns his heart from it; for his life he cannot tell how to swear, lie, or join with others in wickedness; but this must be understood of the constant course of their lives; I speak not what they may do in temptations, when they are surprised, but in the course of their lives, they commit sin, as if they knew not how to do it; the other doth it skilfully; these cobblingly, and bunglingly, they do it ill-favouredly; thus it is with a wicked man in doing a good work, he cobbles it up. This is intimated unto us in the very phrase of the apostle: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin:" it is not the same thing to sin, in St. John's acceptation,

and to commit sin; committing sin is the action of the artist, and practitioner in the trade; fromy this the seed of God, which abideth in the regenerate, secureth him. Thy faith then must be a faith that worketh by love: canst thou do those good works thou doest out of love? then, my soul for thine, thou art saved. Get me any temporary that loves God, I shall say something to you. Hast thou then a faith that causeth thee to love God, a working faith, and a faith that will not suffer thee to do any thing displeasing to him? if thou hast such a faith, thou art justified before God.

2. And so I come now to the point of justification, the greatest of all blessings: "Blessed is he," saith David, "whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." It is the most blessed condition that can be; it is set down by way of exclamation. "O, the blessedness of the man, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity!" or, as the original imports; "O, the blessedness of the man discharged from sin." Here are many blessings conceived in our justification from sin. For justification, see what it is; the Scripture in St. Paul's epistles, speaks of justification by faith; and in St. James, of justification by works. Now it will be useful to us in this point to know whence justification comes; it comes from justice, tsedeck, as the original hath it, and hitsdiq, to justify; so that justification and righteousness depend one upon the other; for what is justification but the manifestation of the righteousness that is in a man? And therefore in Galatians, chap. 3 ver. 21 they are put for one and the same thing: "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness had been by the law;" that is, justification had been by the law. Again, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," that is, also, if justification had been by the law, &c. Justification is a manifestation of righteousness; and as many ways as righteousness is taken so many ways is justification, which is a

declaration of righteousness; so that if there be a double righteousness, there must be also a double justification. Beloved, I bring you no new doctrine; be not afraid of that; but I shew you how to reconcile places of Scripture against the Church of Rome, and those things which the papists bring against us in this point. It stands by reason, seeing justification is a declaration of righteousness, that there must be so many sorts of justification, as there be of righteousness.

Now there is a double sort of righteousness. "That the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us;" see then there is a double righteousness; there is a righteousness fulfilled in us, and a righteousness fulfilled by us, that is, walking in the Spirit. The righteousness fulfilled in us, is fulfilled by another, and is made ours by imputation; so we have a righteousness without us, and a righteousness inherent in us: the righteousness without us, is forgiveness of sins, and pardon of them, which is a gracious act of God, letting fall all actions against me, and accounting of me, as if I had never sinned against him all my life time; then there is a righteousness within me, an inherent righteousness. And if a righteousness, then justification; for that is but a declaration of righteousness. And so that which the fathers call justification, is taken generally for sanctification; that which we call justification, they call forgiveness of sins; that which we call sanctification, they call justification: so that the difference is only in the terms. Justification, we must know, is not taken only as opposed to condemnation, which is the first kind of righteousness. "He that is dead, is freed from sin;" if you look to the Greek, or to the margin, it is, "he that is dead, is justified from sin:" this is not took in the first sense as opposed to condemnation, but in the other sense as it hath relation to final grace. The perfection of sanctification is wrought in me; for where there is final grace, there is a supersedeas from all sin;

"Let him that is righteous, be righteous still;" the Greek is, "let him that is righteous, be justified still." See then the difference between St. Paul, and St. James. St. Paul speaks of that which consists in remission of sins, as in comparing the apostle with David will appear; "Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven." St. James speaks of justification in the second acceptation. You need not fly to that distinction of justification before God, and justification before men: think not that St. James speaks only of justification before men; "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac on the altar?" What, justified by killing his son? this was a proper work indeed to justify him before man, to be a parricide; to kill his son, though it were not so before God. So Psalm 106 we read how God accounted the act of Phineas for righteousness: thus you see how works are accounted righteousness in the second kind of righteousness. In the former righteousness we are justified by faith, for in righteousness inherent there is a goodly chain of virtues; "Add to your faith, virtue," add one grace to another; add "to virtue, knowledge:" faith is but one part of the crown. Now this justification in the first sense, whereby my sins are forgiven, is called the righteousness of God, because of Christ which is God, because it is wrought by Christ, he is called "an everlasting righteousness," which continueth for ever, world without end; for do not think the saints in heaven have only the second kind of righteousness, for they have the same covering by justification by Christ in heaven, that they had before. God covers their sins, not here only, but there also; justification follows them for ever.

QUEST. But now, what parts hath justification in it? we are wont to say that there are two parts; one imputation of righteousness, the other forgiveness of sins.

SOL. I answer; for my own part I think justification is one simple act of God, and that it is improperly distinguished as parts; but rather as terminus a quo is distinct from terminus ad quem. And this I shall shew unto you both by reason and authority, that faith is but one act.

Let none say that I take away the imputation of the righteousness of Christ: no; the bringing in of light, and the expulsion of darkness is not two acts, but one; but there is terminus a quo, and terminus ad quem. We are accounted righteouss, and that is, we have our sins forgiven. And the reason is this; if sin were a positive thing, and had a being in itself, then the forgiveness of sin must be a thing distinct from the imputation of righteousness. Scholars know the difference between adversa and privantia, white and black are both existent, but darkness and light are not, but only a privation one of another. Darkness is nothing of itself, but the absence of light; the bringing in of light is the suppression of it: you must understand sin hath no being, no entity; it is only an absence of righteousness, that want of that light which should be in the subject: which want is either in our nature, and then it is called original; or in our person and actions, and then it is called actual transgression. Sin is an absence of that positive being, which is, as I said, either in our nature, or works. Then thus I will resolve you in another point, viz. If sin were a positive thing, all the world cannot avoid it, but God must be the author of it; for there is nothing can have a being, but it must derive its being from the first being, God. Now, how can we avoid God's being the author of sin? Why thus; it is nothing.

But what, is sin nothing? Will God damn a man, and send him to hell for nothing?

I answer, it is not such a nothing as you make it; a man is not damned for nothing. It is a nothing privative, an absence of that

should be, and that a man ought to have. As when a scholar is whipped for not saying his lesson, is he whipped, think you, for nothing? Indeed he hath nothing, he cannot say a word of his lesson, and therefore it is he is whipped; it is for a thing he ought to have, and hath not. Well, if you will say there are two parts of justification, do if you please; but this I take to be the more proper and genuine explanation.

Besides, it appears by testimony of the apostle. "As David describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they, whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." The apostle cites the prophet Davidf. Mark the apostle's conclusion, and how he proves it. His conclusion is, "That man is blessed, unto whom the Lord imputeth righteousnness without works." His argument then must needs be thus framed.

He whom God forgives, is blessed;

But him, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, God forgives;

Therefore he is blessed.

Now, how could this assumption hold, if imputation of righteousness, and remission of sins were two distinct acts? for, not imputing righteousness, is, not to bring in a light which keeps out darkness. But observe, the apostle to the Colossians and Ephesians, makes this forgiveness of sins the whole work, nay, foundation of our redemption. But here remember, I deny not the imputation of righteousness; for that is the foundation of the other; here is the point. How is Christ's righteousness imputed to me? that positive thing, which expels the other? Not so, as if Christ's righteousness

were in me subjectively; for it was wrought by his passion as well as his action. The apostle calls it faith in his blood; by faith in Christ, Christ's passive obedience is imputed to me. What do you think the meaning is, that God doth esteem me, as if I had hanged on the cross, and as if I had my side pierced? No, that would not stead me, or do me any good; that which was meritorious and singular in him, did reach to us: so that the meaning is this, as it is in the articles of the Church of England, that "we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings;" that is, for the merits of Jesus Christ, God is well pleased with the obedience of his Son, both active and passive: he is so far satisfied, as that he takes us to be in that state for his sake, as if we had fulfilled all his laws, and never broken them at any time, and as if we owed him not a farthing: this is imputative righteousness, however the papists may scoff at it. And this kind of justification must of necessity be by imputation: Why? because, when a man hath committed a sin, it cannot be undone again: God, by his absolute power, cannot make a thing done, undone; for it implies a contradiction. The act past cannot be revoked, nor the nature thereof changed: murder will be murder still, &c. How then can I be justified, the sin being past, and the nature of it still remaining? I say, how can I be justified, in the first sense any other way than by imputation? It is said, "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." This kind of justification, which consists in remission of sins, cannot be imputative; sin cannot be changed, nor the thing done, undone.

But now cometh a greater question: if by justification our sins be forgiven us, what sins are forgiven, I pray? sins past, or sins to come? we are taught by some, that in the instant of justification, all our sins past and to come are remitted; which is in my mind an unsound

doctrine: for if we look narrowly into it, we shall find that in propriety of speech, remission of sins hath relation to that which is past: it is said therefore: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." And remission of sins hath relation to those that are past, as appears by inevitable reason; for what is remission of sins, but sin covered? Now can a thing be covered before it be? "bloti out mine iniquities," saith David; can a thing be blotted out, before it is written? this is the thing makes the pope so ridiculous, that he will forgive sins for the time before they are committed; but what, do we get nothing for the time to come? yes, yes, when the sin is past, by faith we have a new access unto God; and having risen by repentance, we get a new act, not of universal justification, but of a particular justification from this and that particular sin.

But if there be forgiveness of sins past already, and I know that I am justified, and my sin remitted; may I now pray for forgiveness of sins past? The papists say it is active infidelity, and as absurd to pray to God to create the world anew, or incarnate his Son again.

But there is no remission where there is no praying; and there is need of praying for the remission of sins past, and against sin for the time to come, as I shall shew next time; as also, consider whether there be any interruption of the act of justification by falling into great sins. There is no man hath a mind more against quirks and quillets than I; yet for the opening of these things, and staying and settling the mind, and clearing the understanding, give me leave the next time to clear these things unto you.

SERMON XVI:

Peace with God through Christ, Part 2 - Romans 5:1

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

IN this chapter, especially in the beginning thereof, I shewed unto you that the apostle sets down unto us those special comforts, that a man receives after God hath wrought that supernatural grace of faith in his heart; so that here is set down the mother grace, justification by faith; and then the blessed issues or daughters thereof; and those are, a free access to God, a joyful hope of the glory to come, and not only a patient, but a joyful suffering of all afflictions that shall befall us in this life.

Concerning justification by faith, I laboured to open it unto you the last day; three things may well be considered therein.

1. What that faith is whereby we are justified.

2. What that justification is, we have by faith.

3. What relation the one of these hath to the other.

Concerning the first of these I told you, that it was not every faith that justifieth, nor every kind of faith that a man can live by. There is

a dead faith, and a man cannot live by a dead thing: and there is a living faith, and that is called a faith unfeigned. And though it be in Scripture called the faith, yet it is with some restriction; it is the faith of God's elect; and common to none besides. There is a faith also which is but temporary; that being touched with the sense of sin, and seeing there is no deliverance from the curse due to sin, but by Christ; and that there is no part to be had in Christ, but by renouncing all corruptions; the consideration of the desperateness of his case without Christ, makes him long after him; and since he cannot have Christ without leaving sin, he will resolve on that too; he will make towards Christ, and perhaps he comes to taste of the sweetness of Christ, and feels the power of the world to come; he forsakes sin, and thereby comes so near the true believer, that a man must, as it were, cut a hair to divide between them. And this is a thing very necessary to be considered of.

And I shewed unto you also that these are not moral things; not a faith that is wrought by the power of men, but by a work of God's Spirit; for it humbles a man for sin, and makes him make toward Christ, and seek him above all things, and having laid some hold on him, he escapes the pollutions of the world, and yet this faith is but temporary; a thing supernatural it is, yet it is without root. Now as I noted unto you, this is not different in the circumstance of time; for time alters not the thing. A child that liveth but half an hour, doth as properly and truly live, as one that liveth a hundred years. But it is called temporary, not that therein stands the difference, but therein it is shewn, and that proves the man to have something wanting. Our being united to Christ, and being nigh unto him, is as a graft or scion put into a tree; there are two grafts put into one stock, and each of them have all the several things necessary done unto them, as cutting, binding, &c. yet time discovers that the one thrives, and the other withers; so that there was a fault unseen; though he that put in

the grafts never saw it, yet time discovers it. Now the difference is not in the time, but in the foundation of the thing itself. Now what the difference is between these, I laboured to declare unto you the last day.

The use of it is in brief, this faith (I mean the sound faith) is not in all these. All have not faith, the faith, I say, of God's elect, yet some come so near, and have faith so like it, that it will trouble a wise man to make the distinction. These are like the foolish virgins, that lived very civilly, and kept their maiden-heads in regard of the world; none could accuse them for any evil they had done; yet they are at length shut out. Many think themselves in a good way, and a safe condition, yea, and go out of the world in this conceit, and they are entering into the gate of heaven, till they in a moment are cast down to hell: try we therefore, search and sift ourselves; if this grace were as grass that grows in every field, it were something; but it is a precious flower, which, if we have not, Christ profiteth us nothing. This is the means of Christ's being applied unto thee; how doth it therefore behove every one of us to look to it, and not to slubber over the matter slightly, but to search and try, and examine ourselves. And in the marks I shewed before that it was such a thing as may be likened to a conception which never comes to the birth; such a thing is this temporary faith.

Among others let me add the tokens of love; it is twice set down in the Galatians, "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision," but "faith which worketh by love;" and again, "neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision," but "a new creature." They that have a temporary faith want nothing but the new creature; what is that? it is "faith that worketh by love." They that love God, it is a sure token that God hath loved them first, and God never giveth this love to any but they have faith unfeigned.

The next thing is, he is ever careful to try himself, to prove himself. The temporary cannot endure to be brought to the touch or trial. He accounts every beginning of grace in himself very great; every mole-hill to be a mountain. Now God's children know that they may be deceived with counterfeits, and therefore they try themselves.

Mark the speech of the apostle: "Examine yourselves, prove your own selves; know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?" Let us understand the words; first, we see then it is a thing that is possible to be known, whether we are in the faith, or no; and this is flat against the papists, for they think that a man can have but a conjectural knowledge that he hath grace and faith. It may be probable, they say, but it cannot be certainly known; but does not the apostle say, "Examine yourselves, prove yourselves, know you not yourselves." No papist can know it, yet it is possible to be known. Prove and try, you shall not lose your labour. If you take pains in it, you shall attain it in this world. "Make your calling and election sure," saith the apostle, on God's part it is sure enough, "forc the foundation of God standeth sure," but make it sure unto yourselves, in respect of your own knowledge. "Know you not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." It is a thing may well be made sure of; therefore "search, try, examine." Others are content with bare beginnings that never come to any maturity; but those that have true faith, are ever bringing themselves to the trial and touchstone.

But may some say, I have tried and examined myself, and I do not find that Christ is in me; what, am I a reprobate therefore?

No, God forbid: I say not the man is a reprobate that cannot discern that Christ is in him; see what that is that will explain this: "For there must be heresies among you, that they which are approved might be

made known;" there must be "δόκιμοι, men that are approved," such as have endured the dint and shot of the musquet; such as have put themselves to the trial, and come off well: these are the δόκιμοι, and are opposed to those ἀδόκιμοι, who are such men, as taking things hand over head, do not search, and try, and examine, and put themselves to the proof; it is a sign these have not true faith; for what, is the having of Christ so slight or poor a thing, as that they will take no pains for him, or care not for knowing whether they have him or no? what, neglect Christ so much, as not to adventure on the trial? these are those ἀδόκιμοι, But he which has this saving faith, he is ever putting himself to the trial. Again, God's child not only useth the means in himself to try himself, but he prayeth for the aid of God also; he knoweth that his own heart is deceitful, and may cozen him, but that "God is greater than his heart, and knoweth all things." And therefore he cryeth unto God to try him: "Try me, O God, and know my heart; prove me, and know my thoughts; look, look well whether there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting;" there is an everlasting righteousness, and an everlasting way that leads unto it, about which these are not content to try themselves only, but they desire God to try them also; and to make them know the uprightness of their own hearts, and not to suffer them to be deceived thereby. Now that I have done with.

Consider now what that justification is, that is obtained by this "true lively faith;" I shewed unto you that justification is ordinarily taken for an acquittance from a debt. It is derived from justice or righteousness; therefore I shewed that justification and righteousness are taken for one and the self same thing; "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;" that is, justification had been by the law. Now as there is a double righteousness, so there is also a double justification. Not that I hold there is any other

justification, as it comprehends remission of sins, but only one, but other ways, as many righteousnesses as there are, so many justifications there are. Now there is a double kind of righteousness, the one imputed, and the other inherent; the one is the righteousness of Christ, an act transient from another, which cannot be made mine but by imputation. Besides this, there is another which is inherent, a righteousness in us. St. James speaks of the one, and St. Paul of the other. One is opposed to condemnation, and the other to hypocrisy. The soundness of the heart is respected of God for righteousness, in respect of the graces inherent in us.

Now to give you a touch of the difference between the one and the other, and therein to declare the difference between us and Rome: know then, that the question between us and Rome, is not whether justification be by faith or no; but whether there be any such thing as justification or no. The doctrine of the Church of Rome is, that there is no such grace as this.

But concerning the first of these, that justification which is by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I showed unto you that imputation in this case is, as when a man comes to hold up his hand at God's bar, as it were, and it is demanded of him what he hath to say for himself, why he should not die; and then this justification by Christ's righteousness is opposed to condemnation. Then justification by faith is, that when I come to stand before God, though conscience say I am guilty of a thousand sins, yet I may go boldly and plead my pardon, which will acquit me, as if I had never sinned at any time. "God was thus in Christ reconciling us (the world) unto himself, not imputing their sins unto them." Now sin is a thing past, which being done, cannot be made undone, the sin remains still: murder is murder still; and adultery is adultery still; it cannot be undone again. Now how shall this man that is guilty of

murder and adultery be made just? it cannot possibly be but by not imputing his sin unto him, so that God should account it to him, as if it had not been done at all by him; he puts it upon Christ's account; account: the word is used in the epistle to Philemon, ver. 18 where St. Paul saith: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." A man's sins being thus put upon Christ's account, he is accepted of God as freely as if he had never owed him any thing, or as if he had never offended him. Now this is done by transferring the debt from one person to another; so that we see this imputation of sin to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to us is most necessary. It must be so: and if there were no testimony for it in the Scripture, yet reason sheweth that there can be no righteousness, but by God's acceptation of us in Christ, as if we had never sinned; there is the difference then: "To him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted to him for righteousness."

But doth God justify the ungodly? that is a hard speech; we read in the Proverbs, chap. 17 ver. 15. "He that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord."

But here we must understand this as we do some other Scriptures; we read in St. Luke, chap. 7 ver. 22 that "the blind see, the lame walk, the dumb speak." It is impossible for a man to be blind and see, to be dumb and speak, all at once; yet take the chief of sinners, suppose Paul, and he was so on his own account; but the act of justification alters him. God justifies the ungodly, that is, him that was even now so; but by the imputation of Christ's righteousness he is made righteous, that is, righteous in God's account. And indeed, justification in St. Paul's acception, importing the remission of sins, the person justified must of necessity be supposed to have been a

sinner; otherwise remission of sins would no more concern him, than repentance doth the holy angels which never offended.

But in proceeding in this point I did reflect a little back. God finds a man with a number of sins, full of sin, and forgives these sins; now I demanded this; how far doth this justification and forgiveness extend? to sins past alone, or to sins and to come? And I answered that we must consider this matter two ways.

First, to justify a man's person simply; and then to justify a man from this or that particular act: the phrase is used in Scripture: "And by him all that believe, are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." There is justification from this or that thing: there is first, justification of a man's person; he that was an enemy, is now made a friend; he is now no longer a stranger at home, but is in the list of God's household. Now this we say, no sooner doth a man receive it, but the selfsame hour that he receiveth it, the bond is cancelled, the evidence is torn, and fastened to the cross of Christ, and hangs up among the records, whereas before it was an evidence against us, and would have lain heavy on us at the bar; but now it is fastened to the cross, as a cancelled record, the bond is become void.

Secondly, but now when we consider justification from this or that particular act; I declared that so a man is only justified from sins past; for it is contrary to reason and Scripture, that a man should be justified from sins to come: for Scripture, the apostle hath it: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" and it is clear also from the nature of the thing. A thing cannot be remitted before it be committed, nor covered before it had an existence, nor blotted out before it be

written. Therefore justification from such or such a fault, must have relation to that which is past; but for justification for the time to come, I will speak anon; there I left the last time.

I have now faith, and I believe in Christ; I have now relation to him, and remission of sins past. By why then do I pray for it? to what end is that? Bellarmine objects that it is an act of infidelity to pray for it afterwards; but we do it, and we ought to do it; see Psalm 51. David made that Psalm after the prophet Nathan had told him his sin was pardoned; see the title of it, (and we must know that the title is a part of God's word as well as the rest) A psalm of David when Nathan came unto him, after he had gone in unto Bathsheba: Nathan told him that God had took away his sin: yet he crieth here throughout the whole psalm, to have his sin pardoned and blotted out; so that through there were faith and assurance, yet he still prays for it. Now Bellarmine saith, this cannot be; but doth he dispute against our opinion? no, he disputes against the Holy Ghost; for David having received a message of forgiveness, yet prays. Therefore if the Jesuit had grace, he would join with us to salve the matter, rather than through our sides to strike at God.

But it is a fallacy to join these two together; for a man to pray for a thing past, it is an act of infidelity; as to pray that God would create the world, and incarnate his Son.

I answer, there is difference between an act done, and an act continued; when the world was made by God, God had finished that work. And when Christ took our flesh upon him, the act was done; but the forgiveness of sin is a continued act, which holds today and to-morrow, and world without end. God is pleased not to impute thy sins, but cover them; now this covering is no constant act, but upon a supposition of constant indulgence, which ought to be solicited by

constant prayer. I may cover a thing now, and uncover it again; now forgiveness of sin being an act not complete, but continued, and continued world without end, and therefore we say the saints in heaven are justified by imputative righteousness, God's continuance of his act of mercy. The point then is this; as long as we continue in the world, and by contrary acts of disobedience continue to provoke God to discontinue his former acts of mercy, and our sins being but covered, therefore so long must we pray for forgiveness. When the servant had humbled himself before his lord, it is said; "The lord of that servant loosed him, and forgave him the debt." But though he forgave him, yet he did another act that caused his lord to discontinue his pardon: "Shouldsti not thou, also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, as I had pity on thee?" He had pity on him; yet since he doth another act, which turns his lord's heart against him, therefore "he is now cast into prison, and he must not come out thence till he hath paid the utmost farthing." He had forgave him to-day and to-morrow, and would have continued his forgiveness, if he had not thus provoked him; we must pray to God to continue his acts of mercy, because we continually provoke him by new acts of rebellion. Add to this, the king grants pardon to a man; in all patents of pardon there is a clause that the man must renew his patent. If forgiveness may be renewed, then those things are to be renewed again, by which the renovation of my remission may be wrought. God would have me renew my acts of faith; and if of faith, why not of repentance, and of prayer? There is a singular place in Ezek. chap. 36 ver. 29, 35, 37, that makes it plain, that though God intends to do the thing, yet he appoints this to be the means: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" that is, though I have done it, and intend to it, yet will I do it by the means of prayer. Howsoever that God had promised Elijah, "that rain should come upon the face of the earth;" yet he goes upon the mount, and saw no show of a cloud. The text

saith not what he did; but "he put his head between his knees." St. James saith, "he prayed, and he opened heaven, and brought down rain." It was an humble secret gesture. A man may be more free in private than in public. "He prayed, and the heavens opened." God had promised it, and would do it, but yet he would be sought to. So we see the mediate cause is prayer; so, though the Lord will do this, yet for all this he will be inquired of: it is not with God as with men; men, who have promised, would be loth to be sued to, not to break their promise; they account that a dishonour to them, but it is not so with God; God hath promised, yet thou shalt have no benefit of it, until thou sue to him for it; therefore thou must go to God and say, "Lord fulfil thy promise to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust." God loves to have his bond sued out. Lord, make good this word, perform that good word that thou hast spoken. God would have his bond thus sued out. And as-thy faith, repentance, prayer is renewed, so is thy pardon renewed. When God will make a man possess the sins of his youth; when a man is careless this way, it pleaseth God to awaken him. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquity of my youth." When a man forgetteth the iniquities of his youth, and reneweth not his repentance, and hath not new acts of faith and petition, then God maketh him to "possess the iniquities of his youth;" he makes his sins stand up and cry out against him, and by this means his old evidences are obliterated. When a man hath a pardon, and it is almost obliterated, the letters almost worn out, that they cannot be read, he would be glad to have it renewed, to have a new exemplification. Every sin it puts a great blur upon thine old evidences that thou canst not read them. They may be firm in heaven, and yet perhaps be so blurred that thou canst not read them, and therefore if thou wouldst get them cleared again, thou must go to God by prayer, and renew them again; so that whether our evidences be blurred, or whether it be that God will make us possess the

iniquities of our youth, it is necessary to pray for the forgiveness of those sins, which have been before forgiven.

But now you will say, when I have sinned afterward, how come I then to be justified? Then a man would think repentance only doth it, and without repentance a man cannot be justified.

But you must understand, repentance is not an instrument at all; faith only is the instrument, faith justifieth me from sin hereafter, as well as before. The case is this, faith brings life. "The righteous shall live by his faith," as the prophet Habakkuk speaks.

What do then new sins do?

There are two sorts of sins; one of ordinary incursion, which cannot be avoided; these break no friendship betwixt God and us; these only weaken our faith, and make us worse at ease. But there are other sins which waste a man's conscience; a man that hath committed murder, adultery, and lives in covetousness, which (in the apostles) is idolatry; as long as a man is in this case, he cannot exercise the acts of faith; we must know faith justifieth not as an habit, but as an act applying Christ to the comfort of the soul. Now a wasting sin it stops the passage of faith, it cannot act till it be opened by repentance; physicians give instances for it. Those that have apoplexies, epilepsies, and the falling sickness, are thought to be dead for the time, as it was with Eutychus, yet saith St. Paul, "his spirit was in him." Every one thought him dead, yet his spirit is in him; however in regard of the operation of his senses it did appear he was dead. So, if thou art a careless man and lookest not to thy watch, and to thy guard, but art overtaken in some gross and grievous sin, thou art taken for dead. I say not, a man can lose his life that once hath it; but yet in the apprehension of others, and of himself to, he may appear to be dead. As in epilepsies, the nerves are hindered by obstructions;

so sin obstructs the nerves of the soul, that there cannot be that life and working till these sins be removed. Now what is repentance? why, it clears the passages, that though faith could not act before, yet now it gives him dispositions unto it. As a man in a swoon cannot do the acts of a living man, till he be refreshed again; so here it is repentance which clears the spirits, and makes the life of faith pass throughout. Now when repentance clears the passages, then faith acts, and now there is a new act of faith, faith justifies me from my new sins; faith at first and at last, is that whereby I am justified from my sins, which I commit afterwards.

But this forgiveness of sins, what doth it free us from?

In sin, we must consider two things; the fault and the punishment. Now consider sin as it is in itself, and as in itself, and as it respects the sinner, as acted by him, as repecting the fault of the sinner, it is ἀνομία, a transgression of the law; the punishment is death; as it respects the sinner, it is guilt. The sin is not guilt, but the guilt the sinner's. For instance, a man hath told a lie, or sworn an oath, the act is past, but a thing remains, which we call the guilt. As if a man commit murder, or adultery, the act is past, but yet if he sleep, or walk, or wake, the guilt follows him; and nothing can take away the murder, or adultery from the soul, but the blood of Christ applied by faith.

First, God takes away the punishment. "There is now," saith the apostle, "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" what, nothing in them worthy of condemnation? God knows we are worthy of a thousand condemnations. There are two judges; there is a double guilt; when a man is brought to the bar, first, the jury judge the fact, and then the judge that sits on the bench, he judgeth the punishment; one saith,

Guilty, or not guilty? The other saith, Guilty, then he judgeth him. Now when we are justified, we are freed from both these guilts; "sino when it is accomplished, bringeth forth death:" you know the natural work of sin, ἀποκύει, it labours with death; now God will stop the acts of it, that it shall not do that, which it is apt to do, which is as good as if the sin were taken away; when there were wild gourds sliced in the pot, it is said, the prophet took that venomous herb away; that is, though the thing were there, yet it is as if it were not there, it shall do no manner of hurt: "Bring now and pour out, and there was no evil thing." So in respect of us, though there be an evil thing in punishment, and what, if we had our due, would bring condemnation, yet when we are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, it can do us no evil, no hurt; it is said in the Scripture, that the stars fell from heaven to the earth; but they are said to fall, when they give not their light, and do not that, for which they were put there; so, though I have committed sin, yet when God is pleased for Christ's sake to pardon it, it is as if it were not there at all.

This is a great matter, but I tell you there is more; we are not only freed from the guilt of punishment, but which is higher, we are freed from the guilt of the fact. I am now no more a murderer, no more a liar; when I have received a pardon from the blood of Christ, he frees me from that charge, the world is changed with me now. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" If the Devil lay any thing to thee thou mayest deny it. Such a one I was, but I am justified, but I am sanctified. A man hath committed high treason against the king, and the king gives him a pardon for the treason; if I call him a traitor, he can have no remedy against me, for he is one; the pardon takes not away the guilt: but if his blood be restored unto him, by act of parliament, then if I shall call him traitor, he may remedy against me, because he is restored fully, and is not liable to that disgrace. This is our case, "thoughs our sins be as red as scarlet," yet the die

shall be changed; it shall not be so bloody: thou hast the grace of justification, and this doth not only clear thee from the punishment, but from the fault itself: see in Jeremiah, chap. 50 ver. 20 the place is worth gold: "In those days, and in that time saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: For I will pardon them whom I reserve." What is the matter? What, a sinful man, and no sin? What then, there is search made for sin in such a man, shall it not be found? You will say this is meant of the grace of justification; no: "I will pardon them;" that pardoning of sin makes the sin not to be found. What a wonderful comfort is this? When I shall come at the day of judgment, and have the benefit of my justification, the last absolution, such sins shall not be charged on me, my sins and iniquities shall not be remembered. "I will remember their sins no more," saith God; it is a wonderful thing, and a strange mistake in many men, especially the Papists; did they ever write comfortably of the day of judgment? Never; they make that a terrible day. Alas poor souls, they knew not that justification is that, that makes sins that they shall never be remembered: mark, it is said, thou shalt hear of all thy good deeds for thy honour and thy praise; but for thy sins, there shall search be made, and they shall not be found, when God forgives sins, he doth it fully, it shall never be cast in thy teeth again: but thou shalt hear of all thy good deeds, not of thy bad. Then "lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near:" here is the blessed grace of justification, that we being justified by faith, have not only no condemnation, but no guilt; whereas all the sins of the wicked man shall be set before his face, and he shall stand quaking and trembling by reason thereof: "notu one good thing that he hath done shall be remembered, but in the iniquity that he hath committed, in that shall he die;" and so I have said somewhat of that point.

You may remember that I said (a word perhaps that some think much of) that the question betwixt us and Rome, is not whether we be justified by faith or no? But whether we be justified at all; I will make it good. There are two graces, righteousness imputed, which implies forgiveness of sins; and righteousness inherent, which is the grace of sanctification begun. They utterly deny that there is any righteousness, but righteousness inherent. They say forgiveness of sins is nothing but sanctification. A new doctrine never heard of in the Church of God, till those last days, till the spawn of the Jesuits devised it. Forgiveness of sin is this, that God will never charge me with it again. They say, that forgiveness of sin is an abolishing of sin in the subject, where is true remission; as much as to say, there is no justification distinct from sanctification: whereas the apostle distinguisheth them, when he saith: "The Son of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is made unto us "of God." By the way let me expound it unto you. Christ hath three offices; a prophetical, regal, and sacerdotical office. He exerciseth his prophetical office to illuminate our understanding. He exerciseth his kingly office to work on our will and affections: there are two branches of it, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. How am I made partaker of Christ's prophetical office: he is made unto me wisdom, before I was a fool, but now, by it, I am made wise. First, he enlightens me, and so he is made unto me wisdom: well, he is my priest; how so? He is made an expiation for my sin; he is said to be ἱλασμὸς in St. John, "a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the world." There is a difference between συγγνώμη and ἱλασμὸς, that is a bare pardon, but this is such a propitiation, as the party offended is well pleased with Christ, being made a ransom; he is made unto us ἱλασμὸς, by the oblation offered unto his father. He is righteousness imputed to us. And as a king, he rules me in the kingdom of grace, and in the kingdom of glory; in the kingdom of grace he is made unto me sanctification, and

in the kingdom of glory he is made unto me redemption; it is called by the apostle, the redemption of our bodies; these two are thus clearly distinguished. The work of Christ's priestly office is to be a propitiation for our sins; sanctification proceeds from the sceptre of his kingdom: the one is without me, the other within me, the one receives degrees, the other not. As a man that is holy, may be more holy; but imputed righteousness doth not more forgive one man than another. Imputation is without augmentation or diminution. Those things which have divers contraries, cannot be one and the same thing. Justification and sanctification have divers contraries. The contrary to justification is condemnation; but the contrary to sanctification is wickedness, and false dealing, &c. Aristotle distinguisheth homonymous words, and bids you consider their contraries: thus you see the difference between these two.

I should now come and descend unto the dependance one hath on the other; that is, in what respect doth faith justify? Is faith an instrument to work justification, or to receive it only?

The answer is clear, it justifieth in regard of the object. If you remember the two places I bid you compare: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" is that all? compare this place with, "Muchz more then, being now sanctified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him;" we are justified by his blood, and by faith in his blood: here are two acts which signify the same thing. It is no more than to say, I was cured by the bath, or by going to the bath, so that faith is the legs of the soul, that brings a man to Christ. And so my faith is an instrument, not to procure my justification, but to receive it; so that, seeing faith is an instrument, to receive justification, and to procure it, then the weakest faith carryeth away as much forgiveness as the strongest. A strong faith rids a great deal of work, because it is an active

instrument. The stronger faith worketh the greater work; but in the point of justification, it is an instrument whereby my justification is wrought, an instrument whereby Christ is received. And the weakest hand may receive a piece of gold as well as the strongest; we must know that in the point of receiving we live on God's alms. All our justification is his free gift, and faith is that palsy hand which receives all our comfort. It is not, then a strong faith that justifieth, but faith; it is called by Peter, "a like precious faith." "Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." It is ὁμότιμος, in the meanest Christian that hath a trembling hand to pitch on that, and draw virtue from him; it is a like precious faith in them, as in the most great apostle Peter, and all the rest.

SERMON XVII:

Peace with God through Christ, Part 3 - Romans 5:1

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I HAVE heretofore declared unto you, that in these words, and the words following, there are set down the great graces and great blessings which you have in Christ, in the kingdom of grace, before you come to the kingdom of glory.

First, here is set down the mother and radical grace of all the rest, and that is justification by faith; and then followeth the blessed fruit that issueth from thence.

1. Peace with God.

2. A gracious access into his presence.

3. A joyful hope arising from that great glory that we shall enjoy for the time to come.

4. In the worst of our troubles, and midst of our afflictions, this joy is so great, that it cannot be abated by any of them; yea, it is so far from being abated by them, that they are as fuel to kindle it: we rejoice in affliction, saith the apostle, that which would undo the joy of a carnal man, is made the matter of this man's joy.

Concerning the first of these, I shewed you that justification is the ground or foundation of all the rest: "being justified by faith;" that is the root and ground, without which there is no fruit, no peace, no joy, no hope, much less any kind of rejoicing in tribulation. Faith is that which seasoneth all; we must be justified by faith, before we have any other comforts; for that is the first ground, the first rudiment for a Christian in the school of Christ.

Therefore I proposed unto you three things for the understanding of it.

1. What that faith is that justifieth.

2. What that justification is that is obtained by faith.

3. What relation the one of these hath to the other.

Concerning the first of these I shewed you that it is not every faith that justifieth. I shewed you that there is a dead faith, whereupon the apostle saith: "The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." A dead thing cannot make a living man; it must be, and I shewed you how, a living faith.

Again, I shewed that beside the true faith, there was a temporary faith, which is active too, and comes near the other. It had the operations of the Spirit, but it wanted root. It had supernatural works, but it wanted the new creature. There was a conception, that was but an abortive kind of birth, it came not to maturity, not to a full growth, it did not continue. And I shewed unto you how a man might discern one of these from the other; for herein lieth the wisdom of a Christian, not to content himself, or be deceived with flashes; therefore the apostle exhorts us "to prove, and try, and examine ourselves." It is an easy matter to be deceived, and therefore God's people should be careful to examine themselves, to have their senses exercised herein, that however others may slight and slubber over the matter, they may be careful in it; and then they will not only do it themselves, but they will crave the aid of God also: "Provec me, O my God, try me."

Then for the second thing, concerning that justification that is obtained by faith. I shewed you that the word justification was

derived from justice or righteousness; and as many ways as justice and righteousness may be taken, so many ways may justification be taken: sometimes for justification of righteousness in a man, and sometimes it is opposed to condemnation; so it is taken in St. Paul, and it is taken as an acquittal; sometimes it is opposed to hypocrisy and pollution in a man's soul; so it signifies sanctification, whereby God not only covers our sins past, but heals our natures. The first is perfect, but imputed: the second inherent, but imperfect. When the time cometh that God will finish his cure, he will then make a perfect cure; when final grace cometh, we shall not need to think of a popish purgatory. Death is the Lord's refining pot; then there is not a jot of sin shall be left in a Christian. Now, when God hath taken away our dross, then to think we shall be put in a refining fire; that an entire soul that hath no blot, that one that hath no spot, should be purged after final grace hath made him clear and whole, that is against reason and common sense. They might have learned better of their own Thomas; all the fire in the world will never put away sin without the infusion of grace. This by the way concerning them.

I shewed besides, that these two being both righteousnesses, the Church of Rome confounds them both together: St. James his justification with St. Paul's. They confound inherent righteousness which is begun, and shall be perfected in final grace with the other; so that the point is not between us and Rome, whether faith justifieth by works or no? but, whether it justifieth at all? In truth that is the state of it: the question is this, whether there be such a grace as justification that is distinguished from sanctification, or whether there be another grace of sanctification? Do not think that we are such blockheads as to deny faith and sanctification; yet faith is but a piece or part of that train of virtues. There justification is taken for sanctification; we acknowledge a man is justified by faith and works: but the question is between us and them, whether there be any

justification besides sanctification? that is, whether there be any justification at all or no? we say sanctification is wrought by the kingly office of Christ; he is a king that rules in our hearts, subdues our corruptions, governs us by the sceptre of his word and Spirit; but it is the fruit of his priestly office which the Church of Rome strikes at: that is, whether Christ hath reserved another righteousness for us, besides that which as a king, he works in our hearts, whether he hath wrought forgiveness of sins for us? we say he hath, and so saith all the Church, till the new spawn of Jesuits arose. They distinguish not remission of sins from sanctification. Bellarmine saith, "remission of sins is the extinguishing of sin in the soul;" as water, though it be cold, yet the bringing in of heat extinguishes the cold; and so remission of sins is the bringing in of inherent righteousness, which extinguisheth all sin which was before. A strange thing, and were it not that the Scripture does speak of "a cup in the hand of the harlot of Rome, whereby she makes drunk the inhabitants of the earth with the wine of her fornication," except the men of her communion were drunk, it were impossible that a learned man should thus shake out an article of our and their creed, which hath ever been believed by all the churches. When the Scripture speaks of forgiveness of sins, see how it expresseth it: "Bee ye kind one to another, brethren, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Observe in the Lord's prayer, we pray that the "Lord would forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." Let him that hath common understanding judge: do we forgive our neighbour by extinguishing sin in the subject? I forgive you; that is, I take away the ill office you did me: doth he forgive thus? alas, no! forgiveness is without a man. I have an action against you, perhaps an action at law; I will let fall my suit, my charges I will forgive; this is forgiveness. "God justifieth, who shall condemn?" Though God has

just cause to proceed against me as a rebel, yet he is content to let fall his action, to fasten it upon the cross of his Son; there to fix the chirographum, "the handwriting against us." He will let fall that which was the ground of a suit against us, all that he could say against us.

That you may understand the thing the better, there are two things, two kinds of righteousness; the one of justification, the other of sanctification. The Holy Ghost distinguisheth them by several terms: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." You see here are two distinct graces, righteousness and sanctification; they make them but one, sanctification and remission of sins. "Moreoverh, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here justification and glorification are nothing else but justification and sanctification. St. Paul speaks of a thing past, not of the glory to come; them he glorified, not shall glorify: he means sanctification, which is inchoate glory. For what is the glory we shall have in heaven, but the enlargement of those inherent graces God begins in this world? Here is the seed, there is the crop: here thou hast a little knowledge, but there it shall be enlarged; now thou hast a little joy, there thou shalt enter into thy master's joy; here some knowledge, but there thou shalt have a full knowledge, and a full measure. Here glory dwelleth in our land, but there we "shall with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" that is, we are more and more conformed to the image of Almighty God, by obedience and holy qualities infused into us, that we grow from one degree of sanctification unto another. And so you see how these are distinguished by their terms. Justification and glorification, justification and sanctification. There is another place in St. John, an

hard place; but yet as I take it, these two righteousnesses, that have the same name for justification and sanctification, are righteousnesses both of them, to be distinct in their terms; in that place it is said, that "when the Spirit shall come, he shall reprove;" or, as we should translate it, and as you read it in the margin, "he shall convince the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment." Thus I say it should be translated, for it is of no sense to say that God should reprove the world of righteousness; on what occasion this was spoken, we must not stand to speak: but righteousness and judgment is justification and sanctification. And the drift of the place is this; when the Spirit shall come, how? not upon me or thee; but the Spirit here spoken of is that Spirit that should come upon the apostles, it shall begin at the day of Pentecost; and these, first, should set forth like twelve champions to conquer the world, and to bring them unto the sceptre of Christ. He shall convince the world; that is, when the Spirit shall come on you, and your tongues be tipped with that spiritual fire, which shall be active; it shall convince the world of three particulars, "of sin, righteousness and judgment:" of the point of humiliation for sins, the point of justification by righteousness imputative: and the glory of sanctification in judgment, and righteousness inherent. This method St. Paul useth in the Romans to stop every man's mouth. First, he convinceth the gentile, which was easy to be done; after, he convinceth the Jew, that there is righteousness to be had in another, though none in myself. "He shall convince the world:" As if he should say, to be shut up under unbelief is to be convinced of all sins. Now consider what is the nature of unbelief; it is to fasten all sins upon a man: and when I have faith, all my sins are put out of possession, they are as if they were not; but if we are shut up under unbelief, we are dead. The second work of God's Spirit, is the ministry of his word; he shall convince the world that there is righteousness to be had by a communion with another; though we are guilty in ourselves,

yet he will set us free; and the reason is, "because I go to my Father." As if he should say, though you be convinced of your sins, that you are wholly dead in trespasses and sins, and have no means in the world to put that away; yet notwithstanding, the second work of God's Spirit is to convince of righteousness; that there is a righteousness to be had in Christ, because he was our surety, arrested for debt; he was committed to prison, where he could not come out, till he had paid the utmost farthing. There is a justification to be had in me; I go to the creditor, I have made no escape; not like one that brake the prison, and ran away, but I am now a free man. I have not made an escape before the debt is paid, then I might be brought back again; but the debt is discharged, and therefore "I go to my Father," to maintain my place and standing. I was "given unto death for your sins, but I am risen again for your justification," and I now sit at my Father's right hand: this is the second thing. But is there not a third thing that the work of the ministry must do? Yes, "to convince the world that there is a judgment or righteousness inherent." There is a hard place, I shall speak of it; it is usual in Scripture to join righteousness and judgment together. The words of the Lord are "righteousness and judgment." And the integrity of a man's heart which is opposed to hypocrisy, is called judgment; "as God liveth who hath taken away my judgment." How did God take away his judgment? is it meant that he had taken away his wits? No, but he hath put his heavy hand on me, that hath put a conceit in the mind of my friends that I am an hypocrite; though, to confront the error of his misjudging friends, he was resolved to persist in his integrity; "Mym righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." His "judgment was taken away," that is, the opinion they had of his integrity: and this will expound another place in Matth. chap. 12 ver. 20. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he send forth judgment unto victory?" What is that, "until he send

forth judgment?" This judgment signifies nothing but those inherent graces, those infused qualities, that God sends into the heart of a Christian; which being produced in the children of God by the spirit of judgment, through which they are enabled to judge what is right and acceptable to God in Christ, who is their wisdom, are themselves called judgment. You read therefore of washing away the filth of the daughters of Sion, and purging the blood of Jerusalem, which is the sanctification of the Church, by the spirit of judgment. In a man's first conversion there are but beginnings of grace: what is faith, hope, patience and fear? it is like a smoking flax, that is, like the smoking wick of a candle made of flax: as when a candle burns in the socket, it is now up, now down, you know not whether it be alive or dead; so in the first conversion of a Christian, infidelity and faith, hope and despair mount up and down. There is a conflict in the beginning of conversion, but he will not give it over until he bring forth judgment, until he get the victory of all opposition from the flesh. And what is the reason? "Because the Prince of this world is judged." He shall convince the world of an inherent righteousness in spite of the Devil's teeth, because he is condemned. He that before worked in the children of disobedience is now cast down. The strong man is cast out, and therefore, upon that ground you have the third point. Besides the grace of justification following upon Christ's death, there is another; the grace, I mean, of sanctification, through which the Devil shall be dispossessed; the Devil is strong where he doth wicked things, but he shall be disarmed, he shall not touch thee, the wicked one shall not hurt thee, thou shalt overcome him.

I now go forward.

The third thing I noted besides faith and justification, was, that we must observe what relation one hath to the other; and how it comes

to pass that justification is attributed to faith, there being more noble graces in us, than faith.

I answer; the reason is, because faith is brought as the only instrument whereby we receive our justification, purchased by the merits of Christ's death. When we say faith is an instrument, we must understand it right well; we say not, faith is an instrument to work my justification, Christ alone must do that; it is no act of ours, nothing is in us; faith is said to be an instrument, whereby we get our justification in respect of the object, it is a nearing us to Christ; it is the instrument of application, the only instrument whereby we apply the medicine, and the plaster of Christ's blood; whereby we that were strangers, and afar off, are made near; faith is the only hand which receiveth Christ; when the hand layeth hold on a thing, it layeth hold on a thing without itself; so is faith a naked hand, not as a hand that gets a man's living, but like a beggar's hand that receives a free alms given by the donor, as the apostle speaks: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." There is abundance of grace, and a gift of righteousness; faith is the only means whereby we receive this gift: whereupon I inferred this, which was of so great consequence, seeing faith did justify, not as an active instrument, but as it did receive the gift of grace, it did follow, that the weakest faith that was did get as much justification as the strongest faith of any whatsoever; because faith justifieth not as a work, but as it did receive a gift; therefore our Saviour saith, "Oo, ye of little faith!" yet, as little as it was, it was builded upon the rock; and though Satan desired to winnow them, and sift them as wheat, yet they remained firm; as our Saviour saith of the faith of miracles: "If ye had faith as much as a grain of mustard seed, ye should say to this mountain, be removed, and it would obey you." So for common faith, which the apostle calleth so, because it is

"common to all the elect:" if thou hast so much faith, thou shalt be able to remove mountains of corruptions; suppose thou hast a trembling hand scarce able to hold, yet have the persuasion of the woman in the Gospel, "If I may but touch him, I shall be whole:" I shall be saved, healed, if I can but touch him: and mark our Saviour; "The people thronged about him," and he saith, "Who is it that toucheth me?" A wonder that he, when they crowded him, should ask such a question; but Christ knew that somebody touched him, beside the touch of the multitude: indeed that woman touched him more than the crowd that pressed him, as St. Augustine saith: "Illa mulier quæ fimbriam tetegit, magis tetegit, quam turba quæ pressit;" it is said in the text, "Ther poor woman came trembling, and told him all the truth. And he said, be of good comfort;" though thou hast a paralytic, and palsy-sick hand, yet the touch is enough, the least faith brings as much as the greatest.

OBJ. But then, what need a man look for a great faith?

SOL. Yes, by all means; for though thou hast much comfort by a little weak faith, yet the more faith, the more comfort; and therefore it is to very much purpose to labour after a strong faith. "Abraham," it is said, "staggered not through unbelief;" if thou hast a strong faith, thou wilt have a strong consolation: thou mayest by thy weak faith be healed of thy disease, yet by the weakness of thy faith, mayest want much of the strength of thy comfort; therefore thou must "got from faith to faith;" but know this, that a new born child ἀρτιγέννητον βρέφος, is not yet so strong as a man, yet he is as much alive, as the strongest and tallest man; so that again thus, thou art yet but a new-born babe, not so strong or so lively as one more grown, but yet thou hast all the lineaments of the new creature in thee, though thou art not so strong and lively as another may be.

OBJ. Did not you tell me that it was not every faith that did justify, but a working faith? how then doth faith alone justify?

SOL. I answer, when faith justifieth, there is one thing said of another; the subject and the predicate are, faith justifies. Justification is attributed unto faith; look on the word only, whether it doth determine the subject or the predicate; doth faith which is alone severed from good works, justify? so the proportion is false. First, that faith which is alone, separated from love and the fruits of good works, doth not justify; but let the alone be put to the predicate; faith justifieth alone; that is, faith is the only virtue in the soul whereby a man is justified, that is true: as if a man should say, the eye alone seeth, it is true; if we put it thus, the eye, severed from the members of the body, seeth, it is false. If the eye were taken out of the head, it would neither see alone, nor at all; but the meaning is this, the living eye is the organ whereby a man discerns a visible object; so faith, though joined with other graces, yet takes not other with it for helps for justification.

OBJ. But why should God select this virtue among others, that are more noble?

SOL. I say as before, God had "respect to the low estate of his hand-maid," it was reason that God should choose the lowest and the meanest: God selected this poor beggar's hand for two reasons.

First, in respect of God.

I say, first, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all;" so that here are two strong reasons; one in respect of God, that God, by so mean a thing as a beggar's hand,

should bring a man to justification; and the other in respect of faith itself, that it might be grace, for when thou bringest nothing but a bare hand ready to receive a pardon, this must needs be of grace. If God say, thou must love me, this were an exchange, not a free gift. I lay down something, and I take up something for it. Faith is that naked hand which fills itself with Christ, it layeth fast hold on Christ crucified with all his merits.

As if a man were ready to be drowned, there is a cable cast to him to lay hold on, and he laying hold on it, is safe to the land; but a man when he lays hold on the cable, must let go all his other holds which he laid hold on before. Thus must a man let go all other holds, and lay fast hold on Jesus Christ.

Faith hath two faculties: 1. it opens itself to let fall all other things: and then 2. when it is a naked hand, it layeth hold on Christ, and then it is filled with Christ, when the believer esteems all dross in comparison of Christ; it hath fullness by grace: "Where is then rejoicing and boasting? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith." And then, "Foru if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God;" faith taketh away all boasting. "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." This is the reason in respect of God.

2. In respect of ourselves; "to the end the promise might be sure to the seed;" what is the reason why people doubt and think nothing sure; it is because they come not with a naked hand; we must have such a measure of humiliation, of patience, all to bring somewhat with us; whereas if we look on these things, we shall never be heard. If the bare acceptation of Christ, with a trembling hand, will not make thee sure, thou understandest not the excellency of that very

treasure whereof thou art possessed; what canst thou have more than the bare receiving of such a gift by faith? The reason why we are not more sure, is because we come not with a naked hand.

By the way there are many means, some a priori, others a posteriori.

1. For the first; they are those things by which faith is wrought, though they are not so evident, yet they are most sure; when I consider God calls me in my blood, having nothing in me, and will be friends with me, bids me take his Son, and I do not, bids me take his kingdom and glory with him, and I refuse it, though this be a matter not so evident, yet it is most sure.

2. Then there are other arguments which come from the fruits of faith a posteriori; they are more evident, but not so sure. And thus have I declared unto you the first point of justification by faith, it is so sweet a string, that I cannot tell how to leave it, and therefore harp so long upon it.

Now let us come from the mother to the daughter; the eldest daughter is peace with God, then this is the first birth; and we are at peace with God.

In this peace we will consider these three particulars.

1. What is that peace which we have.

2. With whom have we it.

3. By whom, and by whose means we have peace with God: It is procured by Jesus Christ.

What we have; peace.

With whom; God.

By whose means? Our Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. What this peace is. You know the point of peace is a great matter; it is the apostolical benediction: grace and peace in all the epistles; "Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ;" and "Nowx the Lord of peace himself give you peace by all means always." This is a thing by all means to be desired, you must labour to get it; this was the angels' song when Christ was born, "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men." This peace is a thing by all means to be sought after, and what it is, you may know by the contrary; you know what a miserable thing war is; God grant you may not know it too soon; you know what it is to have an enemy among us. This is our case, till we be justified, we are at daggers drawing, at point of hostility with God. It is a foolish conceit for a man to think that by reason of God's predestination he is justified before he was; this is a foolish conceit; until thou art justified by faith, thou art not justified at all. God's predestination doth not make a change in the subject; if I intend to enrich a beggar, he is in rags still, for all my intention, till my intention be put in execution. Paul was elected before the foundation of the world; but till he was converted, he was an enemy, and "a persecutor, the chief of sinners," as he speaks of himself, so the Scripture speaks in that point: "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Before the time of peace came, we were unbelievers, enemies, in the state of enmity, when as before God was thy enemy, as soon as thou hast touched Christ by a lively faith, presently all the actions he had against thee are let fall; God is friends with thee; this is a high and a deep peace, and this comprehends all kind of

blessings; Amasa, one of the valiantest captains that David had, speaks there of peace; one would think it not so proper, it belongs not to them to talk of peace, but because peace comprehends all kinds of blessing, it is said: "Thenz the Spirit of the Lord came upon Amasa, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto thy helpers, for thy God helpeth thee." This is a speech from a soldier to a soldier, and this is done in a military way; peace is welcome though coming from a warrior, because it comprehends all manner of blessings, it is said, that "when Uriah came unto David, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered." Look unto the margin according to the original, and it is, "He demanded of the peace of Joab, and the people, and of the peace of the war." A man would think it a contradiction that he should demand of the peace of the war; so then this peace which we have with Almighty God, after we are justified by faith, is the comprehension of all manner of good. This having peace with God is the fruit of the Spirit.

But with whom is this peace? with God; it is not peradventure so with thyself: thou mayest have a turbulent conscience, insomuch that thou wouldst give all the world to have it quiet, to be assured that there is peace between God and thee; that is not the point: the thing thou getest by faith is peace with God: when thou art troubled with thyself, and hast but a weak act of faith, yet if thou believest, thou art more afraid than hurt; thou art cocksure, and shalt be calm and quiet in God's good time.

OBJ. But why should Christians be so foolish, so troubled? what is the reason the children of God do disquiet themselves?

SOL. Because they are fools, they stand in their own light, are straitened in their own bowels. God is liberal and free, but there is some hope of worthiness in us, and we do things we should not do. We are always poring on ourselves, and do not bring a naked hand; and this is the reason we are so full of distractions: for he that seeks justification (I mean remission of sins) by his own performance, will never attain it. Observe what the apostle speaketh upon this point: "Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." This was their stumbling stone, as he there saith.

Again, it is the nature of many peevish people amongst us, that they will not be comforted; when news was brought to Jacob that Joseph was slain and lost, it is said: "All his sons and daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning." They have a kind of pettishness, and peevishness, and wilfulness; they will not be comforted, and it may be there is some kind of pride in it too; they would perhaps be thought to be the only mourners of Israel, of the kingdom. "Asd Rachel mourned for her children, and would not be comforted;" they shut up their eyes against all comforts; God commands them to be comforted, and they will not; it is no marvel then that they eat the fruit of their own hands; it is a part of our office to bring comfort, we have an injunction to it; "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord; we bring the tidings of peace, and our feet should be beautiful," we bring good news, all is well; as Noah's dove coming with an olive branch in her mouth. Comfort ye, comfort ye, cry aloud, spare not. If you stop your ears, who can help it? the Lord is gracious and chargeth us to comfort you: and can there be any better news than to say, all is peace, all your sins are done away. "I have blotted as a thick cloud thy transgressions:" as

who should say, it is the tidings of such good things, as all within thee is too little to praise the Lord, and therefore it is not a thing to be slighted over; "blessedf is the man whose sins are forgiven," which is no noun adjective, nor of the singular number neither; it signifieth the blessednesses, as it were an heap of blessings. They commonly call it the eight beatitudes, it is but varied upon divers subjects; were there eighty-eight, that were all one: to have thy sins forgiven thee, is the comprising of all happiness; and he whose iniquity is covered, hath interest in them all.

Again, when a man sets his eyes too much upon his sins; more upon his sins than upon the mercies of God freely offered in Christ, this is a wonderful hinderance of the peace; thou lookest on the wrong object, looking too much on thy sins, when thou shouldst look on Christ, that brazen serpent offered unto thee; then it is no wonder that thou seest not Christ though he be near thee: Mary Magdalen complains and weeps (as she thought) to the gardener, that they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid him, when as he stood at her elbow; her eyes were so full of tears that she could not behold her Saviour. Now therefore stand not in thine own light, but look upon Christ as well as upon thy sins; observe, though there be a peace and a calm, yet presently all turmoils will not cease after humiliation. When there is a great storm at sea which lasts perhaps twenty-four hours, and then ceaseth, what, are the waves presently quiet, as soon as the storm is over? no, there will be tossing and rolling many hours afterwards, because there must be a time of settling: and so though there be peace between God and thee, and the storm over, yet there must be a time of settling.

I should now show you the difference between the peace that wicked men have and this other peace: theirs is not peace: there is no peace to the wicked: it is a truce only, and we must make a great difference

between a truce and a peace. A truce when it is expired, commonly ends in more bitter war. With them there is a cessation of trouble, their consciences do not accuse them, but when the time limited is over, and conscience again breaks loose, it will be more unquiet and unsettled than ever before; it will be at open war against them.

SERMON XVIII:

Access by Faith - Romans 5:1-2

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

HAVING out of these words declared unto you the mother-grace, justification by faith, I proceed to the consideration of her daughters, those fruits or graces which spring from a true justifying faith. So that here we have the great charter and privilege that a justified man is endowed withal. First, he hath peace with God. Secondly, free access unto him. Thirdly, unspeakable joy, and that joy not only in respect of that delectable object, the hope of the glory of God in heaven hereafter; but here also, that which spoils the joy of a natural man, (afflictions, &c.) are made the matter of this man's joy.

Now concerning "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," the first of these, I considered three parts in it.

1. What the peace was which the justified man enjoyeth.

2. The parties between whom this peace was made.

3. Who was the peace maker.

Concerning the peace I declared unto you what it was, that it was an unconceivable thing, "The peace of God that passeth all understanding;" a thing which our shallow understandings cannot reach unto, we cannot apprehend the excellency of this grace:

consider its excellency by the contrary; there is no misery in the world like that, as when a man stands at enmity with God: "Do we provoke the Lord? Are we stronger than he?" "Ifb a man sin against a man," saith Eli, "the judge shall judge him; another man may take up the quarrel, but if a man sin against God, if the controversy be between God and us, who shall intercede for us?" Were it not for this our Peacemaker Christ Jesus, we should be in a woful condition, unless he put to his hand, and took up the matter.

Now it is a great matter to come to the fruit of peace; "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." We have this fruit of peace from righteousness, we do not sow fruit but seed, the fruit comes afterwards. It is not so with a Christian, he is as sure, as if the thing were in hand, he soweth not only the seed, but the fruit of peace in righteousness, to his justification; as soon as he is justified, at that instant he hath the fruit of peace.

So we have peace, but with whom is it? it is between God and us. God, and a justified man is at peace through Jesus Christ; at the very same instant that a man is justified, he is at peace with God. This peace as I declared unto you, is a gift of an high nature, which belongs not to every man, but to the justified man only; he who is justified by faith, he only hath peace. In the Ephesians and Isaiah there are general proclamations of peace; "Peace be unto them that are near, and unto them that are afar off:" and Isaiah, chap. 57 ver. 19. The word the apostle useth in the Ephesians, hath allusion to this in Isaiah: "I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh, saith the Lord, and I will heal them; but the wicked are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Though the proclamation be never so general to Jews and Gentiles, yet it belongs only to those who have peaceable minds towards God, those who will not stand on

terms of rebellion against him: what madness is it to think, that if I stand in point of rebellion against God, I should have peace with him? But I must cast down my arms, renounce my treasons, and I must come with a subject's mind, then there will be peace, otherwise no peace. When Jehu came to revenge the quarrel of God, Joram asked him, "Is it peace, Jehu?" he answers, "What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many!" As long as thou continuest in a course of rebellion, what hast thou to do to talk of peace? Why thinkest thou on peace, when thou art the chief rebel? As long as wickedness continues in thy heart, thou hast no peace of God by Jesus Christ.

Now it may fall out that there may be a kind of quietness in the conscience of a wicked man; but we must make a great difference between a peace and a truce; a truce is but a cessation of war, for such a time; and many times when the truce is over, it ends in greater war, because they have the more time to gather strength, and increase their forces: so there may be a peace or a truce between God and wicked men, but it is the highest judgment that can be upon a wicked man to be thus let alone; but it is not so with godly men; God breaks their peace, and hedges up their way with thorns, and many times torments their conscience, and breaks their peace; but when God suffers a sinner to thrive in sin, when he suffers him to go on so long, that his own honour is almost touched; "I held my peace," saith God, "then thou thoughtest me to be such a one as thyself." God holds his peace, then the sinner saith, God doth not heed. However the preacher amplifies these things, God is not so terrible as they make him: well, but though God hold his peace long, yet at last he will speak; "Oh, consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." When the time of the truce is out, then the conscience is like a fierce mastiff; the longer he is tied, the more fierce he is when he is let loose: so conscience, when

he hath been long quiet and tied up, when God lets loose the cords thereof, it will be more fierce than ever before, it will then fly like a mastiff in thy face, and as it were tear thy throat; and then there will be in thee the very flashings of hell.

Now there is a great difference between the peace of God's children, and this little cessation of war in the consciences of wicked men: "When the strong man armed, keeps the house, the goods that he possesseth are in peace." When Satan is the master, and thou dost his will, and he hath thee at command, he doth not trouble thee; when he keeps the house, the goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he comes, and puts him out of possession, then comes the strife and debate. Look therefore to thy peace; is it such a peace as thou hast never found any conflict, any stirring, striving betwixt the strong man and the weak? suspect that peace; that is not the peace of a justified man, but of such a one who is held by the prince of darkness.

2. Again, how comes this peace to wicked men? they consider not the wrath of God, nor the danger of sin; they consider not that "Tophet is prepared of old," if they did but consider this, it would spoil their sport, and break their peace: but now a justified man, he knows what sin is, and what hell is; and at that very time, when he is thinking of his sins, and of damnation, when he knoweth that this is the reward of God's enemies, he hath peace even then. This proceedeth from the sense of God's frank and free remission in Christ, with which the children of God are much affected. St. Augustine cries out: "Quidi retribuam Domino, quod recolit hæc memoria mea, et anima mea non metuit! inde diligam te Domine, et gratias agam, &c. What shall I render unto the Lord, that I recollect these impurities and monsters of sin, and yet am not overwhelmed with consternation in the recognition of them! I will love thee, O Lord, and give thee thanks,

and confess to thy name." The other, the wicked, they shut their eyes that they may not see their danger; and because they discern it not, therefore they are at peace. A man in a dark night going over a dangerous bridge, that if he miss but a step he is drowned, yet he passeth over securely, and is not afraid, because he wanteth light to discover the danger; but bring him the next day, and show him what a danger he escaped, and the thoughts of it will make him quake and tremble, though the danger be past; so these men, being in darkness, see not their danger, and therefore do not fear; but God's child having his eyes in his head, discerns the danger, and sees also how he is delivered by Jesus Christ: he is at peace, not because he seeth not the danger of the way, but because he knows that God made the way broad by Jesus Christ, and so is freed from sin and death.

Now to speak something to them that have this true and sound peace, this peace is with God; I showed you the last time that this peace is not always in their own conscience, but is such on God's part, which is the safe part; many reasons there are, why God doth not show it unto them; though all be quiet betwixt God and them, yet they have not an apprehension of it in their consciences.

I showed that this is "many times their own fault," because they will not be comforted; all their thoughts are bent upon their sins, and their provocations of God, and they have not an eye open, to look upon the mercies of Christ; they put it off, and will not be comforted: and if they put it off from themselves, no marvel if they have not peace in their consciences.

This may come by reason of the great conflict before in the conscience: God raiseth a great storm, and when he intends to bring a man to some great work, or to a great deal of joy, he first humbleth him; the Prince of our salvation was consecrated by afflictions, and

we must be conformable unto Christ our Head; when the storms are past, the sea will continue raging for a while; and when you have turned the wheel round, if you take away your hand, it will go round itself for a time: so when you are justified by faith, the storm is over, yet the roaring of the waves will continue; it will be so with the children of God; though there be a calm, yet there will be some remainders of a storm.

Again, they are in travail, and that is a painful thing: "My little children with whom I travail." They have the pangs of the new birth, and it is a good while before they can find that quietness their heart doth long for.

Again, God purposely doth, though he be friends with them, take away from them the sense of peace, because he takes delight to find that strength of faith: Faith is manifest that way, faith is most strong when there is least sense. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" the less sense, the faster the hold; and God loves this at life, that when he spurns and frowns, he will not let go, nor be put off; let him kill me, he shall kill me with Christ in my arms, I will not let go my hold; God cannot fail, he hath given me his word, and therefore I will not let go. Such a strong faith had Abraham, contrary to reason; God's word is true, he gives me his word, and I will trust him: so a child of God will not be put off; though God write bitter things against him, he will not forego him. We have an excellent example in the woman of Canaan; the end of it is, "Om woman, great is thy faith." But how doth the greatness of it appear? "Lord, have mercy upon me, my daughter is grievously afflicted:" Why not rather, Lord, have mercy on my daughter? the reason is because she was afflicted in her daughter's affliction. By the way, we may hereby understand the meaning of the commandment, where it is said, "he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth

generation of them that hate him." But why to the third and fourth generation? because, I may see the third and fourth generation, and may see the judgment of God on them, and may remember my sin, for which they are plagued; the case is mine, and not theirs only: "Lord have mercy upon me, for my daughter is diseased:" I see my own sin is punished by the judgment on her in my sight. Poor woman, Christ will not hear her; she might have been dashed out of countenance, the disciples were weary of her clamorous cries, and say, "Send her away, for she troubleth us:" What, saith Christ? "Is it fit to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs?" This was enough to dash her quite; before she was discouraged by silence, but to be called dog, it were enough quite to discourage her: but see the fruit of faith; she seeks comfort of that which would have undone another: What, am I a dog under the table? there I shall get a crumb; others of the children that are better, let them have the loaves: I account myself happy if I may but get a crumb; "O woman, great is thy faith:" this is great faith when it goes contrary to all sense; that when God calls me dog, when he spurns at me, and frowns on me, I will not be put off. Faith is of the nature of the vine, if it have but the least hold on the wall, it makes use of it, and climbs higher and higher: so out of the least thing that drops from her Saviour's mouth, she raiseth her faith higher: so, though we have this peace with God, yet oft times he withholds the notification of it to us.

3. The last thing is to note the difference between the peace of a carnal and a spiritual man; carnal peace is mixed with a great deal of presumption and pride; but the more spiritual peace thou hast, the more thou art dejected in thyself, the more cast down: see it in Ezekiel: "I will establish with thee an everlasting covenant; then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thy elder and thy younger; and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant: and I will establish my

covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord." When God is pacified, yet they hold down their heads, and are ashamed; when a man knoweth that God hath pardoned his sins, he is ashamed that he hath carried himself so wickedly against God, of whose mercy he hath now such experience: when God is pacified, a man remembers his former sins, and is confounded; as it is in Ezekiel: "Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations in that time when I am pacified toward you." That which would work in a carnal man security and pride, (for he never thinks himself better than when there is peace within) will work in the child of God the grace of humiliation. In the last chapter of Job, God had manifested himself wonderfully to Job; and however before he had very sharp afflictions, his sufferings in soul were next to the sufferings of Christ. I believe never any man suffered so much as Job did, insomuch that "thep arrows of the Almighty stuck in him, the poison whereof," saith he, "drinketh up my spirit." This was the case of Job, and he stood upon terms of justification; he wished that God would dispute with him, that God would either be the opponent or the answerer. If God would answer, he would oppose; or if God would oppose, he would answer. God comes as he would have him, and Job is not at that point that he was before; when God draws nigh unto him, he saith: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee." Well, this may make thee a proud man, and elevate thee: no, saith he, "now I abhor myself in dust and ashes." The nearer God draws unto us, and the more merciful he is unto us, by that light we the more discern our own abominations. That which would make another man proud, brings Job to the

knowledge of his vileness. "Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

3. Now another thing is, who is this peace-maker? This I shall but touch: "we have peace with God:" but how? "through our Lord Jesus Christ;" he is our peacemaker, and interposeth between his Father's wrath and us, "For he is our peace; who hath made both one, and hath broken down that partition wall between us;" we have not only peace with God through Christ, but Christ is the very peace; not only the peace-maker, but the peace. There was a middle wall of partition between the Jews, and the Gentiles; and between God, and us; Christ breaks it down; sin shall no longer be a wall of partition. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make himself of twain one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." There was hatred between God and us. Christ hath crucified that hatred with the nails wherewith he was fastened to the cross; he hath killed it by his crucifixion, and now enmity being slain, peace must needs be alive; there is peace and reconciliation made. "Yous are come," saith the apostle, "to the blood of sprinkling;" whereas the blood of Abel cried for vengeance against Cain the murderer: this blood cries for peace, it outcries all our sins; sin hath a voice; it is said, "the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah went up into the ears of the Lord;" every sin thou committest hath a voice to cry, but the blood of Christ hath a shriller voice, and outcries the cry of thy sins; it is so preeminent, it speaks for peace, and doth outcry the voice of our sins; the high priest was a type of Christ; "He must have on his frontlet Holiness to the Lord;" as one which bears the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel representing the Holy One of the Lord and standing in the person of Christ; Moses saith (when there was wrath gone out from the Lord) unto Aaron, "Takeu a censer and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on

incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out, the plague is begun;" so when the wrath is gone out, the high priest comes and offers up himself a sweet incense acceptable unto God. "And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and came into the midst of the congregation, and behold the plague was begun among the people, and he put incense and made an atonement for the people." When wrath is come out from the Almighty, and his army is sent out for to destroy the rebels, now our high priest stands between the living and the dead, and offers up himself an oblation to Almighty God to make peace: look to the case of Balaam; when the people had committed fornication, Phinehas executed judgment; wherefore the Lord saith, "Phinehas hath turned away my wrath from the people;" and if that one act of Phinehas, his zeal for the Lord in killing the fornicators before the congregation, if this, I say, appeased God's wrath for the whole congregation; how much more doth our Phinehas, who hath fulfilled all righteousness, whom the zeal of God's house had eaten up? He is nothing but zeal itself, and all that he doth in our name unto his Father, is for our good. How much more shall Christ pacify God's wrath, who hath received the gash of God's sword upon his own body, and would not have himself spared, that he might do it? "Asx Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth." There is a mighty storm, and Jonah is cast out into the sea, presently the storm ceaseth; so Christ having suffered for us, there is peace, the storm is over.

Now follows in the next place in the text; "By whom we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." These are the two privileges that a justified man hath; he hath a gracious access unto God; suppose he be in fault, (as who is not?) "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous. "These things have I written," saith the apostle, "that you sin not; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father."

This is the state of a justified man; though he do by his relapses provoke God, yet he is in the state of a subject; though he be a disobedient subject, yet a subject, not a foreigner as before; but now ye "that were not a people, are become the children of the living God." A child of God in the midst of rebellion no sooner repenteth, but he is sub misericordia; as soon as he is in the state of grace, he is under God's protection, he is no stranger: and as soon as he converteth unto his heavenly Father, though he hath his blood about his ears, and is in his rags, yet he may with an humble boldness come to God; "By Jesus Christ he may come boldly to the throne of grace, that he may find help in time of need." The apostle sets down twice the great privileges Christians have; "Fora through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father:" it is Christ which makes the way. To have a friend at the court is a great matter, especially when a man hath need of him; Christ is gone before us, and he "lives for ever to make intercession for us," and we need no other mediator: thus he bespeaks his Father; Father, this is one of mine that I shed my blood for, one of those that thou gavest me; I beseech thee have pity upon him, and I beseech thee give him audience: "By him," that is, through Christ, "we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, in whom we have boldness by the faith of him, and access with confidence." I go not now doubting unto God, I prefer my suit with boldness. Mark the apostle St. James; "If any man want wisdom, or any other thing, let him ask it of God that gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." It is otherwise with men; when one hath done a great man wrong, and comes to desire a favour at his hands: Oh Sir! saith he, do you not remember how you used me at such a time, or in such a place? that he is presently upbraided with, it is cast in his dish: but it is not

so with God; he gives liberally, and upbraids no man: so there is a free and a bold access with faith and confidence, by whom we have boldness and access: let him not doubt or waver; that is a notable place; here is bold access by faith unto God, and by that we may be assured of whatever we ask; if it be forgiveness of sins, we may be sure they are forgiven; if we ask in faith we may be assured. By the way, take notice of the folly of the Papists, who think that a man can have no confidence or assurance that his sins are forgiven. "This is our confidence, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Now, is it not according to his will to ask forgiveness of our sins? Doth not he enjoin us to do it? Therefore what infidelity is it, not to be assured of it? And what impudency is it in them, to go about to cut off that which is the whole comfort of a Christian? The assurance of his salvation. Thus it is indeed with those that have no feeling nor confidence, as those who are in hell think there is no heaven; and they who teach such uncomfortable doctrine can receive no comfort farther than the priest giveth it them. It is true, there is no true assurance, but in the true Church; but there it may be found.

And as I began with "sowing in tears," so I would end with "reaping in joy:" that is the next thing in the text, for which I pass over the other part of it. I begin with humiliation, but end with joy; and not only that joy which we shall have in the kingdom of heaven, but on earth, while we have these things but in hope and expectation. A man that would reckon up his estate, doth not only value what he hath for the present, but he reckons his reversions also; what he shall have after such a time, what will come to him or his heirs. God's children, they have a brave reversion; glory and honour, and a kingdom: "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom." "Wed are all the children of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be: when he appears, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. He shall change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body." We

are here sons, but yet, but in a strange country, no body knoweth what he is, and therefore he meets with many affronts. The king when he was in France, went for an attendant on the duke, and is he troubled at it? No, he knew that the world knew it not, they knew not what he was; and therefore he is not troubled at it? So is it with the children of God; but when they shall appear, they shall be advanced, and their enemies ashamed. By the way, let not the people of God be discouraged by the taunts, jeers and reproaches of wicked men; they know not what you are, and therefore make light of you, as they did of Christ himself. Well, besides what we have in reversion, the very present hope of it works wonderful joy in the heart of a Christian. David did not live to see the glory of Solomon's temple; but he made provision for it, and cast the model of it, and he took much delight in the contemplation of what it would be. The consideration of these hopes "makes my flesh rest in hope, and my heart rejoice." The consideration of the resurrection made David's heart rejoice: the consideration of that which is to come should bring abundance of joy unto a Christian: these are strange things, not like the joy of a natural man; for "hisf heart is sad in the midst of laughter," but "these rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Here are some sparks, some beginnings of the glory of heaven, and of that great joy which we shall have hereafter; but I cannot speak of these things in an hour.

But, forasmuch as the Devil "transforms himself into an angel of light," there is no work of God's Spirit in the hearts of his children, but Satan, like an ape, labours to imitate in the hearts of wicked men, to make them secure: we must know that there are joys in some who are not regenerate: "They that receive the word on the rock, received it with joy." The word, if it be apprehended, and hath but the least footing, brings joy with it.

But now to know how I may get this joy, how beneficial a thing is it to have such a comfort on earth, as to know that I have this true joy! and to be able to distinguish this joy from the false joy, from the flashes, those fleeting joys of the wicked, which are but "as the crackling of thorns under a pot," for theirs is but as a blaze that suddenly goeth out. Now if thou wouldst know thy joy aright, and whether it differ from that counterfeit joy which flesh and blood, and the Devil suggests: look to the things that go before, and produce this joy.

1. The first thing that goeth before true joy, and produceth it, is an opening unto Christ when he knocks at the door of thy heart: as in that famous place: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." There is, if thou open, a sweet and familiar communication between Christ and thee; he communicates himself at dinner and supper. A man comes not melancholy to meals; Christ will come, and make merry with thee, he will sup with thee familiarly. But how is it with thee? hath Christ knocked, and thou hast given him a sleeveless answer, and hast thou joy? it is a false joy. But when Christ knocks at the door of thy heart, there must be an opening the door on thy part, when he knocks by his word and Spirit: and dost thou give such an answer as the spouse in the Canticles: "Ik am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey." Now Christ coming to supper, knocked at the door, and would bring in a great deal of joy: "I sleep," saith the spouse, "but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my well-beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." When God comes and woos us, and desires to communicate himself unto us, and desires us to put off our cloths, dost thou look for comfort if thou openest not? "At last I opened to my beloved; but he had withdrawn

himself, and was gone; my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." When thou givest not Christ entertainment when he comes, thou mayest seek, and not meet with him. It is observed that "the keepers of the wall" are the greatest strikers: those whom God hath set to be watchmen, instead of comforting, they smite; "Them watchmen that went about the city they found me, they smote me, they wounded me, they took my veil from me:" she gets raps from them who should protect her, because she did not entertain Christ: if thou findest any comfort after Christ hath knocked, and thou hast opened unto him; then it is true joy, and thou mayest make much of it.

2. If it be true joy, "there goeth faith before it; for being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." So that the exercising of the acts of faith, is a spiritual means to raise comforts in our souls; I had need to speak of this, for there is want of the exercises of faith: is it enough, think you, to have faith once exercised? "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him:" it is not enough to eat once a year, A man will not be in good liking that eats but once a year, but a man must eat once a day at least. A Christian should feed on Christ every day, make him his ordinary food, renewing every day the acts of faith, receive Christ crucified, by faith, every day. If a Christian would consider that God offers Christ unto him every day, and thou renewest thy faith, and claspest him every day, it would be a special way whereby joy should be raised in the soul. It is said "Weo rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Thus when thou hast exercised the acts of faith in believing, and then upon that rejoicest, then it is seasonable and true joy, and not the counterfeit joy of the wicked: when it arises and springs from believing, when that procureth it, it likewise

distinguishes it from all false joys. The apostle tells us: "Having this confidence, I know that I shall continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith." It is called "the joy of faith," because it springs from that principle of rejoicing, from that mother-grace, that your rejoicing may be the more abundant.

The preaching of the word whereby faith is wrought, brings abundance of joy. That place of St. Peter is remarkable: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:" yet believing, that is, exercising the acts of faith, which we too much neglect. If we did exercise these acts every day, we should have our charter of joy renewed every day; "yet believing, ye rejoice."

3. Pray and be thankful; praise and thanksgiving are those fruits which fulfil all our joy. When thou prayest, thou conversest with God, thou speakest with him face to face, as Moses did. He who can pray spiritually, and pray hard unto God, as Moses' face shined when he talked with God, so will thy soul thrive, praying hard, and being thankful: there is no greater means than this to get this joy: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praising is comely for the upright." Upon this hangs all our comfort; praise always brings rejoicing, the one begets the other. In Isaiah, the comfort there that God's children receive, is the changing of raiment: "Christs preaching the acceptable year of the Lord to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The ground of praise is joy; one follows the other: observe, God will give us the oil of joy: "Christ was anointed with this oil above his fellows:" Christ hath fullness of joy; this oil doth not come on his head alone, but it trickles down unto the lowermost hem of his garment, even upon all the lively members of his mystical body.

I will add in the last place, when a man considers the great things which are given to him by God, and what an estate we get by Christ. I have forgiveness of sins; and "blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven." Christ's blood is mine, and my name is written in the book of life. "Dou not rejoice," saith our Saviour, "because the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." When I consider that I am not in the black roll, and it is my faith which strengthens me, which makes me reckon Christ my chiefest wealth; this makes me rejoice in mine inheritance, and in hope of the glory of God. When I consider the great reward in the world to come, this is a great cause of rejoicing; and therefore God's children long for the coming of Christ: it is made a mark of those that shall be saved: "that they long for the appearance of Jesus Christ, looking for, and hastening unto the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And "lookingy for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." A longing expectation there is in all the creatures after the second coming of Christ; "they wait," saith the apostle, "for the manifestation of the Sons of God:" and presently he adds: "not only they, but we also that have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan and long for the coming of that day." And therefore the last breath of the Scripture is breathed out in the confirmation of this hope: "Hea that testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly; Amen, even so be it, come Lord Jesus." There is a sweet allegory to express this: "Make haste, my beloved, and be like the hind and like the roe; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; and come as the hind, and as the roe, and as a hart upon the mountain of spices:" make haste, and come quickly; be swift, and do not tarry: and in a better place I cannot end.

SERMON IXX:

The Spirit of Adoption - Romans 8:15-16

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.

The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

THE apostle sets down in this epistle a platform of Christian doctrine, whereupon all persons and churches might safely build themselves; showing therein a sure way, how those might come to the Lord Jesus Christ who are to obtain salvation by him, which he delivers in three heads, showing,

1. First, how God will convince the world of sin.

2. Secondly, he discovereth to them what that righteousness is, which without themselves is imputed to them.

3. Thirdly, he setteth forth that righteousness inherent, and created in us by sanctification of the spirit with the effects thereof, and motives, and helps thereunto.

Answering that threefold work of the Spirit in John, chap. 16 where Christ promiseth that when the Comforter should come he should reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment;

First, he shows the Comforter shall work a conviction of sin, a making of a man as vile, empty and naked as may be; not a bare

confession of sin only, which a man may have and yet go to hell, but such a conviction as stops a man's mouth that he hath not a word to speak, but sees a sink of sin and abomination in himself, such as the apostle had: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." To attain to this sight and measure of humiliation, there must be a work of the Spirit. First therefore in the first chapter the apostle begins with the Gentiles, who failing grossly in the duties of the first table, God had given over also to err in the breach of all the duties of the second table. Then the next chapter, and the most of the third he spends on the Jews: they bragged of many excellent privileges they had above the Gentiles, as to have the law, circumcision, to be leaders of others, to have God among them, and therefore despised the Gentiles. The apostle reproves them, shewing that in condemning the Gentiles, they condemned themselves, they having a greater light of knowledge than the Gentiles, which should have led them to the true and sincere practice of what they were instructed in. Then he goes on and shows all naturally to be out of the wayb, and so concludes them to be under sin, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. This is the end of the first part.

This being done, in the latter end of the chapter he proceeds to speak of the second work of the Comforter. To convince the world of righteousness; but on what grounds? "Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;" that is, he shall assure the conscience that now there is a righteousness of better things purchased for us: that Christ was wounded, arraigned and condemned for us; that he was imprisoned, but now he is free, who was our surety; yea, and that he is not free, as one escaped, who hath broken prison and run away, (for then he could not have stayed in heaven no more than Adam could stay in paradise after his fall) but now that Christ remains in heaven perfectly, and for ever reconciled with the Father: this is a

sure sign to us that the debt is paid, and everlasting peace and righteousness brought in for our salvation. This the apostle enlargeth and shews this to be that righteousness which Adam had, and which we must trust all unto. And this he doth unto the sixth chapter.

From whence the apostle goes on to the third point, convincing the world of judgment and of righteousness, unto the ninth chapter, which are two words signifying one and the same thing; but because he had named righteousness before which was the righteousness of justification, without a man, in Christ Jesus; he calls the third judgment, which is that integrity which is inherent, bred and created in us, to wit, sanctification, as we may see in Isaiah, chap. 42 ver. 3 where it is said of Christ: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he bring forth judgment unto victory." Where he shows judgment to be a beginning of righteousness in sanctification, even such a one as can never be extinguished. So the word is taken where Job expostulateth the matter: "as the Lord liveth who hath taken away my judgment," all the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue deceit. God forbid that I should justify you, till I die I will not remove my integrity from me, my righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go." Here you see by judgment is meant integrity, and that righteousness which is created and inherent in us; so that the substance of that place in Isaiah is, that God will never give over so to advance and make effectual that weak righteousness and sanctification begun in us, until it shall prevail against and master all our sins and corruptions, making it in the end a victorious sanctification. And the ground hereof is, "for the prince of this world is judged;" he is like one manacled, whose strength and power is limited: so that now, though he be strong, yet he is cast out by a stronger than he; so that he cannot, nor shall he ever rule again as in times past.

This strain of doctrine the apostle follows in this epistle, shewing that as the righteousness of justification by the blood of Christ is a thing without us, so the righteousness of sanctification is a thing created and inherent in us, and the ground of the witness of our spirits, as we shall shew in its own place. So that the blood of Christ doth two things unto us; in justification it covers our sins, and in sanctification it heals our sins and sores; that if there be any proud or dead flesh, it eateth it out, and then heals the wound. Therefore the apostle says, "You are not under the law, but under grace." He that sees the law is satisfied by another, and all to be of free grace, he will not much stand on any thing in himself for his justification; but as a poor beggar, be content all should be of mere grace: therefore he concludes, "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

After this the apostle goes on to other particulars, shewing divers things, especially the twelfth verse of this chapter, where he drives unto the point of sanctification, as though he should say, you are freed from the law indeed, as it is a judge of life and death, but yet the law must be your counsellors; you are debtors of thankfulness, seeing whence you are escaped, that you may not live after the flesh; and then he proceeds to show them how they should walk, that seeing they had received the spirit, they should walk after the spirit; now that they had received that which should subdue and mortify the flesh and the lusts thereof, they should be no more as dead men, but quick and lively in operation, by living after the spirit, otherwise they could not be the sons of God, and he comes to the words that I have now read: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father: for the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

Where the apostle shows the ground of our union and communion with Christ, because having his Spirit we are of necessity his, as St. John speaks: "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." What ties together, and makes one, things far asunder, but the same Spirit and life in both? so that Spirit which is in Christ a full running over fountain descending down, and being also infused into us, unites us unto him; yea, that Spirit communicated unto me in some measure, which is in him in such fullness, that Spirit doth tie me as fast unto Christ as any joint ties member to member, and so makes Christ to dwell in my heart; as the apostle speaks to this purposef. That thus by one Spirit we are built up and made the temple of God, and come to be the habitation of God through the Spirit; so that by this means we are inseparably knit and united unto him; for what is it makes one member to be a member to another? not the nearness of joining or lying one to, or upon another, but the same quickening spirit and life which is in both, and which causeth a like motion: for otherwise if the same life were not in that member it would be dead, and of no use to the other; so that it is the same spirit and life in the things conjoined, which unites them together; yet to explain this more, as I have often in the like case said, imagine a man were as high as heaven, the same spirit and life being diffused into all his parts, what is it now that can cause his toe to stir, there being such a huge distance betwixt the head and it? Even that selfsame life which is in the head being in it; no sooner doth the head will the toe to stir, but it moves. So is it with us; that very Spirit which is in Christ being in us, thereby we are united unto him, grow in him, live in him, and he in us; rejoice in him, and so are kept and preserved to be glorified with him. He is the second Adam, from whom we receive the influence of all good things, showering down and distilling the graces of his Spirit upon the least of all his members. That, as it was said of Aaron, who was a type of the second Adam, and of that holy oil, representing the graces of his Spirit,

"which did not only run down his head and beard, but the skirts of his garment also, and all his rich attire about." So when I see the oil of Christ's graces and Spirit not only rest upon the head, but also descend and run down upon the lowest of his members; making me now, as one of them, in some sort another man than I was, or my natural state could make me; by the same spirit I know I am united unto Christ. To this purpose is that which Christ so stands upon unto the Jews; where speaking of the "eatingh of his flesh, and that bread of life which came down from heaven," lest they should be mistaken, he adds: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life:" so that we see it is the spirit that gives a being to a thing. And therefore the apostle proceeds to show, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." That as Christ is the true natural Son of God, so we as truly, by conveyance of the same Spirit into us, are his sons by adoption, and so heirs with God, yea, and joint heirs with Christ; this he begins to show, verse 13. So that being in this excellent estate, they were not only servants and friends, a most high prerogative, but they were now the sons of God, having the spirit of adoption, whereby they might boldly call God, Father. In which verse the apostle opposeth the spirit of bondage, which doth make a man fear again, unto the spirit of adoption, which frees a man from fear.

Now two things may be observed hence: 1. The order the Spirit of God keeps e'er it comforts; it shakes, and makes us fear. This the apostle speaks in Hebrews where he shows, that the end of Christ's coming was, "that because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the Devil: and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage." The first work then of the Comforter is, to put a man in fear. 2. Here is showed, that until the Spirit doth work this

fear, the heart will not stoop. The obstinacy is great; yea, so great, that if hell gates were open, ready to swallow up a man, he would not yield until the Spirit set in to convince the heart. Therefore St. John tells us, that "when the Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin;" that is, he will convince and show a man that he is but a bondman: and so from this sight he makes us to fear. No man must think this strange, that God deals with men at first after this harsh manner; to kill them, as it were, before he make them alive: nor be discouraged, as if God had now cast them off as none of his: for this bondage and spirit of fear is a work of God's Spirit, and a preparative to the rest, yet it is but a common work of the Spirit; and such a one, that unless more follow, it can afford us no comfort.

But why then doth God suffer his children to be first terrified with his fear?

I answer, that in two respects this is the best and wisest course to deal with us; or else many would put off the matter, and never attain a sense of mercy.

First, in respect of God's glory.

Secondly, in regard of our good.

First in respect of God's glory; and that first because, as in the work of creation, so in the work of redemption, God will have the praise of all his attributes: for as in the work of creation there appeared the infinite wisdom, goodness, power, justice, mercy of God, and the like; so will he in the work of our redemption have all these appear in their strength and brightness: and when we see and acknowledge these things to be in God in the highest perfection, hereby we honour him; as on the contrary, when we will not see and acknowledge the excellency of God's infinite attributes, we dishonour him: yea, and I

may safely add, that the work of redemption was a greater work than the work of creation; for therein appeared all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the conveying of it unto the Church. Herein appeared first, infinite wisdom, in ordering the matter so as to find out such a way for the redemption of mankind, as no created understanding could possibly imagine or think of. And secondly, for the mercy of God; there could be none comparable to this, in not sparing his own Son, the Son of his love, that so he might spare us who had so grievously provoked him. And thirdly, there could not be so much justice seen in any thing as in sparing us not to spare his Son, in laying his Son's head, as it were, upon the block, and chopping it off: indeed the death unto which he gave his Son, was not only more vile than the loss of his head, but far more painful and terrible to nature, the death on the cross; in rending and tearing that blessed body of his; even as the veil of the temple was rent, which was a type of him, so was he rent and tore, and broke for us, when he made his soul an offering for sin. This was the perfection of justice. And thus was he just, as the apostle speaks, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. God would have justice and mercy meet and kiss each other; and that for two reasons, for the magnifying of his justice, and the magnifying of his mercy.

First, for the magnifying of his justice. The spirit must first become a spirit of bondage and fear for the magnifying of God's justice: thus the prophet David having sinned, was driven to this practice: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Thus he, a holy man, was brought to confess his sin, to give God the glory of his justice. And so to this end, that a man might pass through or by, as it were, the gates of hell unto heaven, the Lord will have his justice extended to the full; for which cause lessening, or altogether, for a time, abstracting all sight of

mercy, he turns the law loose to have its course. And thus, as in the work of redemption, he would have the height of justice appear; so would he have it appear in the application of our redemption, that justice should not be swallowed up of mercy. But even as that woman, "who had nothing to pay, was threatened by her creditors to take away her two sons, to put them in prison." So though we have nothing to pay, the law is let loose upon us, to threaten imprisonment and damnation, to affright and terrify us: and all for the magnifying of God's justice, which also we satisfy not by what we suffer, yet it is meet we should acknowledge and learn thereby more highly to value the suffering of our Saviour. But farther, God hath set forth many terrible threatenings in his word against sinners; shall all these be to no purpose? The wicked, they are insensible of them; must they therefore be in vain? Some people there must be, on whom they shall work: "Shallp a lion roar," saith the prophet, "and we not be afraid?" Since then those who should, will not, some there be who must tremble, and those even of God's own dear children. This the prophet excellently sets forth, in Isaiah, where the Lord showeth who he will regard: "But to this man will I look, even to him that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." So that you see, even some of his own must tremble, and be thus humbled of necessity: and that it is not without a just cause, that God doth deal with his own children after this manner, though it be sharp in the experience. We must fear, tremble and be humbled, and then we shall receive a spirit not to fear again. That vain courage which some brag they have, so as not to fear death, is not it which is meant here; for alas such braggers, out of ignorance of the thing, and desire to be out of misery in this life, may embrace death unwillingly, hoping it may put an end to their sorrows. But this spirit, not to fear again, is such a spirit that assures me of the forgiveness of all my sins, showing me my freedom by Christ Jesus from hell and eternal damnation; making me live a holy life, and from hence not to fear, and so sealing

me up unto the day of redemption; as you shall hear more, when we come to speak of the witness of the Spirit. This now is for the glory of God's justice.

Secondly, it is requisite that the Comforter should first work in men a fear, for the glory of God's mercy; which would never be so sweet, relish so well, nor be so highly esteemed of by us, if the awful terror of justice had not formerly made us smart: as we may see in that parable (whereunto our Saviour likeneth the kingdom of heaven) of the man that owed ten thousand talents unto the king his master; he shows him mercy, and forgives him all; but what did he first? Why first he requires the whole debt of him; and because he had nothing to pay, he commands him, his wife and children, and all that he had to be sold, that payment might he made; first he would have him pinched throughly, that he might know how much he was indebted, and, in that case, how great that favour was which he received in having all that he owed forgiven him. Thus a king many times casts men into prison, suffers the sentence of condemnation to pass on them, and perhaps orders them to be brought to the place of execution, before he pardons them, and then mercy is mercy indeed, and so God deals with us many times, he puts his children in fear; shows them how much they owe him, how unable they are to pay, casts them into prison and threatens condemnation in hell for ever, after which when mercy comes to the soul, then it appears to be wonderful mercy indeed, even the riches of exceeding mercy. Why do so many find no savour in the Gospel? Is it because there is no sweetness, or matter of delight in it? No, it is because such have had no taste of the law, and of the spirit of bondage, they have not smarted, nor found a sense of the bitterness of sin, nor of that just punishment that is due unto the same. Even as the king will suffer the law to pass on some grievous malefactor for high treason, bring him to the place of execution, and lay his head on the block, before a

pardon be produced; as we have had experience in the country of a man who otherwise would not cry or shed a tear for any thing; despising death, and not afraid to meet an host of men. Such a one having now at an instant a pardon brought from the king, how wonderfully doth it work upon him, causing softness of heart and tears to flow from his eyes when nothing else could; whilst the wonder of this mercy, which now appeareth so sweet and seasonable, is beheld and admired, he is so struck that he knows not what to say: for this cause therefore God shews us first a spirit of bondage to prepare us to relish mercy, and then he gives a spirit of adoption not to fear again: and thus by this order the one is magnified and highly esteemed by the foregoing sense of the other.

If therefore this terror and fear be hard and troublesome unto us, yet if it be for God's glory, let us endure: if he will give me over to a wounded terrified conscience, to fears, tremblings, astonishments, yea or to draw me into the fire itself, or any other punishment, so we see he dealt with his Church of old, he brought her through the fire and water before she came into a wealthy place. Since it is for his glory, I must be contented. But what do I say? He gets nothing by us of all that we do, all is for ourselves; our acknowledgments of him make him no stronger, wiser, juster, or better than he is, but in glorifying of him we do glorify ourselves, and so pass from glory to glory, until we come to be fully transformed into his image. And herein consists our happiness in acknowledging of his wonderful attributes, that by the reflex and knowledge of them, we grow up in them as much as may be. God was as glorious, powerful, wise, just, happy and good before the world was made as now, and if the case be put concerning glorifying of him, the three persons of the Trinity were only fit and worthy of so great honour, not we; as we may read in Proverbs, chap. 8 verse 30. There, Wisdom shews how it was with the Father, before all time, and that they did mutually solace

themselves in the contemplations of one another's glory. Then, says Wisdom, "I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;" and in John, chap. 17. There we read the same thing in effect, where Christ prays: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." So that the admiring, beholding and magnifying of God's glory (as much as may be) labouring to be like him, is our glory; and thus much of the glory of God in beginning of this work in us by fear.

The second thing was to prove that this course was for our good, and this appears two ways. 1. In our justification. 2. In our sanctification.

For the first, we are such strangers unto God, that we will never come unto him till we see there is no other remedy, being at the pit's brink ready to starve, hopeless of all other helps, being frozen in the dregs of sin, delighting in our ways; as we see in the parable of the prodigal son, who would never think of any return to his father till all other helps failed him, money, friends, acquaintance, and all sorts of food; nay if he might but have fed upon husks with the swine, he would not have thought of returning any more unto his father: but this being denied him, the text says, he then came to himself, which shows us that, whilst men run on in sinful courses, they are mad men of themselves, even as we see those in Bedlam are beaten and kept under, and comforts denied them, till they come to themselves. And then what says he? "I will arise and go to my father," confessing that he had sinned, "and I will say, Father, I have sinned." So is it with us; until the Lord humble us, and bring us low in our own eyes, showing us our misery and sinful poverty, and that in us there is no good thing, that we be stripped of all help in and without ourselves, and must perish for ever unless we beg his mercy, we will not come unto him. As we see it was with the woman that Christ healed of her

bloody issue. How long it was before she came to Christ; she had been sick twelve years, she had spent all her substance upon physicians, and no body could help her, and this extremity brings her to Christ. So that this is the means to bring us unto Christ, to drive us on our knees, hopeless as may be, to show us where help only is to be found; and make us run unto it. Thus therefore, when men have no mind to come to Christ, he sends, as it were, fiery serpents to sting them, that they might look up unto the brazen serpent, or rather unto Christ Jesus, of which it was a type, for help; so unto others, being strangers unto him, he sends variety of great and sore afflictions to make them come to him that he may be acquainted with them; as Absalom set Joab's corn on fire because he would not come at him, being twice sent for. So God deals with us before our conversion many times, as with iron whips lashes us home, turning loose the avenger of blood after us, and then for our life we run and make haste to the city of refuge. Thus God shoots off as it were his great ordnance against us to make us run unto him. Thus John the Baptist came preaching of repentance, in attire, speech and diet, all being strong and harsh, cloathed with a camel's hair and with a girdle of skin about his loins, his meat locusts and wild honey, the place was in the wilderness, his speech harsh and uncomfortable, thundering with his voice, calling them a generation of vipers, and telling them that now also was the ax laid to the root of the tree, that every tree that brought not forth good fruit was hewn down and cast into the fire. As also we know in this manner the Lord came to Elijahu. First "a great strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after that went an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire:" these were a peal of great ordnance, shot off to prepare the way, showing the King was a coming; and after the fire a still small voice, and there the Lord was. So the Lord rends, tears, and shakes

our consciences and rocky hearts, many times to prepare the way for him, and then he comes to us in the still and soft voice of consolation.

Secondly, for our sanctification, it is good for us that the Comforter's first work be to work fear in us, for we are naturally so frozen in our dregs, that no fire in a manner will warm and thaw us. We wallow in our blood, and stick fast in the mire of sin, that we cannot stir; so that this fear is but to pull us from our corruptions and make us more holy. As we see if a man have a gangrene beginning in his hand or foot which may spread farther, and be his death if it continue so, he is easily persuaded to cut it off, lest it should go farther. So doth God deal by us with this fear of bondage, that we might be clothed anew with his image in holiness and righteousness. Now to effect this, the sharpest things are best, such as are the law, the threatenings of condemnation, the opening of hell, the racking of the conscience, and a sense of wrath present and to come. So hard hearted are we by nature, being as children of the bondwoman, unto whom violence must be used. Even as we see a man riding a wild and young horse, to tame him, he will run him against a wall, that this may make him afraid, ride him in deep and tough lands, or if this will not do, take him up into the top of some high rock, when bringing him to the brink thereof he threatens to throw him headlong, make him shake and quake, whereby at last he is tamed. So deals the Lord by us, he gives us a sight of sin, and the punishment due thereunto, a sense of wrath, sets the conscience on fire, fills the heart with fears, horrors, and disquietness, opens hell to the soul, brings a man as it were to the gates thereof, and threatens to throw him in, and all this to make a man more holy, and to hate sin the more. So that you see there must be a strong mortifying and subduing of us by a strong hand to bring us unto Christ for our sanctification, nothing but a fiery furnace can melt away that dross and tin which cleaves unto

such corrupt metal as we are. See this method excellently set forth in the prophet. "Because ye are all become dross, behold I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, as they gather brass, and iron, and lead, and tin into the midst of the furnace to blow the fire upon it to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there and melt you."

Before I proceed farther, give me leave to answer an objection of a troubled soul which may arise hence, O, may a soul say, what comfort then may I have of the first work of the Spirit in me? For as yet I have found none of these things; I have not been thus humbled, nor terrified, nor had such experience as you speak of in that state under the spirit of bondage.

I answer, though this be a work of the Spirit, yet it is not the principal justifying and saving work of the Spirit: yea the children of the Devil may come to have a greater measure of this than God's own dear children, whom, for the most part, he will not affright nor afflict in that terrible manner as he doth some of them, but the consequence of this is more to be accounted of, than the measure, to see whither that measure I have, whatever it be, leads me. For if the measure were never so absolutely necessary to salvation, then all God's children should have enough of it. But I make a difference still between humiliation and humility, which is a grace of itself, and leads me along with comfort and life. Thus therefore I think of humiliation, if I have so much of it as will bring me to see my danger and cause me to run to the medicine, and city of refuge for help, to hate sin for time to come, and to set myself constantly in the ways and practice of holiness, it is enough. And so I say in the case of repentance, if a man have a sight of sin past, and a heart firmly set against all sin for the time to come, the greater and firmer this were, the lesser measure of sorrow might suffice for sins forepast. As we

see a wise father would never beat his child for faults that are past, but for the prevention of that which is to come, for we see in time of correction, the child cries out, O I will never do so any more. So God deals with us, because our resolutions and promises are faint and fail, and that without much mourning, humiliation and stripes, we attain not this hatred of sins past, and strength against them for time to come, therefore it is that our humiliation and sorrow must be proportionable to that work which is to be done, otherwise any measure of it were sufficient which fits us for the time to come.

But I will add, there are indeed divers measures of it, according unto which the conscience is wounded or eased; when there is a tough melancholy humour that the powers of the soul are distracted, good duties omitted, and the heart so much the more hardened: when upon this the Lord lets loose the band of the conscience, oppressing the same with exceeding fears and terrors, this the Lord uses as a wedge to cleave in sunder a hard piece of wood. God then doth show us, because we would not plough ourselves we shall be ploughed. If we would judge ourselves, saith the apostle, we should not be judged, and therefore the Church confesses and complains, that "the ploughers ploughed upon her back and made deep furrows." Why? How came this, she did not plough up her own fallow ground, wherefore the Lord sent her other strangers and harsh ploughers, that ploughed her soundly indeed. Wherefore doth God thus deal with his children? because he is the great and most wise husbandman, who will not sow amongst thorns. Therefore when he is about to sow the seed of eternal life in the soul, which must take deep root and grow for ever, he will have the ground throughly ploughed.

The way then to avoid these things, that are so harsh and displeasing to flesh and blood, is to take the rod betimes and beat ourselves, for

when we are slow and secure, and omit this, God doth do the work himself: but yet God makes a difference of good education in those who have kept themselves from the common pollutions, and gross sins of the times, it pleaseth God, faith comes into them, they know not how, nor the time, grace drops in by little and little, now a little and then a little by degrees, sin is more and more hated, and the heart inflamed with a desire of good things in a conscionable life. But in a measure, I say, such must have had, have, or shall have fears and terrors; so much as may keep them from sin, and quicken them to go on constantly in the ways of holiness; or when they fly out of the way they shall smart for it and be whipped home again; yet for the main they find themselves as it were in heaven they know not how. But if a man have stuck deep and long in sin, he must look for a greater measure of humiliation and fear, and a more certain time of his calling, there must be haling and pulling such a man out of the fire with violence; and he must not look to obtain peace and comfort with ease, God will thunder and lighten in such a man's conscience in Mount Sinai, before he speak peace unto him in Mount Zion.

A second time there is also, of a great measure of humiliation; which is, though a man may be free from great, gross sins, and worldly pollutions, when the Lord intends to show the feeling of his mercy and the sense thereof to any in an extraordinary measure, or fit them for some high services, then they shall be much humbled before, as we see St. Paul was: God did thunder upon him, and beat him down in the highway to the ground, being stricken with blindness for three days after.

Thus much shall suffice to have been spoken of the fifteenth verse, touching the spirit of bondage, and the spirit of adoption. The apostle tells them, they may thank God the spirit of fear thus came, that hereafter they might partake of the spirit of adoption to fear no

more; he stirs them up, as it were, to be thankful, because now they had obtained a better state: why, what estate? A very high one: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

SERMON XX:

Children of God - Romans 8:16

The same Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

HAVING spoken concerning the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption in the former verse, the apostle, in these words that I have now read, doth, as it were, stir up those unto thankfulness; to whom he writes, because they had now attained to a better state; the Spirit itself bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God.

The thing then is, to know ourselves to be the children of God, there must be found evidences; here then are two set down, whose testimony we cannot deny. I will touch them as briefly as I can, and so will make an end.

First, the witness of our spirit.

Secondly, the witness of God's Spirit with our spirits.

These are two evidences, not single, but compounded; wherein you see there may be some work of our spirit.

But some may say, our spirit is deceitful; how then can our own spirit work in this manner to testify?

I answer, in this place, our spirit is as it were an evidence of God from heaven, as a loud token given, assuring me upon good grounds, that I have not misapplied the promises; but though God do write bitter things against me, yet that I love him still, and cleave unto him, that for all this I know that I still hunger and thirst after righteousness; that I will not be beaten off, nor receive an ill report of my Lord and Saviour; that I rest, wait, fear and trust in him still. When thus our valour and faith is tried, then comes the same Spirit, and seals with our spirit, that we are the children of God: when our seal is first put, then God seals with our spirit, the same thing by his Spirit. To this effect is that in 1 John, chap. 3 ver. 8 we read three witnesses are set down, the spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. These three witness that we have everlasting life, and that our names are written in heaven. How do these three agree with these two witnesses? very well: St. John, he ranks them according to the order of their clearest evidence; first the spirit, then the water, then the blood: the apostle here, he ranks them according to their natural being; first, our spirit in justification and sanctification, and then God's Spirit. For the Spirit, of all other, this is the clearest evidence; and when this is bright and manifest, there needs no more, the thing is sealed. So the testimony of water is a clear evidence, whereby is meant sanctification, this is put next unto the spirit; for when the spirit is silent, yet this may speak: for though I have many wants and imperfections in me, yet if my spirit can

testify unto me that I have a desire to please God in all things, that I resolve upon and set up his service as the pitch of all my utmost endeavours, that with allowance I willingly cherish no corruption, but set myself against all sin; this water will comfort and hold up a man from sinking; as we see in all the sore trials of Job. Still he stood upon the integrity of his own spirit, and would not let that go, though he were sore beaten of the Almighty, and slandered for a wicked person. But the water may be muddy, and the struggling of the flesh and spirit so strong, that we happily shall not be able to judge which is master: what then? Then faith lays hold of the blood in justification, which, though it be the darkest testimony, yet is as sure as any of the other. Now in comparing of these witnesses together in St. John and in my text, I rank the water and the blood with the testimony of our spirit. And the spirit mentioned in St. John and in my text, to be all one; not as though we wrought them, but we believe them to be so. If a man ask how I know that I am sanctified, the answer must be, I believe and know it to be so: the work of producing these things in me comes of God; but for the work of discerning, this is certain, how our affections stand in this case; it comes of us: yet to come nearer the matter.

The testimony of our spirit I conceive to be, when a man hath taken a survey of those excellent things belonging unto justification and sanctification, when according to the substantial truths which I know in the word, I observe and follow as fast as I can what is there commanded; when I take the candle and the word, and with that bright burning lamp search into the word, what is there to be done, and so bring it home to myself, thereby mortifying my corruptions; this is the groundwork of the witness of our spirit. First, as in the blood, with my spirit I must see what is needful to be done in order unto justification, what free promises of invitation belong thereunto; I must see how God justifies a sinner, what conditions on our part

are required in justification; I must see what footings and grounds for life, and what way of hope there is for a graceless man to be saved; yea, even for the worst person that may be. In this case a man must not look for any thing in himself as a cause, Christ must not be had by exchange, but received as a free gift; as the apostle speaks: "Therefore it is of faith, that it may be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." I must there bring unto the receiving of Christ a bare hand. It must be of grace: God for this cause will make us let fall every thing before we shall take hold of him. Though qualified with humiliations, I must let all fall; not trusting unto it, as to make me the worthier to receive Christ, as some think. When thus, at first for my justification I received Christ, I must let any thing I have fall, to lay hold of him; that then he may find us thus naked as it were, in our blood; and in this sort God doth take us, that all may be of mere grace. Another thing the apostle adds, and that is, that the promise may be sure: if any thing in us might be as a cause or help to our justification, a man should never be sure; therefore it is all of that grace, that the promise might be sure. As though God should say, I care for nothing else; bring me my Son, and show me him, and then all is well. And in this case you see he doth not name hope, or love, or any other grace, but faith; for the nature of faith is to let fall all things in laying hold on Christ: in justification, faith is a sufferer only; but in sanctification, it works and purgeth the whole man; and so witnesses the certainty and truth of our sanctification, and so the assurance of salvation.

Hence, from the nature hereof in this work, the apostle writes to them "who had obtained like precious faith:" in this case it is alike to all in virtue in this work, whatsoever the measure be. And I may liken it thus; St. Paul, you know, writes: "With these hands I get my living." Now, though strong hands may work more than weak hands, and so earn a great deal more; yet a beggar who holds out his hand,

may receive more than he or any other could earn. So faith justifies only receiving, not working; as we may see: "Butd to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe in his name." Receive him; that is, believe in him; how? Come and take him: How? as it is in Rev. chap. 22. "And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." Now, when I see that God keeps open house, come who will, without denying entertainment to any, and when God's Spirit hath wrought the will in me, what lets me now to receive Christ? Now, when the Spirit hath wrought this will in me, and I come, and take God at his word, and believe in Christ; laying hold by degrees on the other promises of life, winding and wrapping myself in them as I am able, it is faith: but that persuasion only which many have, that they shall go to heaven, is not faith, but rather a consequent hereof. The promise is made unto those that believe in Christ: "For in him," says the apostle, "all the promises are yea, and amen." If a man weep much and beg hard for the remission of sins, he may weep and be without comfort unto the end of his life, unless he have received Christ, and applied his virtues home unto his trembling soul. A man must first receive Christ, and then he hath a warrant to interest himself in all the promises. So that now this being done, if such a man were asked, hast thou a warrant to receive Christ? Yes, I have a warrant, says the soul, for he keeps open house unto all that come, welcoming all, and I have a will to come, this is a good and sufficient warrant for me to come, if I have a will wrought in me, and then if I do come, this is the first thing to be observed in the witness of our spirit.

Now if a man do stagger for all the King keeps open house, so as he will not, or does not come, then in the second place comes invitation, because we are slow to believe, therefore God invites us, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Many object, O, I am not worthy to come, but you see here is an invitation to encourage me to come, yea the sorer and heavier my load is, I should come so much the rather: so that in this case, if the question should be asked of such a one, Friend how came you hither? What warrant had you to be so bold? Then he shows forth his ticket, as if he should say, Lord thou gavest me a word of comfort, a warrant of thy invitation, in obedience to thy word, and faith in thy promise, I come hither. Now this invitation is directed to them who as yet have no goodness in them, when then my spirit warrants this much unto me, that upon this word of promise and invitation I have come in for relief and ease of many miseries unto Christ Jesus, the great physician, relying on him for cure, and lying as it were at his feet for mercy, this is the testimony of my spirit that I do believe, and a ground for me to rest on, that now I am in the way of life, and justified by his grace.

Thirdly, sometimes Christ meets with a dull and slow heart, lazy and careless, in a manner, what becomes of it, not knowing or weighing the dangerous state it is in, making excuses; here Christ may justly leave us, (for is it not much that the King should invite us for our good?) as he did those in the Gospel, who for refusing to come to his supper were excluded from ever tasting thereof, strangers being fetched in their places. God might so deal with us, but you see God sends an embassage to intreat us, erects, as it were, a new office for our sakes, saith he: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." This may seem to be needless, we being weaker than he. Ambassadors for the most part are sent unto those that are stronger. The apostle reasons the matter, are we stronger than he, do we provoke the Lord to anger? But here we see and may admire his infinite rich goodness, that he comes and sues to us to be reconciled, as we see it is a kind of indignity for a great monarch to

sue for peace to them that are far below him and his inferiors. This dishonour God is willing to put up at our hands, and sues unto us first, when it rather became us upon our knees to beg and sue first unto him. The effect of the embassy is, that we would be friends with him, and receive that which is so highly for our advancement; when therefore I see that this quickens in my heart, so that, as St. James speaks of the ingrafted word that is able to save our souls, I can bring it home, having some sweet relish, and high estimation of it in my heart, that it begins to be the square and rule of my life, then I am safe. If this or any of these fasten upon the soul, and thereupon I yield and come in, it is enough to show that I am a justified person. And from hence our spirit may witness, and that truly: this is a third thing in the witness of our spirit.

Fourthly, if none of all this will do, then comes a farther degree, a command from the Highest, you shall do it: "And this is his commandment that we should believe on his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment." In the parliament of grace there is a law of faith, which binds me as strictly to believe, as to keep any of the commandments: says the apostle, "Whereg is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith." So that if I will not believe on the Lord Jesus, who eases me of the vigour of the law, and so is my righteousness, I must perish for ever. What? may one object, must I needs believe? Yes, thou art as strictly bound to believe, as not to murder, or not to be an idolater, not to steal or commit adultery: nay, I will add more, that thy infidelity and contempt of that gracious offer, thy disobedience to the law of faith is greater than thy breach and disobedience to the law of works, when thou dost fling God's grace in his face again, and, as it were, trample under foot the blood of the covenant: see for this John, chap. 16 ver. 9. What is that great sin which Christ came to reprove? even this infidelity, saith he, "because they believe not in me:" which

in two respects is a great sin. First, because it is a sin against God's mercy. Secondly, because it is a chain which links and binds all sins together. Thus our faith is sure when it relies on the word, otherwise all other thoughts are but presumption, and will fail a man in the time of need; for what is faith but my assent to believe every word of God he hath commanded me to believe, and so endeavour the practice of it.

Fifthly, if none of these prevail, there comes threatening; then God swears, that such as refuse shall never enter into his rest. If a prince should sue unto a beggar's daughter for marriage, and she should refuse and contemn him, do you think he would be well pleased? So it is with us, when the King of Heaven's Son sends unto us, Will you be married to me? if we refuse, the Son takes it wonderfully ill. Therefore he says; "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all those that put their trust in him." So in the Hebrews, God swore, that because of infidelity, those unbelieving Jews should never enter into his rest. All the rest of the threatenings of the law were not backed with an oath, there was some secret reservation of mercy unto them upon the satisfaction of divine justice; but here there is no reservation, God hath sworn such shall never come into heaven. Look not for a third thing in God, now as a mitigation of his oath, it cannot be, he hath sworn that an unbeliever shall never enter into his rest.

These five things are the grounds of faith, even unto the worst and unworthiest persons that may be, and by all or some of them he creates faith in us, which once wrought in the heart by the spirit of God secretly, and we discerning the same, this is the witness of our spirit.

Now our spirit having viewed all these things, and the promises upon which they are grounded: thus it witnesseth, as if one should demand of a man, Are these things presented to thy view, true? Yes, will he say, true as the Gospel: then the next thing is, is all good and profitable? O yes, says he, all is very good and desirable; then the upshot is, But is this good for thee? If your soul answer now, Yes, very good to me; if then thou accept of this, and wrap and fold thyself in the promises, thou canst not wind thyself out of comfort and assurance to be in Christ Jesus; for pray, what makes up a match but the consent of two agreeing? so the consent of two parties agreeing, upon this message, makes up the match betwixt us and Christ, uniting and knitting us unto him. There are also, being now incorporated, other means to make us grow up in him, by which time discovers what manner of ingrafting we have had in him: for we see four or five scions are ingrafted into a stock, yet some of them may not be incorporated with the stock, but wither. So many are by the word and sacraments admitted as retainers and believers of the promises, who shrink and hold not out, because they never were throughly incorporated into Christ, but imperfectly joined unto him. But howsoever all that come to life must pass this way, if they look for sound comfort. And thus much shall suffice for the witness of our spirit in justification.

But the testimony of our spirit goes further, wherein I might show how in sanctification our spirit saith, Lord, prove me, if there be any evil in me, and lead me in the way everlasting: he loves the brethren, and desires to fear God, as Nehemiah pleads: "Be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name." This is the warrant that I am partaker of that inward true washing, and not of that outward only of the hog, which being kept clean and in good company will be clean, till there be an occasion offered of wallowing in the mire again. But when I find that though

there were neither heaven to reward me, nor hell to punish me, if opportunity were offered, yet my heart riseth against sin, because of him who hath forbidden it; this is a sure evidence, and testifies that I am a child of God. This is for the first thing in bringing of a man in, to survey the promises belonging to justification and sanctification, wherein our spirit seeing itself to have interest, doth truly and on sound judgment witness the assurance of our salvation. Secondly, when I find Christ drawing me and changing my nature, that upon the former reasonings, view, and laying hold of Christ, making me now have supernatural thoughts and delights, (for this a man may have,) then certainly my spirit may conclude that I am blessed: for, saith the Scripture, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee." But some like dreamers do dream of this only, I know not on what grounds, but do I this waking with my whole soul? doth my spirit testify it upon good grounds, why then I may rest upon it, it is as sure as may be. Thus much is the testimony of our spirit. Now it is clear how faith is wrought, briefly two ways, which the Lord useth to bring a man to the survey of those grounds upon which our spirit doth witness.

First, he works upon the understanding.

Secondly, on the will and affections.

It is a strange thing to consider how this work is begun and finished? so that we may say hereof, as the Lord poseth Job, "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?" And in another place, "Where is the way where light dwelleth, and as for darkness where is the place thereof.

First, God enlightens the understanding with the thunderings of the law, when he shews a man such a sight as he could not have believed, and convinceth them in general, that his estate is not good, that

without mercy hell attends him; this is a flash of lightning from Mount Sinai. Secondly, comes a thunder clap, laying all down, laying flat the will and affections, dejecting a man; so that this first secret work of faith is a captivating of the understanding, will and affections. Now the act both of the understanding and the will is set forth in this case: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them." In this Scripture is set down the two hands and arms of faith. First, believing Christ out of sight. Secondly, laying hold and embracing the promises. They in the old Testament did not receive Christ in the flesh, and so are said to look afar off: as the apostle speaks: "Whoml having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice." But the apostle adds they were persuaded of the promises, and embraced them. This is the work of the Spirit upon the understanding, convincing the soul of sin, shewing there is a remedy, telling the soul all is marvellous true that God hath revealed in his word; and then drawing to this conclusion, Christ came to save sinners, whereof I am chief; therefore he came to save me.

Yet all this while the will may be stubborn and rebellious, and the affections disordered; therefore here comes in the second arm of faith, not only being persuaded of the word as a word of truth, but as a good promise of good things to me: so that here is another degree of the working of the Spirit to compel the will and affections, so sweetly grace having removed that perverseness and disorder which governed them before. Now this gentle enforcing and often beating upon the will again and again what the understanding hath rightly conceived, this at last works upon the will, and moves it; for we see the wickedest man in the world lays hold on the worst things as good and profitable unto him: so when the best thing is presented to the will as the best thing, and the necessity thereof urged by dangers

ensuing inevitably if I will not, then it apprehends that, and says of it, as Peter at the transfiguration; "It is good for us to be here, and let us build tabernacles." Hence you see what faith is in this working, an act of the understanding forcing in that way of conviction which we mentioned, the will and affections. And thus when the understanding is captivated, and the will brought to be willing, then the first act of faith is past. From whence we proceed to the second, which is the running to the city of refuge, the application and believing of the promises, and so to the apprehending of Christ, surveying of the promises belonging to justification and sanctification, and bringing them home to the soul, from whence comes the witness of our spirit.

Before we come yet to speak of God's Spirit witnessing with our spirit, because betwixt this work there may be many times, and is, an interposing trial, ere the Spirit of God witness with our spirit, we will first touch that. When our spirit hath thus witnessed in justification and sanctification, God may now write bitter things against me, seem to cast me off, and wound me with the wounds of an enemy, remove the sense of the light of his countenance from me; what then is to be done? why, yet I will trust in him though he kill me, sure I am: "I have loved and esteemed the words of his mouth more than mine appointed food," as Job speaks; I have laid hold of Christ Jesus by the promises, and believe them: I have desired, and do desire to fear him, and yield obedience to all his commandments: if I must needs die, I will yet wait on him and die at his feet. Look, here is the strength of faith, Christ had faith without feeling, when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" When sense is marvellous low, then faith is at the strongest. Here we must walk and live by faith, we shall have sense and sight enough in another world. The apostle tells us, "Now we walk by faith, and not by sight, and by faith we stand." As we may see a pattern of the woman of Canaan. First she was repulsed as a stranger, yet she goes on, then she was

called a dog, she might now have been discouraged so as to have given over her suit; but see this is the nature of faith, to pick comfort out of discouragements; to see out of a very small hole those things which raise and bring consolation: she catches at this quickly, Am I a dog? why yet it is well, for the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Thus faith grew stronger in her, and when this trial was past, Christ says unto her, "O woman," not O dog, now, "great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And thus have I done with the testimony of our spirit.

Then from our believing of God in general, believing and applying the promises, and valorous trustings of God, and restings upon God, taking him at his word, comes the testimony of "God's Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God."

I say, this being done, and God having let us see what his strength in us is, he will not let us stand long in this uncomfortable state, but will come again and speak peace to us, that we may live in his sight, as if he should say, What, hast thou believed me so on my bare word? Hast thou honoured me so as to lay the blame and fault of all my trials on thyself for thy sins, clearing my justice in all things? hast thou honoured me so as to magnify mercy to wait and hope on it for all this? hast thou trusted me so as to remain faithful in all thy miseries? Then the Lord puts unto the witness of our spirit the seal of his Spirit, as we may read, says the apostle: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Here is the difference betwixt faith and sense, faith takes hold of general promises, draws them down to particulars, applies them, and makes them her own, lives and walks by them, squaring the whole life by them in all things. But sense is another thing; even that which

is mentioned when there is a full report made to the soul of its assured happiness, "Sayo unto my soul, I am thy salvation." When a man hath thus been gathered home by glorifying him, and believing his truth, then comes a special evidence to the soul with an unwonted joy, and saith, "I am thy salvation," which in effect is that which Christ in another place speaks, "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him." And as it is in the Canticles, chap. 1 ver. 2. "Then he will kiss us with the kisses of his mouth," so as we shall be able to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." When God hath heard us cry awhile till we be thoroughly humbled, then he takes us up into his arms, and dandles us.

So that a meditation of the word being past, a man having viewed his charter and the promises, surveying heaven, the privileges of believers, and the glory that is to come; then comes in the Spirit and makes up a third, with which comes joy unspeakable and glorious in such a measure, that for the present we can neither wish nor desire any thing else, the soul resting wonderfully ravished and contented. This cannot, nor shall not always continue, but at sometimes we shall have it, yet it remains always so, as it can never be finally taken away, as our Saviour's promise is: "And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again; and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you." This is the root of all consolation, that God will not forsake for ever: but will at last come again, and have compassion on us, according to the multitude of his mercies.

But here some may object: What? doth the Spirit never seal but upon some such hard trials after the witness of our spirit?

I answer, the sealing of God's Spirit with our spirit is not always tied to hard foregoing trials immediately, for a man may be surveying

heaven and the glory to come, or praying earnestly with a tender and melting heart, applying the promises, and wrestling with God, and at the same time God's seal many times may be and is put unto the same. For as the wind bloweth where it listeth, and no man discerneth the coming thereof: so may the Spirit seal at divers times, and upon divers occasions; yea and why may it not seal in time of some great suffering for the truth, as we read of the apostles, "Who went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

Lastly for trial we must now see how to distinguish this testimony of the true Spirit, from the counterfeit illumination of the Anabaptists and some friars who will have strange sudden joys, the Devil no question then transforming himself into an angel of light unto them. This trial therefore is made by three things going before, and three things following after. For the things that go before:

First, see that the ground work be true. If a man be in the faith, and do believe the word, if upon believing and meditation, there be an opening unto the knock of Christ at the first, and not a delaying him like the lazy spouse in the Canticles, if in this case the Spirit come and fill the heart with joy, then all is sure and well, it comes with a promise, for then Christ promised to enter; but if a man have a dull dead delaying ear, and therewith great fantastic joys, he may assure himself the right spirit hath not wrought them, they are but idle speculations, but if this joy comes upon the surveying of our charter and evidences, it is sure we may build upon it.

Secondly, a man must consider, if he hath as yet overcome strong passions and temptations, and passed through much hazard and peril for Christ, having been buffeted with divers temptations of which he hath obtained mastery; for the seal of God's Spirit with our

spirit comes as reward of service done, as you may see: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Whereby he means he will give a secret love token to the soul, whereby it rests assured of the unspeakable love of God, and freedom from condemnation. Now what was this white stone? The Athenians had a custom, when malefactors were accused and arraigned, to have black and white stones by them, and so according to the sentence given, those condemned had a black, and the acquitted had a white stone given them, unto this the Holy Ghost here alludes, that this stone, this seal shall assure them of absolute acquittance from condemnation, and so free them of the cause of fear. Again he tells us, Christ will give a man a new name, that is, write his absolution in fair letters in the white stone, with a clear evidence: as if he should say (when Christ hath seen a man overcoming, and how he hath conflicted with temptations, and yet holds out, pressing for the crown unto the end of the race;) Christ will come in then and stroke him on the head, easing him of all his pains and sores with such a sweet refreshing as is unspeakable. When a man hath won it, he shows he then shall wear it.

Thirdly, if the Spirit seal after meditation on the word, it is right, the apostle says, "in whom after that ye believed ye were sealed." Examine the root of this joy, Spirit gives no comfort but by the word. If a man do meditate on the promises, and thereupon have a flame of love kindled, this is sure a man may say, the word did stir it up: if it be God's comfort, God will have his word to make way unto it; some there are who find no sweetness in the word, what is the cause thereof? because they chew not the word to imprint it on their memories and in their heart. If comfort come whilst a man

meditating on the promises doth wedge it home upon his heart; it is of God, otherwise it is counterfeit and false. These are the forerunners to this seal.

In the next place, there are three things that follow after this sealing which the Spirit leaves behind it. As,

First, humility, as in his knowledge, so in his sense, it makes a man more humble. There is naturally in all a certain pride, which must be overcome: says the apostle, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" But by the contrary, the nearer a man comes unto the glory of God, he finds so much the more rottenness in his bones, as we see in Job: "I have heard of thee," says he unto God, "by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee," his inference is, "therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Secondly, another thing the Spirit leaves behind it, if it seals rightly, is a prevention of security for time to come. In this case we must look for a new encounter, a false persuasion makes a man to fall into security, because Satan is then most malicious and busy, a man must stand faster than ever. The Devil hates them most that are most endued with God's image, whom, because he cannot reach, he persecutes in his members. And therefore in this case it must be with us as it was with Elias. After such an enlightening a man must now think that he hath a great journey to go, and so walk on in the strength of that a long time. The Devil we see watcheth a man, and when he is at the best, then endeavours to overcome him. As we may see in Adam and Eve, no sooner were they placed in that estate of innocency but he tempts them; how much more a man having a sweeter taste of the Spirit, and less strength now, may he look to be set upon. And therefore in these feasting days he had need to be more on his watch and pray more: for we have more given us than

Adam had, we have a new name given us, a secret love token: further we see Christ says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open unto me, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." Now in this case if we be such persons who let our hearts fly open to let him in, we are safe; as if he should say, if you would be sure of reconciliation, to be at peace with me, sup with me and I will sup with you: for we know if men who were enemies be once brought to keep company together, and to eat and drink one with another, we use to say all is done and wrapped up in the table cloth, all old reckonings are taken away, now they are certainly become friends. But if, like the spouse in the Canticles, "we let him stand knocking and will not let him in," we also may have great and sound knocks and blows ourselves before we find him again; as we read it befel the Church there, whom the watchmen found, beat and took away her veil, as she was seeking Christ. If we would have comfort therefore, let us mark the knocking of the Spirit, and not grieve him by withstanding holy motions; and then we shall find him sealing up our salvation, "witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God." Men you see wait for the wind, and not the wind for them, otherwise they may wait long enough before they reach home: so must we watch the knockings of Christ, and let him in, that his Spirit may seal us up to the day of redemption.

Thirdly, another thing the true witness of the Spirit leaves behind it is love. It makes a man more inflamed with love to God. If a man do not love God more after such an enlightening, it is false and counterfeit: "I will love thee dearly, O Lord, my God, because thou hast heard my voice." And says the apostle, "They love of Christ constraineth me." And therefore if we be obedient sons, we will show it in loving and honouring our Father more and more, as the prophet speaks: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master, if then I be a father, where is mine honour?" These are the trials before and

after a true illumination to try it from the counterfeit, which that we may always find and observe in ourselves let us pray, O Lord our God, &c.

SERMON XXI:

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace - 1 Corinthians 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

THE holy apostle in the words going before doth set down a course for ordering of the exercises of prophesying in the Church; a thing not being well ordered brings all to confusion in the Church; therefore the apostle, though he commends prophesying, yet he would have it done in order; and therefore saith in verse 29. "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." Though they have liberty to deliver that doctrine they may learn out of the word, yet they may not challenge to themselves such a power as they may not be censured for, but let others judge; but how? the answer is in verse 32. "Let the spirits of the prophets be subject to the prophets." First, let the fewer be content to submit themselves to be ordered by the greater company of prophets; for, saith my text, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace:" for if every man may teach what he list, and men shall not submit to one another, there must needs be confusion, but God is the author of peace.

I will begin with the latter part first; "God is the author of peace." From whence observe;

DOCT. All sound peace hath its rise and ground from heaven, from above.

In the Scripture, therefore, God is called the God of peace; "The God of peace shall be with you:" "Theb God of peace shall tread down Satan under your feet shortly:" "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." So for his power; "Hisd name is the Prince of peace." Therefore those two types of Christ, Melchisedeck and Solomon bore the name of peace; Melchisedeck is called king of Salem; that is, the king of peace. And therefore, when the Lord brings his first begotten Son into the world, this is one part of the angels' adoration; "Gloryf be to God on high, and on earth peace." Peace, it was the song of heaven. And when our Lord was to depart out of the world, he takes his leave thus; "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:" this was the last legacy he bequeaths unto his disciples. And so his kingdom, it is a kingdom of peace, in Rom. chap. 14 ver. 17. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace:" and in Isaiah, chap. 9 ver. 7. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Other kings, the more their kingdoms are enlarged, the more ado they have to maintain peace: his way is a way of peace: "To guide our feet into the way of peace." So that the way to the kingdom of Christ is not a troublesome, contentious and bitter way; but the way of peace. His Gospel is the Gospel of peace; "Howi beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace." His officers, they are ministers of peace; "Into whatsoever house ye enter, say peace be to that house." His subjects, they are the subjects of peace; "Ifl the children of peace be in it, let your peace rest upon it:" so that the one, his ministers, they are the preachers of peace; the other, his subjects, they are the children of peace: and in Ephesians, chap. 4 ver. 3 they

are both joined together: "keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

The subjects of Christ are joined together in order and peace; for he who is the God of peace, and the author of peace, knits all his children together in the bond of peace.

But how are they knit together? How doth the Lord knit these together? What cords are they, of which this bond may be said to be twisted?

I answer, God doth make men the children of peace by infusing certain heavenly graces into them, whereby they are disposed to a peaceable temper: for there must be something within to keep a man quiet, before he can keep a good correspondency with those that are without him; "Have salt in yourselves, and peace one with another;" The neglect of this makes unquietness; a man must have a spirit well seasoned within, he must have this salt, this seasoning virtue within himself, else it is impossible he should ever hold good quarter with them without. Now there are three principal grains of this spiritual salt that must season a man; wisdom, love, and humility; these are those spiritual graces whereof this spiritual salt is composed, whereby a man is disposed for the maintenance of the peace of the Church. First, wisdom; this is the ground of it, "Whon is a wise man, and endued with wisdom? let him show, out of an unblameable conversation, his works in meekness of wisdom:" because wisdom is always joined with a meek and gentle spirit; "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated." The quality of the wisdom that is from above is first to be pure, then peaceable: it is the nature of wisdom not to take things hand over head, but to be able by the use of discretion, to discern betwixt pure and impure; it is a point of wisdom to sever the precious

from the vile; and to try all things, and choose that which is good. But as wisdom is first pure, so in the second place it is always peaceable. Suppose that another hath as much wisdom and strength of judgment as I have, and hath made choice of what I did not; it may be an impure thing pleaseth him best; then the next thing is, it must be peaceable. If you say, But what if the party have made the worst choice? what if he oppose the truth? what shall I do then? what shall wisdom teach me in this case? Answer, Do not break the bond of peace by any means: "The servant of God must not strive, but be gentle to all men, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." Here is the property of God's servant, he that is the true minister of God: "If a man lust to be contentious, we have no such custom:" the servants of God are not the ministers of contention: what if men oppose themselves, instruct them with meekness; we must not fret and rush against them as an enemy, but we must instruct them with meekness: but what are the grounds? why, "if peradventure," saith the apostle, "the Lord will give them repentance, to the acknowledgment of the truth." But if any should say, Do you think it is an easy matter to discern betwixt good and bad, truth and error? I answer, no; it is the gift of God, that one is able to discern more than another; therefore, it coming from God, why shouldst thou be so far against him to whom God hath not revealed so much as to thee. This is the first grace that seasoneth and fitteth for this peace, spiritual wisdom. There remaineth love and humility, which the apostle joineth together in Ephesians, chap. 4 ver. 2. "With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering; forbearing one another in love." If any ask, how shall I endeavour to keep peace? the answer is, love and long suffering knits this bond fast. What the properties of love are, the apostle tells us: "It is not suspicious, it covers all things, believes all things," &c. "Fulfilr ye my joy," says the apostle, "that you be like minded, having the same love." If there be an heart full of love, it will be easy to be entreated:

the means to keep peace is to have love; and these two go together hand in hand, lowliness of mind, and a peaceable heart. Let nothing be done in high mindedness, but have a lowly heart; it is pride and want of love from whence this doth spring; "Let the same mind be in you," says the apostle, "that was in Christ," who saith, "learnt of me, for I am lowly in mind." Now by these means God enableth his children to be peaceable.

Now, what will follow from hence by way of application? Certainly, thus much; that all those, whose hearts can testify to themselves, that they are the children of peace, and are inclinable to peace; it is an argument to them that God is with them, and that they are the children of God, and then they are blessed; for so saith Christ himself; "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." If God be the author of peace, he then that followeth peace is God's child, and God will be with him. "Livex in peace," says the apostle, "and the God of peace shall be with you." So then, unless we will banish God out of our hearts, let us receive this apostolical injunction; "Be of one mind, live in peace, and then the God of love and peace shall be with us." And farther, you have also blessings promised unto such: for "blessed are the peace-makers." But what blessings are these? Why, in Psalm 133 we have them set down; it is a short, but yet it is a sweet Psalm: "Behold, how good and how pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity:" how good and pleasant it is, the Psalmist speaks fully: "It is like," says he, "the precious ointment that was poured upon the head of Aaron, and did run down to his beard, and to the skirts of his garments:" no perfume so pleasant and good; "it is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion." And St. James tells us: "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." And in the last words of that Psalm, says the psalmist; "The Lord commanded the blessing, even life for

evermore." What, are such as these blessed? Wonder not at it, for the Lord hath commanded: he that is the Lord of hosts, and hath blessings in store at his command; where he seeth brethren to live together in unity, there he commandeth the blessing. And of what nature are these blessings? Even life for evermore. So that the exhortation here comes in right and just; "Ifa any man love life, and desire to see good days, let him eschew evil, and do good; let him follow peace, and ensue it:" the one is grounded upon the other. God commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore. Dost thou look for life and good days? as it is necessary to eschew evil and do good, so necessary is it to follow peace. But what if I cannot overtake it? Why, ensue it. But what if when we seek peace, others prepare themselves for war? Then it implies that it is such a thing, as that when it is flying away, we must pursue it. This is the first thing.

Secondly, is God the author of peace, he will not then own confusions, that is, tumultuousness and unquietness, this is not from God. "If there be bitter envyings and strife amongst you, boast not, neither lie against the truth, this wisdom cometh not from above, but it is earthly, sensual and devilish." God will not own it, this is not from above: peradventure it may be counted a great part of wisdom and policy, to set persons together by the ears; but what kind of wisdom is? it is not from above, it is not heavenly wisdom; whence is it then, it is earthly says the apostle, there is the world; it is sensual, there is the flesh; it is devilish, there is the Devil. God is not the author of it, who then? why the world the flesh and the Devil, the apostle joins them together, this wisdom is not from above, but it is earthly, sensual and devilish. This wisdom is counted zeal now adays, but says the apostle, if there be envyings and bitterness, believe it, this wisdom is not from above, this zeal is bitter and it argues bitterness of spirit, it is a counterfeit zeal, it is not that which comes from above. If we do truly derive the pedigree of this disorder, it is a

sufficient confutation of it. It is therefore first earthly; if a man examine it well, it is grounded upon worldly respects, and though pretence be made of religion, yet thou shalt find there be strange ends lie under it. "I beseech you, brethren, mark those that cause dissensions and divisions amongst you contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them, for they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly." It is worldliness, notwithstanding they pretend religion and the maintenance of the truths of the Gospel. So the apostle, "supposingd that gain is godliness," that is the root, thence it proceeds, there is their godliness; that they may have gain and preferment. Those that have raised seditions in the Church, it is for worldly respects; there are some that hold men's persons in admiration for advantage, therefore what side they are of, others will be, be it what it will be. Cast your eyes to the Netherlands, whence came those disputes, was it a matter only in the schools that the scholars only had a hand in it, were there not politic respects in it? And the schism in Israel was a pretence of religion not to go so far as Jerusalem to worship, therefore they set up two calves, one at Dan and another at Bethel. This is one father of this evil brat, the world, this contentious wisdom is earthly.

But that is not all, for it is sensual also, saith the apostle, as the world hath her part in it, so the flesh hath its part in it; those that are the authors of these envyings, strifes and contentions, they are such as have dissensions within themselves: a tumult within, a war in the flesh, before there be a tumult without, and this is the cause of unquietness and dissensions without. As in the earth, let the wind blow never so strong upon it, it moves it not, but when it is within the earth, it makes it to quake and tremble; so if there be a man that hath not these tempests of lusts within himself, all the winds and blasts that are without him are not able to shake him; but hence it comes because there are wars within: it is a fruit of the flesh and they are

carnal that follow it. Let us now see in what parts of the corruption of man's nature this is, from whence this ariseth. I answer briefly it is from want of wisdom in the understanding, from want of integrity in the heart, and from want of a due temper in the affections. First it ariseth from want of wisdom in the understanding, for as Solomon speaketh concerning wrath, that is a continual companion of dissension, that it resteth in the bosom of fools. And you shall never see men given to dissension, but you shall desire more wisdom in them than they show. A hasty contentious troublesome man the more earnest he is, the more highly doth he exalt his own folly, there is little understanding in him. "A fool's lips enter into contention," it is for want of wit, it is an easy matter to enter into it; but how to stop a man's self when he is in it, he hath not wit to know how to do it: "Everyf fool," says the wise man, "will be meddling." It is an argument of extreme folly to desire to fish in troubled waters. Suppose a wise man and a fool meet together, in this case there must always be confusion and restlessness; so that this is one corruption from whence these dissensions and confusions come. Secondly, a worse is from want of integrity in the heart; when the heart corrupts the understanding, and that is out of order, all is nought. As in the natural body, the head hath a sympathy with the stomach, and pains in the head rise from the stomach; so in spiritual matters there is a kind of correspondency between the brain and the heart, that if a man be of a corrupt heart, it is a just judgment of God that his head should be infected, and that he should be given to this vein of contention. "The end of the commandment is love," says the apostle; "from which some having swerved, they have turned aside to vain janglings." When men take no pains to look to their own corrupt hearts, but depart from a good conscience, and profess themselves enemies to all goodness; then have they swerved from the commandment, and turned aside to vain jangling. In 2 Tim. chap. 3 ver. 1, 2 the apostle sets down the perils of the last days and times;

and one peril is, "that men shall be lovers of themselves:" they make themselves the idol, unto which all things must bend; they love themselves more than they love peace, the Church and commonwealth, or any thing else. These men are like Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses: but how comes it to pass? do you not think that Moses was the best scholar of the three? They were Pharaoh's magicians; they would not give way to Moses, though they were convicted. What was the ground of it; because they were better scholars? No, but they were men of corrupt minds, and therefore fierce and evil men. There is no curing of the head before the heart; if evil, they will wax worse and worse, use what means you can, the cause is in the heart. Thirdly, there is a distemper in the affections, as love and hatred, or envy; and the mis-tempering or misplacing of affections is a great ground to move unto this contention. But what, is love the mother of contention? Yes, love misplaced is. In Acts, chap. 15 there is a memorable story between two good men, Paul and Barnabas: every one knows that Paul was a good man, and so we read that Barnabas was also; but yet that contention grew so sharp between them, that they broke company: what was the reason of it? the question ariseth concerning Mark: Barnabas would have Mark to go in company with them: "No," says Paul, "he left us at Pamphilia." Was not Paul in the right? Yes: but for all this, Barnabas would not yield; but why would he stand against Paul, he being a good man? the reason is, Mark was Barnabas's sister's son, and he would not have him to be disgraced; there was his natural affection to him. Natural love, though it be an excellent affection, yet it may cause much disturbance and discord; "It is told me," says the apostle to the Corinthians, "that there are dissensions among you." What is the reason? Why, some say, "Ii am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas:" that is, men will cast their affections to this or that person, and he shall be their oracle; this is a ground of dissension, having some men's persons in admiration. And if love be the cause of

contention, much more hatred: for of hatred cometh contention, as also of pride. Thus you see this wisdom, let it be covered with never so much show of wisdom, it is earthly, hath worldly respects, and is sensual. But yet there is another thing in it, for it is devilish also: make no small matter therefore, of contention in the Church and commonwealth; for thou shalt see the Devil also in it. Lord bless us, that men should be the instruments of the Devil; that a man should be in so base an office, as to be his bailiff, and to serve him in his work; in Judges, chap. 9 ver. 23 you read that "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the house of Sechem:" there were great contentions between the king and the people; whence came it? there was an evil spirit, not to be seen, but the Devil had an oar in that boat. This contentious wisdom, examine it well, and you will find it is not only carnal and earthly, but devilish; there is an evil spirit in it. He that put God and man at variance at the beginning, and puts brethren at variance now, he is of that evil one, as St. John saith. Know, that they that are of this contentious disposition, and labour to nourish factions, they do that service to a master, they would be loth to do it if they knew it. So that you see God is not the author of dissension; but the world, the flesh, and the Devil. What now may be looked for from contention if it come from such a root, but a bad issue: therefore, as the apostle saith, "If you bite and devour one another, take heed you be not consumed one of another." Destruction and desolation must follow these divisions. Do we live among Christ's sheep, or among wolves and bears, to devour one another; that one shall not see the face of a man, but some cruel beast will bite him? But take heed you do not consume one another, take heed the God of peace doth not withdraw himself from those that do not know the way of peace. It is a peremptory speech of Christ: "Everyl kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and every house or city divided against itself cannot stand." These are the speeches of the wisest that ever was upon earth. Beloved, doth not

this nearly concern us to consider of, when the question is, whether our state shall be dissolved or no? howsoever you may think to prevent it by your secret wisdom and policy, yet give me leave to believe my Saviour before all the politicians in the world. Certainly let dissension in a kingdom, in a city, or in a house go forward, let not those that are wise beguile themselves; for certainly all the policy in the world cannot make that kingdom, city or house stand, but it must be dissolved. You will say, it may be it may be so in time, when it comes to the height of contention. But you read of a holy proverb that Solomon maketh use of, and it is this; "The beginning of strife," says he, "is as the opening of the waters;" what then, "therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with." The beginning of contention thou thinkest is but a small matter; why, so it is but a small matter to open a dam; but if they should do so in the low countries, all the wit they have will not stop it again. So is the beginning of contention, before it be meddled with; therefore, leave it off, now it lies in your power to stop it. A child may be able to fire an house, but it will trouble and pose the wits of a thousand to quench it again when it hath gotten head. Now, to what end is all this? would we had not all cause to speak, but we have all cause to speak, but we have all cause to pray that God would be merciful to us; we see the ruins of the kingdom, the destruction of the state and Church: if we will persuade ourselves that all things will be well, beloved, let us consider this may not be: far be it from me to intrude upon that which belongs not unto me; but among the churches of the saints, then I am in my own element. Do not we see the churches of the saints abroad are in destruction, and the same flame did begin in our neighbours' countries, first by the disputations in the schools, and then in the state; afterwards there was a supplication of peace, that it might be no breach of peace; at last it came to perfection, and many would not join with them, but they must have congregations of their own, else they would not contribute to the wars. I beseech God,

we in this nation may not try conclusions with God in this case, to see how far such a thing may go before it be stopped. But you may say, how shall this be? I answer and profess before God to give nothing as studious of parts, but of peace.

I advise that all opprobrious terms be suppressed. I see that those that will not yield to that new doctrine which hath disturbed the low countries, there is an odious name cast upon them, and they are counted puritans, which is a thing tending to dissension; we know who are esteemed by Christ, and were it not a vile thing to term him a puritan? And king James maintained the same; and shall those be counted so, who confess the points which he maintained? Do not think I speak any thing as being hired on any side; but I foresee that the forecasting of that name upon those that maintain the doctrine, as hath been published by the pen of our sovereign, will prove a means for the disturbing of our peace.

Secondly, the spirit of the prophets must be subject to the prophets. Whence come these troubles? I remember St. Jerome, writing upon those words, saith; "I have read, and read, but could never find but that the Church was divided by those that are appointed to be priests." It was among the prophets, that the apostle tells them: "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, and drawing disciples after them." But what shall we do with these prophets? I answer, far be it from me to give counsel not fitting for peace; let therefore the prophets be subject to the prophets: let no meeting of laymen think it appertaineth to them; they must be subject to some, else every one would be a pope: but what, to some of their own rank and coat? No, but to those that are enabled by their calling and study, to enter into the deep consideration of these points. So wisdom will tell us, that the prophets should be subject to their censure, and not to those that cannot understand the state of

the question, much less enter into the bowels of it. But yet they must be subject. Observe the innovation; I do stand upon it, whether the point be true or false, but to see how the peace of the Church may be preserved. When contentions break forth in the Church, consider we were quiet in such a time, what is the cause the Church is now disturbed? Why, there be such and such that see the cause of it: what, are they brethren? are they of the prophets? if we see that the greatest number of the prophets go the other way, what can be the meaning of the apostle here, "but let the spirits of the fewer be subject to the rest?" All men know our counsels are founded upon this text; so that this is not a means in policy, but by God appointed. Those that bring in a new doctrine, be it true or false, God hath appointed this order, that the fewer should be subject to the greater number. But suppose they have the truth on their side? I say, if they have the truth, it is all one in this case: for there are certain truths that concern not the foundation of faith: and that which a man holds, if an error, unless he make it worse by his evil carriage, it is that he may go to heaven with for all that. But when there is no danger in the earth, if a man do profess the contrary, why do you disturb the peace of the Church? But you will say that this is an advice that comes from one that is partial. I will not deny, but confess, that in those five points that disturb the Low Countries, I am in the mind of my sovereign; I am not ashamed to confess it, nor never will be. But now the thing we look for, is not so much the discerning of truth and falsehood, but it is for the preservation of peace. Therefore this is my profession, and I do here profess before God, that if I were an Arminian, and did hold those five points that have caused those troubles in the Low Countries, and is like to cause them here among us; the case standing as it doth, that the greatest number of the prophets blow their horns another way, I hold, I were bound in conscience to hold my peace, and keep my knowledge to myself,

rather than by my unseasonable uttering of it, to disturb the peace of the Church.

But is not this a prevaricating of God's cause? No, it is the order God himself hath set down: there is a time when knowledge may be uttered, but not always: a fool uttereth all at once. It is not possible that all men in the Church should agree in all things, but it is possible that the peace should be preserved: "If any man think otherwise, God shall reveal the same." As if the apostle should have said, there are a number of matters wherein you may disagree, and go to heaven. And do your brethren, say they, see more than you? Why, if they be otherwise minded, peradventure the Lord will reveal the same unto you. Truth is the daughter of time; wait therefore. This is the last time I shall be called to this place, therefore I will leave this advice; which if it be neglected, peradventure it will be too late easily to stop things. Peradventure it is not so wise counsel as some do give, who advise that both sides should be silent: but do you think it so easy a matter to silence all those who have moved the troubles?

SERMON XXII:

THE RIGHT OF PRIMOGENITURE - IN A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE KING - Genesis 49:3

Reuben, thou art my first born, my might, and the beginning of my strength.

THIS is the beginning of Jacob's blessing his children, which was an act, and a principal act, of his faith, as it is in Heb. chap. 11 ver. 20.

And in this we may see a difference betwixt the death of Jacob and his father's. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were famous in their generations: God is not ashamed to be called their God. And if we consider their lives and deaths, we shall find this difference. Abraham in his life was most glorious, his faith famous, witness his offering his only son to God with that strength of faith, that, although he verily believed that "in Jacob all the nations of the earth should be blessed," yet was his faith so strong as to be content to offer him up, being persuaded that God was able to raise him from the dead.

Now although his life was thus glorious, when ye come to his death, this is all that is said of him: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, and was gathered unto his fathers."

Commonly great things are expected from holy men at their death, yet ye see Abraham was but ordinary in his death.

Concerning Isaac's life the Scripture saith but little, and the self same words are used of him at his death, as was at the death of Abraham.

Jacob as ordinary in his life as ye shall meet withal; but his death was a prophecy of Christ's coming into the world. He begins with Reuben, to whom, though he had no mind at all to bless him, he gives his due; shows him that the right of primogeniture belonged unto him, if he had not forfeited it: "Thou art my first born, my might, and the beginning of my strength." For this reason God commands, that the first born should have a double portion. And so Reuben should have received, but that he forfeited it; therefore, saith he, because thou art unstable as water, thy excellency is departed from thee: and so he gave it to Joseph. In repeating the genealogy of Jacob's sons, "Now," saith the text, "the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel," for he was the first-born, but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his

birth-right was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birth-right.

Ye see, though he had forfeited his birth-right, he could not forfeit his primogeniture, but there was an escheat thereof to Joseph. All the rest had a single tribe set out to them, but Joseph had two tribes, and so the right that should have gone to Reuben fell to Joseph. Besides this, had not Reuben forfeited his birth-right, he should have had more than his double portion, for there was a promise made, that "kings should proceed from him." Now as in the former Joseph succeeded him, so in this of eminency and power, it fell to Judah; for so it follows in 1 Chron. chap. 5 before named.

Now to explicate this.

The regal power which comes by descent is described by a double eminency: the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. By dignity you understand all outward glory; by power, all dominion, and these are the two branches of majesty.

The Greeks do therefore express it in the abstract. In respect of dignity, the supreme magistrate is called glory; in respect of sovereignty, he is called lordship.

The king is not only glorious, but glory; not only powerful, but power. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Both are joined in the epistle to Jude; and in the eighth verse there is a wicked sort described, that "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." They despise dominion that make no conscience "to blaspheme the footsteps of the Lord's anointed." These men dare do what Michael durst not do, he durst not bring against the devil "a railing accusation," but these dare "speak evil of dignities." And what is their censure? "Toc whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

We use to say, that those that have God's tokens upon them are past hopes of like. Here ye may plainly see God's tokens upon these men: "They are reserved to everlasting damnation."

Well, let us now come to unfold these two parts of majesty, dignity and dominion: the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

By dignity is meant the outward pomp and glory annexed to the sceptre. For, it is God's ordinance that there should be an extraordinary splendour in majesty more than in any other. And therefore the Scripture doth often describe the courts of princes, their splendour at home, and their progress abroad, with dignity and state. When king Agrippa and Bernice went to hear Paul, the text saith, "They removed with great pomp." It was a thing beseemed the regal power so to do. Thee queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem to see Solomon with a great train: but she came to a far greater court than her own. And this state in courts is not pride, but it is a thing allowed by God's ordinance, as Christ saith: "Those that wear soft raiment are in kings' courts." And speaking of the lilies of the field: "I say to you," saith he, "that Solomon in all his glory was not like one of these."

If you see a man, though in russet, attended upon by others in rich clothes, you will conclude that man, though in russet, to be some great personage. The queen of Sheba was astonished at what she saw in Solomon's court; for, when she beheld the meat of his table (he must not be served as other men) the sitting of his servants, the attendance of his ministers, and his cup-bearer, &c. the text saith, "There was no more spirit in her." She was, as a man may say, beside herself to see this state. And so stately it was, that it is brought in as an allegorical description of the glory of Christ and his Church. I need not go to foreign princes to prove this, the Scripture doth sufficiently evidence it. In Esther, chap. 1 there is a description of

Ahasuerus and his feast, the like to which you will not read of in any other story, it lasted one hundred and fourscore days, which was a full half year, and with the greatest glory that could be. When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty, &c.

So then, this is the first part of majesty, namely, outward splendour, which is lawful and requisite to maintain the dignity of a prince. And as the prince ought to have this in his own person, and his attendants, so all dignity and glory rests in him as in the fountain, and all titles of dignity are in him also. Even as ye see in the firmament: "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and one star excelleth another in glory."

In the commonwealth there are some knights, some lords, some earls, &c. but all these differences come from one sun, one head, the prince. There is no light in the moon, but what is derived from the sun even here is borrowed; the stars' light is borrowed also, and when the sun appears, they cease to shine. The stars at this time shine as much as at midnight, but that the light of the sun doth darken them. Even so in the presence of majesty, those other excellent dignities do not shine at all.

2. To come to the eminency of power; for a king to have great state and to have no power, he were then but a poor king.

A duke of Venice is served in as great state as can be, but he hath no power at all.

There is a subordination of power in all government, which because it cannot go ad infinitum, it must needs rest somewhere, and that is in the king. "Let every soul he subject to the higher powers." And the apostle distinguisheth, "whether it be to the king, as supreme, or

unto governors, as unto them that are sent by God, for the punishment of evil doers;" and he adds, "that by so doing, the ignorance of foolish men may be put to silence."

If any professor of religion do rebel against the king, this is a scandal to religion.

Now the apostle did foresee that such there would be, and therefore commands that they be put in mind to be subject, &c. But if any that profess religion do rebel, as I said before, it is the fault of the professor, and not of the profession; for the Church of England doth teach the contrary.

But when men shall not only practise, but teach rebellion (for "by their fruits ye shall know them,") this amounts to a very high crime indeed.

"The king," as St. Peter saith, "hath the excellency of power, as sent by God."

But, what need I say any more? We all swear that "the king is the only supreme governor in his dominions." A man would think, that that word only might be spared, since nothing can be above supreme, but it is put there by way of eminency.

There can be no dominion in the world, unless there be an eminency of power in some one or other. If a man be wronged in any court, he may lawfully appeal higher; but then, appeals must not be infinite, there must be a supremacy of power somewhere to rest in.

The philosopher saith, it must be either in one, or in all. Where the eminency of power is in one, it is called a monarchy. The king must

only have the supreme power, for if any be joined with him, then it is no monarchy.

If the power be in a certain number, it is called an aristocracy.

If the power be in all, a democracy; and all power then is derived from the body of the people, and where you say so, you destroy the monarchy, and erect a democracy.

The duke of Venice hath, as I said before, a marvellous great state, and yet the state of Venice is no monarchy, because the supremacy of power is not in him. He cannot receive a letter, nor make an edict without the state's allowance; nay, he may be called to account by them.

I read in Josephus, that Herod having offended Cleopatra, she besought Antony, who did not use to deny her any thing, to call him to account; but Antony refused so to do: "Then," saith he, "he will be no king."

Look upon the commonwealth of Lacedemon, they had kings lineally descended from the race of Hercules; but shall we say they had regal power? nothing less, because there were Ephori in that state, a certain power in the people to call their kings to account: the supremacy of power there was not in the prince.

In Switzerland there is a democracy, and the only democratical government I know of. They have their magistrates that govern the people. And yet though there be many magistrates that govern in those cantons, this is no aristocracy, for all the magistrates in Switzerland are accountable to the people, and all their power is limited by them. The supremacy of power is in the people there, and thence it comes to be a democracy.

Eminency of power. "In the word of a king there is power," saith the preacher. It was wont to be so, and by the word of God you see it ought to be so. But I will not enlarge upon this. It may be, some ears will not endure sound doctrine.

But the king, we see, must be acknowledged to be supreme, and no superior to the king.

Far be it from me, being in God's place, to flatter any man, I thank God I fear no flesh, but to deliver the truth.

Having now spoken of the two branches of majesty, dignity and power, we shall speak of a birth-right that descends to kings. It should have been Reuben's right here, if God had not taken it from him for a fault.

This day is the birth-day of our sovereign lord. Birthdays of kings have been usually celebrated with great solemnity in former times. Herod's birth-day was celebrated many years after his death: and the Herodians, for the many mighty works that Herod did, believed him to be the Messiah.

It pleaseth God that this day begins the forty-ninth year of his life, and let me call it the year of jubilee to his Majesty.

The Jews had a custom that in the forty-ninth year of any man's life, he should be at liberty, whatever his sufferings were before. It must be the desire and prayer of every loyal heart, that the king may have a jubilee indeed. This is that which loyalty bids us do.

I will not stand too much upon this particular. But this I will say, O that we knew our happiness; to have a king that is the son of nobles! A king that is not a child. A king that is at full age to govern, by

wisdom, and prudence. And truly as God gives us this blessing, so he expects we should acknowledge it thankfully. "Woe be to thee, O land," saith the preacher, "when thy king is a child:" and, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles:" that hath his breeding answerable.

To have him, when his experience hath rivetted in him sound judgment, and ability to govern. The Lord threatened Jerusalem: "I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them." Those that would have their own wills, could, I warrant you, be content that the youngest should reign.

To have a base man exalted, is one of the things that the earth cannot bear. But some body must have the government, it doth not belong to all. You see here is, by birth, one that hath a right unto it.

When Jehosaphat distributed his estate, he gave gifts to his other sons, but the kingdom unto Jehoram, because he was his first born. A kingdom is not a thing divisible.

So the king of Edom, though he took and offered his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, as an offering: yet in the prophecy of Amos, he is called the king of Edom, because he had it in view.

Now to come to Christians; we are kings in our sort, we are primogeniti, we are the Israel of God. When God sent Moses to deliver his people, he bids him deliver this message to Pharaoh: "Thou shalt say to Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn." Here is our privilege, though God hath many sons, yet, being found in Christ, we are all first-born. And so the children of God are called, "Thep congregation of the first-born." Every one that is a member of Christ hath the privilege of a first-born. They are all heirs. In the same relation that Christ is by nature,

we are by grace and adoption: and being so, we have the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

We do not speak of the power of this world: Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

They that preach, "The saints shall reign upon the earth," did not learn it from God; "For our kingdom is not of this world."

There is not that excellency to be found in any of the sons of men, as is to be found in one poor child of God.

Will you see David a king? when he comes with a pious eye, see who are there the most worshipful persons. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but honours them that fear the Lord." When he sees God's image in any soul, he honours him, and if he be a wicked man, a child of the Devil, he is a vile person in his eyes. A sinner, though otherwise never so noble, is a very vile person: "Myr goodness," saith David, "doth not extend to thee, but unto the saints upon the earth."

The apostle St. John, "Behold," saith he, "what manner of love the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, and therefore the world doth not know us."

But if they be so excellent, how come they to be so despised in the world? the reason is, because the world doth not know them to be such. The world doth not know Christ's children more than they know Christ himself.

I have often thought, that when his Majesty was in France, where he was not known, a neglect put upon him there, would not have been in any proportion so bad, as the like must needs be amongst his own subjects. And so it is with us. We are spiritual kings, a royal

priesthood. If the world did know us to be such, they would deal with us otherwise than they do; "but our life is hid with Christ in God," and one day it shall appear, and then shall the righteous shine in the kingdom of their Father.

Beloved, hereupon it is that the children of God have their guard of angels.

The king hath a choice guard to attend him, but if ye did see what attendance the children of God have, you would admire. The angels of God do pitch their tents about them.

In the Canticles, the state of Solomon's bed is described with three score valiant men about it for a guard. What is this but a type of the angels of God guarding his own people, the militia of heaven?

But I perceive the time is past, therefore will end here.

SERMON XXIII I:

The Truth Shall Make You Free - John 8:31-32

Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, if ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed, And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

IN the words before our Saviour justifies the doctrine he had delivered to the Jews, declaring that what he had delivered unto them was not his own only, but also proceeding from and agreeing with his Father; because that he came from the Father, yea from the bosom of the Father. So that no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Christ here proves the truth of his kingly and prophetical office; that he took not this honor to himself, but was sent doing those things which were pleasing unto him. Now many were ready to carp and snatch at his sermon, upon whom he saw admonitions prevailed not. Therefore he turns him to those believing Jews on whom his speech had effect, and tells them that they had made a fair beginning, to be contented patiently to hear him, not finding knots in rushes, and cavilling at every small matter, as those other Jews did. He entreats them therefore to continue in his word, and they should be his disciples indeed; not to be as those who come for a season, and then run away. Therefore he tells them, if you would be sure to have any good by my word, ye must continue in my word. He shows there be two sorts of hearers.

1. Such as commend the word only, and so let it pass without any more good by it.

2. Such who not only commend it, but also lay it up in practice, to live accordingly. Unto this first sort of hearers he shows, the word shall do them no good, unless they continue in his truth. And then, if they do continue in his word, and cleave to his truth, he shows them it shall not be labour lost, or time ill spent, for thereby they shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free.

I will not stand on any curious division to touch many things. The text is plain. It contains matter of practice, upon which I will insist.

I. Observe in general—surely the knowledge of the truth is a most excellent and precious thing, and to be exceedingly desired of us.

This seems a common point, yet our freedom stands upon it; nothing can make us free from bondage, but this: most men think not so; but certainly we shall find the point true. That the knowledge of the truth is the most excellent thing that may be. There be many proofs of this point, but we need not stand upon many. The wise man saith, "Get wisdom, get understanding, forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth; forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Some you see, to obtain some gettings think their adventuring to the East Indies, and such like places, nothing. How comes it then that we have not this wisdom, which is of all other things the most precious? The truth is, we prize it not, we are fools, not knowing, or not valuing the richest commodities as we should. This the wise man confirms, "Myb fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment." It is valued above all things, yea and all precious stones, with all the riches of the world, so that nothing is

like this: you see with those who have understanding to value things, unto such this high treasure is esteemed above all.

The reason hereof is, other things may pass, and I may lack them; but on the knowledge of this my life stands. If a man were certainly persuaded of this, he would by all means, with all his getting obtain this. Tell unto a man in the state of death, who is condemned to die, of great earthly matters; he takes no heed, nor cares what you say; he values life more than all. And, if a natural life be so much esteemed; how much ought we more to esteem of a spiritual life? This knowledge is beyond all things to be sought after. You know Christ saith, "This is life eternal to know thee to be the only very God; and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." See, my life stands upon it. So Moses bids the people, "Sete your hearts unto all the words which I testify amongst you this day, for it is your life." He shows it is no vain word (too slightly thought of by them), but that on which so near and dear a thing as our life stands upon, and on which all our joy depends. So think you that the knowledge of the truth is an ordinary thing, such as a man may have with a song (as they say). No. It is that on which your everlasting life doth depend. See what the Wiseman saith to this purpose, "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life." In this case we must do even as a man who, being cast into a main sea, having a cable let down to him to take hold of, he holds it fast, and will not let it go, because he knows his life depends upon it; a man needs not to bid him hold. So this knowledge of the truth is a cable cast down from heaven unto us, who are in the raging and roaring seas of this world, compassed with sin and death, and we must lay hold for our life, for thereby we attain life. "Forg whoso findeth me findeth life; and shall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me love death." I speak now unto you that have learned and known the truth. It is not to be attained as other things,

with ease, it is an high and supernatural thing, and discovered from heaven by his Spirit, illightning and working upon our spirits.

Uses:

I. To show the miserable and distressed state of those who have not yet the knowledge of the truth: this being a thing of so great importance; and not only a shameful, but also a miserable estate. The apostle imputes the brabling of the Corinthians to want of knowledge and piety; and therefore he tells them, "I say this to your shame; is there not one that is a wise man among you? not one that shall be able to judge betwixt his brethren?" We see also to this purpose, how Christ takes up Philip for his ignorance. When Philip had said, "Lordk show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Christ answers him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip?" He is reproved, that in so long habitation, and being with our Saviour, he continues yet so ignorant. And so may we not now say the like of ourselves, when we shall be brought before God at that last day? What can we plead for our ignorance and disobedience, who have had God, and the means so powerfully, and so long a time with us? may we not now tremble and quake to think of our backwardness this way? Look, against whom will the Lord Jesus come at that day? saith the apostle, "he shall come in flaming fire, rendering vengeance on them, that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." See what a fearful thing this is: the not knowing of Christ may be a means to put us, at that great day, on his left hand, to be tormented with the devil and his angels for ever. This is a cursed ignorance, which produceth such woful effects; to live thus is a continual (as it were) stabbing of the soul. For this cause also the prophet complains, "my people perish for want of knowledge." Look where you will, and you shall find many places to confirm this. Some object, O God is full of mercy; I will fly unto that

—I grant; but what is that to thee? Dost thou think he will be prodigal of his blood for thy good, who esteemest of him no more (nay not so much) as of the basest thing of the world? It is a shameful thing to be ignorant now in so great a light.

II. This is against another sort of men, who bless themselves in their formality not to be grossly ignorant. Yet they value not the truth at an high rate, they will not bestow one hour in a day, in searching of it, to leave any worldly thing undone for this; yea (which is more lamentable) they not only make the search of this truth their least care; but also think all that time lost, which is spent that way. What shall I say? Thus to prefer the world before heaven, and set up the search of earthly things so in our hearts (which will bring but dolor, grief, and main sorrows in the end); is not this to proclaim thyself another Esau, to prefer thy present lusts before this truth? for this is most certain, and look unto it. So far as we prefer the search of the truth before all things, with purpose of heart to live accordingly, so far are we brought into the liberty of God's children, which shall make us free if we continue in the truth. But if a man give Christ no entertainment, but hand over head go on, and put all to the last, that man is in a woful state, without hope of freedom if he continues so. You shall have some, if they may have Christ with ease, they could be content to have him; or if he would so work upon them, that they might go about the work of repentance with ease, why then they would go about it. But yet they will not take Mary's part so seriously to put that in the first place, without which all is nothing, being with Martha troubled about many things. They dare not trust God in temporal things, as though godliness had not the promise above earthly things, yea and of all things with Christ. But howsoever it is clear, the knowledge of the truth is a most excellent thing, and the ignorance thereof is damned: it is heinous, and a bad sign in a professor to prefer anything before it. Yea it is the glory of a Christian

to increase in this knowledge every day, "Thusn saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." As in riches a man is not content to have no more than to keep a man from starving; but also he desires to have for bounty and liberality for others, so much more must we in spiritual things desire and strive to be rich in them; as the apostle exhorts us, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another." We must not seek (as some sluggards do for their ease) the least measure of the knowledge of Christ, which may save a man; this is to be poor in Christ always. But if a man desire Christ truly, he will be more covetous of the riches of this knowledge than any earthly minded man can be of the things of this world. Now I come to the second point.

When and how this knowledge is attained.

It is not gotten so soon as a man (upon hearing the word preached) hath a flash of remorse at a sermon, upon which he doth fall out in commendation of the preacher, and sermon, admiring the power of the word; but then (as Christ's speech is), when we continue in his word, are we his disciples indeed, and shall know the truth. They knew his word before, and were instructed in some generals; and yet were far short of practice, and of that which they were to have. Therefore he shows them the way to come by it is, by continuing in his word. Whence we observe, there is a kind of knowledge which is not attained by our first hearing of the word; but by adhering and sticking close unto it, so as it may dwell in us, and we continue therein. It is not enough to assent at first, and approve goodness. This knowledge is attained with much industry, pains, time, and labour, when a man hath, as it were riveted this knowledge in himself

(as one will drive in a nail fast), and sure to remain, being transformed into the image thereof. This is the next point, if a man would have this knowledge, which is so precious, which shall make him a freeman; he must (as St. James speaketh), "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls." It is not every knowledge, nor every word will do it, but this ingrafted word. In which the apostle shows them, as though he had said, if you will conform yourselves to what I exhort you, and lay away lets, which hinder you from obedience, you shall attain to such a knowledge as the worldlings think is not in the world. Thus you see, a man must continue and stick unto it, if he would be freed by this knowledge. For this, see what the Wiseman saith: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thy ear to wisdom, and apply thy heart unto understanding; yea if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shall thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." As though he should say, you see understanding is not a thing may be had every where. No, God keeps it in his own hands, till we beg for it, as St. James tells us: "Ifr any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thus you see, a man must seek for it. At first, when with ease we attain to know many things, then one would think we had knowledge. But I say no, as in the Proverbs you have heard. It is a treasure, and men must dig and sweat to find out a treasure; a man must seek and dig deep to find it out, and then seek again. When a man hath received the word and hid it, then he must do more; sell all that he hath to purchase it; let all fall that he may have it. So that this true knowledge in the first receiving it puts a man on to search further into those depths of knowledge, which ravish the soul. It stands not in the brain; you shall have many wonderful curious to know much,

and converse with the learned, they never can be satisfied. But let me tell thee, unless thou practise that it descend into thy heart, it shall but increase thy condemnation, that thou, who knowest so much of thy Master's will, and doest so little, mayest be beat with many stripes. But I go on. You see what our Saviour saith, "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." A man must know the will of God or he shall never do it. It is not the despiser, nor the curious disputer, that shall come unto the knowledge of this truth, but the submitter. A man must captivate his reason and understanding, and give, as it were, a blind obedience unto the word; and then a man shall come to know it. To know the word a man must first yield unto it, to be ruled by it; the first knowledge of the truth is, to bring a man on, and lead him further and further still, until he be in truth, yea truth in him, and he transformed into the image thereof; so continuing and going on therein, still reaching for that which is before; thus continuing in his word, we shall know the truth (as our Saviour speaks), and the truth shall make us free.

The reason hereof is, because, as in human sciences, it is not the discourse of one in ordering a battle, that will make wise men trust a man the more to order it; but they will put the business to men of skill, who have adventured their lives in the choake of a battle, and have had experience trained up in the war. So there is an introductory kind of knowledge by learning, which will not serve the turn; which though a man have, yet he is but a novice all the while. But when a man continues therein, it comes to be an experimental knowledge; as that of a general in ordering of a battle, whose experience doth it. So this is a matter of practice, as we see, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." This fear of God is not a discursive knowledge, but it is the well ordering of all. So saith the prophet: "Theu fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they

that do his commandments; his praise endureth for ever." Mark, hath not a man a good knowledge who is able to repeat a sermon well, and speak well? No, if there be no more; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments. When a man doth practise his knowledge, this is the thing. Compare Proverbs, chap. 2. ver. 6 with Proverbs, chap. 2. ver. 10. Observe, as this a thing which comes from God particularly, so he useth not to give it to those who care not for him. He saith there, "When wisdom entereth into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee." So saith the prophet: "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose." To whom will God, think you, give this knowledge? Not to profane persons, blasphemers, idle persons, who will not labour for it. Will he give, and convert these precious things to such? But what man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way, that he shall choose? And so he saith, "Thez secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." Mark; there are certain secrets in regeneration, not communicated unto all, but unto such as fear him. Therefore the prophet David prays unto the Lord, to open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things out of his law. Many there be who find not these wondrous things in the word; yea, and many wise men there are, who will not believe that they can be assured of salvation, or that any man can be assured thereof. These never tasted what wonderful things are revealed in the word, unto those that fear God; for to be assured to be in Christ, and to be with Christ for ever, it is not to every one. His secret is with, and revealed unto, them that fear him. I believe easily such men cannot believe this. So you see there is a knowledge which leads a man unto this freedom, which must be sealed by a long tract of time, when a man must wait and knock at the gates of wisdom for entrance.

The use hereof is,

1. First: men must not marvel that the greatest clerks are not the soundest divines; such who think themselves princely and stately fellows. It is not for want of wit, but of grace in the heart, that such do not profit the people. "They run, saith the Lord, but I have not sent them; therefore they profit not my people." A man must first put off all his own conceits, and cry unto God for it, or he cannot profit himself or others. If a man turn a little learning into practice, God will give more, and teach a man strange things beyond his imagination. But if a man go on in knowledge and learning, and is not transformed into the image thereof, God doth justly to give that man no more. Yea (which is worse) to give a man over to a lying spirit, to be led by vanity, and so fall into that dangerous disease of hardness of heart, which is worse than the plagues of Egypt, as we may see. There is showed the cause of the inundation of Popery; because they walked not according to the knowledge, God gave them over unto blindness and hardness of heart. Mark; some there are who have such a belief of the truth which sanctifieth them; others have pleasure in unrighteousness, not continuing in his word; it is just with God to give such a man over to be damned; to cast him off from the knowledge of the truth, and to let him believe lies; because he received not the love of the truth, that he might be saved, "therefore such a one shall take pleasure in unrighteousness, and be damned." If I did see a Papist showing himself a notorious wicked man, I would not begin to convert that man by dissuading him from Popery; but I would set myself to reprove his sin, and for to convince him of that; for when a man sets himself against God's word, it is a hard matter to reclaim such a man. There are precepts not to murder, lie, commit adultery, steal, and the like; for a man now to set himself against God in these, it is a wicked thing. The apostle compares such men to "Jannesc and Jambres, who do resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." These men were great magicians then, who did resist Moses. Moses was

learneder than they in all the learning of the Egyptians; Moses did convince them, and beat them at their own weapons. Why was their rage set against him? They were men of corrupt hearts and minds. It is not possible that such should turn to God, unless they might be persuaded to leave their sin. And the apostle sets out seducers, and shows such men should come in the latter days, false teachers, who should bring in damnable heresies, by whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. Such he describes to have eyes full of adultery, who cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls, having an heart exercised with covetous practices; cursed children. And then he addse, that whilst they promise men liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. As though the apostle should have said, there will come false prophets among you, saying they can untie you from your sins; believe them not; such men are very rake-hells, such men, who rebel against the truth, will you have them to be your guides, who will guide you and themselves into destruction? So the apostle Jude saith, "These speak evil of those things they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those they corrupt themselves." You shall have a Papist speak the most bitter things against the truth; why? They speak evil of those things they know not. They know not what they do. They did not walk and glorify God according unto their knowledge; but had pleasure in unrighteousness; and therefore they now are barred of the truth, this being the way to bring men to speak evil of those things they know not. A man must continue and abide in a lesser known truth, ere he can attain to know a greater and more excellent truth.

2. Secondly; hence learn we the necessity of this point. A man must continue in this word, or else he shall get nothing by it. There is a coming to the word not common, which makes one still to abide in the truth. As "The elder unto the elect lady, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the

truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." There is a truth which is rooted in one, that one would part with a hundred lives ere they let it go. This he speaks of here, "for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." This is such a truth so rooted, that bring all tortures, or a thousand deaths, a man will not part with it. We must all labour therefore, not to despise the truth, or to sit down contented with a small measure thereof; but strive to attain to this higher strain, to be transformed into it, that we may shine forth as lights unto others. Till a man come to this pitch, I may say truly he knows nothing as he ought to know. For this see 1 John, chap. 2. ver. 3. "And hereby know we, that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." So the apostle bids them add to their faith virtue, and to their virtue knowledge, and to their knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity: for, if these things be in you, and abound, they will make you, that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark; there is a barren knowledge, like the heath in the wilderness, which is good for nothing, scarce for the fire, which is in the brain only. Then there is a fruitful knowledge, which abounds in piety, in the brain, heart, and whole powers of the soul. He saith; if you shall go on and increase, you shall be more and more sanctified. A fruitless faith and knowledge doth but help a man on unto damnation, and maketh his reckoning so much the heavier at that great day. But saith the apostle, "Heh that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

Now what this knowledge is, which brings forth such excellent things, you have seen. I should now come to show the effects thereof:

which is here set down. The truth shall make them free. They bragged they were Abraham's children, and never in bondage unto any man. He who thinks himself freest, many times is the greatest bondslave. I should also have showed how, before a man be in Christ, he is in the greatest bondage may be. For if a man did undergo a great burden, whereof he were sensible, (like the children of Israel in Egypt,) he might come to cry out of his miserable estate, and seek for liberty; but otherwise such are bound, like unto the Jews here, and know it not. Cursed be this liberty which binds a man more and more. This should have been stood upon; of our miserable thraldom till we be in Christ, having this excellent knowledge, and how the truth doth make us free; for hereby comes our only true freedom, as our Saviour tells them, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," and so a slave to sin. There is no servitude like to this, when a base affection doth lead a man on, and rule in him, so that he is led captive therewith. On the other side, our Saviour tells us the sum of all freedom, what it is, "Verilyi, verily, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Christ shows, if it were no more but to be a bond slave, the state of nature were somewhat tolerable; but (which is more) this delivers a man over to the first and second death; for which cause, the devil is said to have the power of death. And Christ is said for this cause to have come into the world, that he might loose the works of the devil. If a man could see sin uncovered, what a vile and ugly thing it were, and how every sin, like the stab of a dagger, strikes a man to the heart, and binds him faster and faster to the devil, he would fly it by all means. Why dare our gallants of this age be so bold to venture and rush on sin as they do, but because they know not the state of nature and end of sin? Want of consideration marreth all. They durst not, for all the world, go on so in sin, if they knew what they did. But I cannot go on, at this time, any further, because of the time. Now let us pray. O Lord our God, &c.

SERMON XXIV:

The Truth Shall Make You Free, Part 2 - John 8:31-32

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

THESE words, as lately I delivered in another place, are a particular encouragement given by our Saviour Christ unto those believing Jews, his hearers; as they had now made a fair beginning, so he wills them to continue in his truth, that they might know the truth. In handling whereof I told you, there was a certain excellent knowledge of the truth, which could not be attained at our first hearing or liking of the word, but by continuing therein: for which cause, by the apostle James (I told you) it is called the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls, and by which a man must be judged at the last day. When a man attends to the word, to rivet it in; when a man is transformed with the image thereof, so as to be one with it, it remaining one in him, and he in it; then the truth doth make us free. Therefore our Saviour here wills them not to be contented with having a flash of the truth, but to continue in his word, that they might know the truth, and the truth might make them free. From that, he shows them, shall another knowledge come, which shall

make a man to see more excellent things. But to know Christ's meaning, consider,

1. What is truth?

2. What our liberty here promised is?

Truth is a great word, of large extent, often used by our Saviour Christ, and St. John uses it much. A matter it is worth the looking after; for our Saviour affirms, "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." When he had thus said unto Pilate, then he asks at our Saviour, "What is truth?" The princes of this world knew it not. It is not an easy matter to tell what truth is. But howsoever the meaning be, Christ himself is principally meant. Look at verse 45. There Christ saith to the Jews, "Because I tell you the truth, you believe me not." He himself is chiefly the truth, as we may see, "Ic am the way, the truth, and the life." But truth is diversely taken in other places; as here, verse 45 of this chapter, where my text is: "Because I tell you the truth, you believe me not." 1. Truth is there opposed unto falsehood, when there are tricks and dissimulation in the business. 2. So in that place it signifies an integrity in the whole man; from which (it is set down verse 44.) the devil fell, and stood not. It is written, "He continued not in the truth;" to wit, in that former state of integrity wherein he was placed at first. Now, the reason why integrity is called truth is, because it is as a girdle to fasten all our spiritual armour, and tie it close about us: as we see our clothes hang loose about us, till they be girded on; and then they are close and more handsome. So long as a man's graces are not girded with this girdle, all are nothing; integrity fastens and makes all sure. 3. All the state of the gospel is there called the truth: "The elder unto the elect lady and her children,

whom I love in the truth. For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." 4. By truth, in another place, is meant the word of God; as it is where Christ prays, "Sanctifyf them through thy truth; thy word is truth." 5. Lastly; by truth is meant Christ himself. Saith he, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And thus Christ tells the Jews, the truth shall make you free. That is, as if he should have said, I being believed in, apprehended, and applied as true in all my words by you, being obeyed and esteemed as that sovereign and universal good, so long since looked for and promised; this shall make you free. Which is proved verse 36. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, then shall you be free indeed. The truth makes us free, when the Son makes us free. We must not separate the word from the ground and substance thereof. And for this you see what is written Psal. * * * *

And so of our Saviour Christ, it is said, "That God hath exalted him highly, and given him a name above every name." But yet we see he hath engaged his truth and his word above all his name. By his word also we know him, and thereby see what he hath done for us. "Yeai, by his knowledge (saith the Lord) shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." That is, by those instructions from his word, believing therein, they shall come to have assurance of their freedom from condemnation.

Now, ere I come to the main matter of this text, I will observe one thing, and so pass on to the rest. Our Saviour here showeth himself to be the true witness; he is the truth. For by truth here (I have showed you) is meant Christ and his word. Thou mayest trust him in whatsoever he saith; heaven and earth shall pass away, rather than his word fail. I say the point is: the Son who shall make us free, whatsoever he promiseth us, we may build upon it. It is certain and sure, and shall be done. It must be so, for he is the truth itself. See to

this purpose, what the Spirit speaketh of Christ, after his resurrection. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." This is the chief name, Amen, the faithful and true witness.

The inference from hence is; as he is, so is his word. And therefore it is, that this truth of God and of his word is so much stood upon by our Saviour, and by all the prophets and apostles; that we might have confidence and trust therein. For the promises are of great things, such as without this we durst not reach at; to make us the sons of God; of bondslaves, freemen; to make us heirs, yea, co-heirs with Christ; and give us a kingdom in eternal life. And in this life also the promises are great: to be with us in all temptations and dangers, to overrule all crosses and afflictions so, as in the end all shall make for our good, notwithstanding Satan and all his malice; and in death to bring us that way to life. In all which, if we rest not on the truth of the promiser, we shall stagger; as we see Christians (like unto David) are ready to fly out upon every little cross to distrust, as if he had left them, unless this truth be looked upon. When David was greatly afflicted, he said in his haste, "All men are liars." Thus began his distrust, when he began to doubt of the truth of all men. But afterwards he fell into more distrust, when he said in his heart, "In shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines, and Saul shall despair of me." And so, in another place, for fear of Achish, we read, "He feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down by his beard." So it is with us: we do never play the fools, till we begin to distrust God, and leave trusting in him; then we come to show ourselves madmen, to scratch on the wall, and to be full of distempers and vile passions; then are we foolish indeed, and much woe and misery befalls us in this estate.

The servants of God for this cause are plentiful (as I have showed) to set forth the truth of God unto us; as, to instance one, after he had brought them into the land of Canaan, as the Lord had promised, thus he speaks unto them before his death: "And behold this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, that in all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." The bringing them into the land of Canaan then was but a type of our bringing into the celestial Canaan now, by our true Jesus. We know while they were in the way, how they did murmur, and distrust the promises. When they looked on at it first, they were afraid, when they saw great cities with strong walls, chariots of iron, and strong and stout people, greater and mightier than they. As if they should have said, how impossible is this to be done, which is enjoined unto us? Shall we cast out seven nations, taller and mightier than we; having such fenced cities, defended with men like giants, under whom we appear like grasshoppers? Such servile people would rather have returned again to slavery and bondmen, than to rely on God's promises. Such slothful, distrustful people are we now in our journey unto heaven; every little cross or affliction is like to make us turn back unto Egypt. We object and say, oh, if we wrestled with flesh and blood it were somewhat; or if these and these crosses were not so sharp and so heavy, I could rejoice. But we wrestle with principalities and powers, with strong and potent enemies, invisible, subtle, powerful, &c. What of all this? Were the enemies never so strong, powerful, and many, God hath promised to cast them all out, that there shall not a man stand before us, as we see the Lord performed unto Joshua, beating all down before him. So it is the Lord that fights for us, and in us, and we overcome by his strength, and the power of his might.

Let us not then provoke the Lord unto anger, and perish as such have done. See with whom was he angry, and who were they who provoked him to wrath. Whose carcases fell in the wilderness? Even such who believed not his words. He was grieved with a faithless people, who forgot all his wonders, and longed rather to return again to Egypt, than believe in God. If you lookr, you shall find what their sin was: they murmured against Moses, and chode with him; whence the place was named Massah and Meribah, that is, temptation and chiding. Mark their sin how foul and detestable it was. When for a little season they had not meat and drink (a thing profane men delight most in) in outward things, they then begin to doubt, and make question, saying, is God among us, or not? This sin is not only peculiar to them, but even so it is with ourselves; we sin deeply this way. If God dandle us on his lap, give us plenty of outward things, freedom from crosses, health, &c., we can rejoice and trust in God; but if once the sunshine of his face be but a little eclipsed, that he withdraw his hand, pinch us a little, and make us feel the rod; then, like unto them we are ready to question God's love, and to say, is God among us or not? doth he love me? did he ever love me, &c. Let the conclusion of all this be; since God is truth; since his word is truth, and since he hath promised to be with us, and help us in all estates; let us wait and trust in him, and lay claim unto his promises, as the Prophet David did, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." So we must put God in mind of his word, of his truth, and of our waiting in expectation thereof.

Now I come to the second part: What this liberty is?

This liberty by our Saviour Christ is expounded to be spiritual. The Jews we see, were carnal, and so wrested all Christ's sayings unto the outward sense of the letter; as when Christ did instruct Nicodemus in the mystery of regeneration, he understood it grossly, and so replied,

"How can a man be born, when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" And so when he told them, "Exceptu ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And when he showed them, that he was that living bread which came down from heaven, they strove among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And here, when he speaks to them of the truth, telling them that the truth should make them free, they mistake him, and dreaming far wide of the matter, make him this reply; "we are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage unto any man, how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" We know for all this, they had often been formerly in bondage unto other nations, and were at this time in thraldom under the Romans, and yet they brag of their freedom. You shall ever have the most slavish and proudest men brag most. Now, Christ shows them, that whosoever commits sin, is the servant of sin. This is their servitude; and that their freedom, when the truth shall make them free. 2. They bragged much of their father Abraham. He tells them, they are of their father the Devil. Here is a natural man's descent, let them brag, and say of themselves what they will. After all this he shows the extent of their freedom. "Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." So he shows what our liberty is, and that thereby he means a spiritual freedom purchased unto us, out of bondage; yea out of death the last of bondages, by our Saviour Christ, to walk in the light of life. First then let us see their bondage, who have not this truth remaining in them. Whence we observe, until the Son do make us free, we remain in bondage and spiritual thraldom.

The apostle to Galatians, in setting down both covenants and states, doth clear this, both which are set down by an allegory. "The one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage, which is Agar; for this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem,

which now is; and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all." So that, before a man be the child of the heavenly Jerusalem, to wit, a member of Christ's body, new born, a child of Mount Zion, &c.; Hagar is in bondage with her children; and such are bondslaves till they be freed by the son. He that is not born again, and hath [not] a new life infused into him, he [not] being in Christ [nor] Christ in him, he is in bondage, like Hagar and her children; yea as yet, fast tied in the chains and fetters of miserable servitude. Many think this to be a paradox, but we have Christ's word for it, "He who sins is the servant of sin." The worldlings think this to be the only freedom, when a man may run out in riot and excess, to do what he will; and a man who fears, and dares do nothing without a warrant, him they think to be in bondage and thraldom. And therefore they say, as it is Psal. 2, "Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us." They consider not that Christ's service is the only freedom. Yet for all this, they are but bondmen all this while. "Hisa own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin." If nothing else should, yet every new sin is as a cord to bind a man. That even as Nebuchadnezzar commands the mightiest men in his army, to bind the three children; so sins fetter us as fast as may be, every sin being a new rope to bind men, and cast them into hell-fire. To this effect the Churchc hath power to bind and loose sin; how? By telling them that their sins are loosed, being freemen in the state of grace, which shows, that formerly such were bound, though they think not so, nor see it. And he saith, "Know you not that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" So that here the apostle shows, there is no bondage beyond the forcible bondage of sin, no thraldom comparable to that. It is as though the apostle had said, Have you no understanding to see what bondage and liberty is? Is there any question to be made,

but if a man obey sin, and the lusts thereof, he is kept in bondage thereof? You may read to this effect, what the apostle Peter writes of such men, "thate while they promise others liberty, they themselves are the servants of sin; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." So that man who is overcome with every sin, he is not free, but a slave bound in the chains of sin; every sin is as a chain, or a bond, to tie him faster and faster.

That I may go further. These men perhaps care not to be slaves of sin, but scorn one should think these bonds unto them. But in the second place, such, who thus are slaves to sin, become thereby slaves to the Devil. I am persuaded, if men did know whose work they were a doing, they would be ashamed to be rowing in the Devil's galleys; that they would repine against such a master. Wicked men in their actions, are doing the Devil service; Satan doth tie them, and imprison them; as it is written, "Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried." Doth the Devil cast ministers in prison? Why, what doth Satan? he appears not? Yes, he casts them in prison: Satan doth it, when men do follow the stream of their own wicked passions and lusts for revenge, or any other cause. They do the Devil's work, he maketh them his drudges, to do whatsoever it pleaseth him. This is woful, to be a slave to the worst of all tyrants, who delights to overthrow his servants, yea all the creatures of God, if he might.

Is this all? No; for as his service is, so is his reward. He is a murderer from the beginning. As he said to Eve at the beginning, "Fear not, you shall not die;" so he deals with Christians now. First he draws them on unto sin, saying, what fear you? these men are too strict, and precise, whom you desire to imitate; there is not so much ado for heaven as you think; God is merciful. And then, when men are thus deceived, he turns a tormentor, and murderer unto them; which is

the reward of his service. Then he shows them (as the apostle speaks) "Thath the wages of sin is death." And will not sin have his wages paid him? The apostle James shows, how the hire of the labourers, who had reaped down their fields, kept back of them by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which had reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Saboth. So I may say, sin, it cries for wages, and this cry, like the blood of Abel, cries for vengeance; so that if there be not a cry which is stronger than this, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, vengeance must come upon thee. But unto us, who are in Christ, we have a cry which outcries this cry; and speaks better things for our peace, which is our happiness. But as for such men, they are strangers from Christ, and so most miserable. And so at the last, when all the world shall be on a flame, and Christ sitting on the bench, he shall say, as for these men, who would not have me rule over them, bring them forth, bind them hand and foot, and cast them into hell-fire for ever, with the Devil and his angels. Is not this a fair reward for service done the Devil? to be cast out into such a furnace, for evermore?

I will not stand upon the use but touch it in a word, because I make haste to the rest. Apply to yourselves; there is no dallying with an Almighty God. Pray then unto him to reveal unto you the misery of this woful estate of nature, more than I or any man are able to express, that so we may run unto the city of refuge.

Now I come to show what is the freedom promised by believing his word, and trusting in him.

As he shows this freedom is a powerful delivery of us from our spiritual enemies, by Christ; wherein he sanctifies us by his truth, to assure us, he will deliver and free us from all our enemies, and settle us in a quiet and sweet secure rest at last. To which effect, he was

called Jesus. For (saith the text) "hek shall save his people from their sins." And so the apostle speaking of Christ, and how he had set him out unto them in preaching, thus describes him: "Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The like in sum we have "Untom you first (saith Peter) God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." And so, there this freedom is further expressed what it is; "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them, that are sanctified by faith in his name." Where all was bound before, he doth now loose, and free us from the bonds of the strong man. As "the Spirit is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them, that are bound." This, as it is cited, in the Gospel, was Christ's first sermon in his country. So that you see what this liberty is. The publishing of the Gospel is a proclamation of a perpetual jubilee, a gaol delivery, wherein all captives are set at liberty. This is the general. But more particularly, wherein consists this freedom? In two things, for these two include all.

1. In the grace of justification.

2. In the grace of sanctification.

For the former; 1. There is a liberty proclaimed from our sins thus far, that, whereas for one sin I deserved everlasting death, and servitude for ever, I am freed now from this condemning power of sin. And whereas (though there were no actual sin committed) for original sin he might have condemned me; yet now I am freed from all. Sanctification is another thing; to have grace and strength not to

fall, and to fight against sin. But for this freedom of justification, let us inquire, how may this be done. Our justification must stand in imputation. Nothing else can do it. Why? When sin is once done, it is impossible to be undone again. With a holy reverence be it spoken, that which is once done, and ill done, God cannot make it be undone again; being evil done, it always continues so, an evil act. But this is the freedom; it shall not be imputed, it shall not be in the account. The papists laugh at this, that we should be justified in this manner, by another, without ourselves, or own merits; but it is certainly true, as the apostle to this purpose writes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Hence, therefore, comes our freedom, that though that, which is done, and ill done, cannot be undone; yet that that, which did deserve death and everlasting condemnation, God will pass by, and not impute it. That is, give unto us a righteousness without ourselves, which brings us to a wonderful liberty: yea (I may affirm) working hereby a perpetual miracle for us; which is wonderful indeed; that though our house be continually a fire, yet it burns us not; though poison be in our pottage, yet that it should not work upon us unto death. Even as, amongst other miracles, this was one Christ promiseth the disciples should do, "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." So we all drink deadly things; and here is the miracle, that they kill us not; so that look how Paul shook off that viper from his hand into the fire without harmr, which the barbarians looked should have killed him. Even so it is with us. Though (as the apostle saith) sin sticks so fast unto us, yet it doth not work unto death. Sin naturally doth work out death, being finished. But here is our comfort by justification. Being in Christ, our sins shall be so covered, that they shall not be found; as Jeremy most excellently speaks. "Int those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah,

and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." So that here is the point of our freedom; in that Christ hath taken away the ground of our accusation, and plea which was against us, causing the suit to cease; yea, and cancelling the bill so as there remains no record against us. As we read in the Revelation of stars, which fell from heaven; so it is in this thing I speak of. What, did the stars fall then? no; but they are said to fall, when they lose their light, and work not as formerly. So it is with us, when sin doth lose its light, that it cannot work and shine, as formerly, to bind, imprison and condemn us; then it is said to be done away, when it cannot murder us, and hath lost its wonted force. And thus in justification the truth frees us from the condemnation of sin.

Yea, (in the second place, which is a great benefit,) we are delivered also from the guilt of sin: to wit, from the condemning power of sin; to bind and imprison us, in respect of that affection, we carry naturally unto it; and the guilt and the shame of the fault committed; that, howsoever this only were sufficient to make us miserable; yet herein is our freedom also. We have heard how every sin binds a man, as it were, with strong cords; yet thus only we are bound being in Christ; that, as Sampson, being bound with new ropes, when the enemies were upon him, he brake them off his arms like thread, and escaped. So it is with us now. Our sins hold us fast, bind us sure; but when our enemies do think us fastest bound; in our danger, our cords vanish and burst as the flax, when it smells the fire; so that our sins have no power to keep us bound.

How is this done?

By the grace of faith laying hold immediately on Christ Jesus, which makes the soul (as it were) in a sudden fit leap out of itself, in this oppressing danger, and fly unto the place of refuge, making haste to

array itself with the righteousness of Christ Jesus. For we must understand, there is no more required of us, in this act, but the laying hold of Christ, with a bare and empty hand, so to take out the acquittance, where the debt is fully paid. God would not have this clogged with any thing of ours. It is a free gift, as freely given as ever any thing in this world can be. The argument therefore to plead for justification is this; as though the party should say: Lord, thou hast freely offered and given Christ unto me, and with him all things in him and with him; and I have taken thee at thy word, and received him, which I know to be true: because I have set myself to yield obedience unto him in all things. If I have received Christ, then I have life.

Many are scrupulous and say: May I lay hold of Christ, being so miserable and sinful? Never think of sanctification, if thou do not think of this first, how the guilt of sin is taken away by Christ, as well as the condemning power of it, the binding power of it also: and thou must know this, and believe it. There is a law of faith. Faith is not a thing arbitrary at our pleasure. You may say as well, may I pray? may I do any good work? I tell thee thou must, and thou sinnest else. So it is, in the receiving of Christ: God hath commanded thee, to come and believe, to receive Christ. It is the law of faith: for faith doth thus present itself before God: Lord, thou hast commanded me to receive Christ, and to do it with a bare, and empty hand, looking for all things in him: now make me feel the fruit of it, since at thy commandment it is done. As Rom. chap. 4. ver. 16. It must be so (saith the apostle) that the promise may be sure. First he shows: Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace. Otherwise it might seem to us to be by purchase or exchange. Thou must believe: therefore it is a law of faith: thou hast a warrant; abridge not his liberty. It stands thee on thy life and salvation to believe. See for this, John, chap. 1 ver. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he

power to become the sons of God, even to them, that believe on his name."

The second thing (saith the apostle) is, that the promise might be sure. If any thing else, on our part, were mingled with justification, save the bare receiving of Christ with an empty hand, the promises would never be sure. There could nothing come from us so perfect, but the Devil would pick a hole in it. Therefore hold this, thy sins are done away by him, in whom the Devil could find nothing: and he received, apprehended, and believed in, is thy life; for then thou art become a member of his, and canst not perish. The ignorance of many on this point is the cause why the Devil keeps men so long in sorrow, because they clog the matter of faith in justification with their own inventions, to be worthy, to be fitted first with such and such measures of humiliation: when indeed our greatest worthiness is, to see ourselves altogether unworthy, and so come. Faith comes to God with an empty hand, and leaves all: and therefore when we come to Christ, faith are the feet we go with, and the mouth we speak with, the weapons we fight with. Then a man comes to the throne of grace with confidence and great boldness, and lays hold on life, assured to receive: as a man cometh with confidence to take in his bond, when his surety hath paid the debt. If a man bring not Christ with him, there is no name or promise else to take hold of, whereby he may be saved. "ln him (saith the apostle) all the promises are yea and amen." "Ifz any man hath the Son, he shall have life." All good things, all high and low things, must be let fall in this case. If it were humiliation itself, we have not Christ for this: I must receive freely with an empty hand, that all may be of grace.

Thus the truth makes us free in justification. By freeing us from the condemning power and guilt of sin: which being done, and sueing God on his bond, then we come to have interest in all the promises.

Gain we nothing else by being thus freed by the truth? Yes:

Secondly—In sanctification,

The truth doth make us free.

It is written: "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities:" that is sanctify us; which is such a high privilege, that for the excellency thereof, it is by the apostle called glorification: "Andb whom he justified, them he also glorified." Sanctification is nothing else but imperfect glory.

Here one may object. If it be thus, what a miserable creature am I not to be freed all this while: I am fettered and chained with my corruptions, which lie heavy upon me, and assail me often. I find not this freedom. Sure I am in a miserable estate.

But for this I say, beloved, mistake not the matter. See what our freedom here is. Our liberty in this life is like that of the children of Israel in the wilderness, marching towards Canaan; like soldiers giving and receiving wounds. We were at first in Satan's dungeon, fast bound in chains under lock and key, full of bolts and fetters. Now here is our liberty; Christ he comes, breaks up the prison doors, knocks off our bolts and fetters, brings us out of prison, and then puts weapons into our hands, to fight for ourselves. We must not expect our freedom here in the Church militant, to be like that of the triumphant above. We are the Lord's soldiers; we must fight, and quit us like men, and scorn to yield ourselves prisoners unto sin and Satan. Here is our freedom—to cast the gauntlet unto sin, resolving perpetual war with Amalek, never to yield. Yea, and though we be weak, yet to be of good courage, crying unto God to help, who is the God of peace, and hath promised shortly to tread down Satan under

our feet, and that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and tread down all at last; though we find not this quite done now, yet it shall be hereafter.

But then what kind of liberty have we?

It stands not so much in the measure as in the truth of grace: to see if a man in his heart hate all sin truly, and love God and goodness, with a resolution to have no covenant or league with sin, and to strive for every grace. If thou canst not bring thyself to yield to wickedness, but art always on thy guard, thou art free, when thou dost resolve never to yield, though thoube taken with blood about thy heels; yet, if thou struggle and fight, resolving not to stand still, but to escape for thy life, and though sin come again and again, yet that thou wilt shake it off, as soon as may be; thou art a freeman, when thou art still on thy guard. As we see the States are free, because they are still standing on their guard.

Some say; Oh, I have wounds, such as a freeman cannot have: and some think they have not this liberty, because they have so little grace, nothing like (as they say) unto others of God's children.

But I say unto thee, how small soever thy spark be, see it be true in all graces, in truth, and then thou art free. What if thy God will have his honour and glory seen so much the more? (like the widow's oil) to make a little go far, and carry thee along with a little grace? To this purpose, see what the Spirit of God saith unto the church of Philadelphia: "I know thy works: Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name:" he makes it as little as may be, and yet he saith, such kept his word. It is God, that makes a little go far. Alas! (may some say) had I had so much grace and strength as such and such a one, I had not thus fallen. Thou

mistakest thyself. It is not by the strength of our grace we stand, but by the blessing on a little and on much. I hinder thee not to labour for a great measure, and to use all means for it. But withal, remember this, a little strength in God's service (if thou be not a dastard) will go far, and make thee go on unto the end. It is but courage, resolution, and endeavour, which we want, to set that little a work. If one will go on with a little, it shall increase, and the truth will make him free.

Now consider in the next place, why doth God enable us, and free us? Not to return to the Devil's service: but to serve God in holiness and righteousness. But here is all the matter, may some say, how shall this be done?

The helps leading us unto freedom of sanctification, are divers. I will only touch them, because of the time.

FIRST HELP

I. The first is, "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." God hath sworn to sanctify as well as justify us. Many believe their justification, but not which is right of sanctification. They can come to ask remission of sins, because Christ hath paid the debt, and they trust and believe in the all-sufficiency of his merits. But they are colder in begging sanctification. But, beloved, God hath as surely promised to sanctify us, as to justify. It is the nature of faith, and faith will lay hold on all promises tending to both. What then shall we do? God hath sworn that he will subdue our iniquities, and sanctify us: and God will have us to believe this. If one then were troubled with a great sin, that he could not master, the way is not by our own strength and industry to

think to overcome it. But this were the way to break the neck of it, if one should come unto the Lord, and say: Lord, thou hast sworn, when thou dost forgive the sin, and justify the sinner, to heal the wretchedness of nature, and sanctify it also, to yield obedience to thy commandments: good Lord, thou hast sworn, those who are justified, shall serve thee for ever, in holiness and righteousness: Therefore, since without thee we can do nothing of ourselves, not so much as to think a good thought, or speak a good word, and that thou workest all our works for us, and hast promised to subdue our iniquities: good Lord, therefore make thy promise good, for thy Christ's sake, and subdue this sin, which so vexes me every day. If a man would thus come unto God, and claim and lay fast hold of the promises, he might have sanctification as well as justification, if a man would plead for it, as for his life.

SECOND HELP

II. Further, for this a man must look upon Christ, in a threefold manner: upon his,

1. Life,

2. Death, and,

3. Resurrection;

and apply them home unto himself upon all occasions.

I. First consider (as the apostle speaks), him that endured such contradiction of sinners. Consider him in his sufferings, and then consider him as a pattern of our imitation. This the apostle points us to do, who, when he hath exhorted us to run on with patience, unto the race that is set before us, he tells us how this should be done:

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." In all troubles, sorrows, and afflictions, look unto him. Here is one means. Perhaps they call thee hypocrite, rail on thee, as a profane person, because thou runnest not with them unto the same excess of riot. How shouldest thou free thyself here? Look on him: they did call Christ a Devil, and a Samaritan: look on him: he puts no more for thee to taste of, than he did himself deeply drink of: and now thy comfort is, that he hath taken the strength of the temptations and blows upon himself, the glancing blow only comes on thee. And therefore, as Abimelech said unto his men, "Whatg ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done." What did they do? In imitation of him, every one cut down his bough, and put them to the tower of Shechem; and so firing them out, chased away all the enemies: so do thou: look what Christ hath done, and what his carriage was in all the crosses of this life, and thus fire out thy spiritual enemies: so shalt thou attain this freedom.

2. Another thing in his life is, we must consider him as a pattern. If we find him rightly, we shall in him find a full overflowing fountain of virtues. Now this do, if thou findest in thyself this and that passion and vile affection strong in thee, meditate, and find thou out the contrary virtue in Christ to thy passion. As imagine it be anger, cast thy eye upon those treasures of goodness in him; look on his patience and meekness, who was dumb, and "led like a sheep to the slaughter, yet opened not his mouth:" look on him, who endured such contradiction of sinners, and then pray:

Lord, thou hast given unto me Christ Jesus, with all those treasures of goodness in him. I find in him a fulness of this so excellent a virtue, the contrary whereof reigns so in me. Good Lord, therefore let

me be partaker of this rare grace so abundant in him. Thus if we would plead and beg heartily, we should have it. So in the Lord's Supper, if I find deadness and dulness to oppress me, Christ is the life quickening all things; there I must beg more spiritual life, and a sense of a sweeter and nearer union and communion with him. And thus in other things we must do the like.

Secondly. Look on Christ in his death. There is no better means to bring one to detestation of sin, than to look upon him in his greatest agony. If thou canst not master a sin, arraign it before the passion of Christ, and there consider of him in a bloody sweat, with clods of blood about him, trickling down to the ground, with hands, feet, and side pierced, the ground imbrued with blood, and he crying out on the cross, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Imagine also, that thou seest for this, all the world hung with black hangings, in mourning weeds, and darkness; bring thy sin unto this sight, and it will go near to move and terrify thee. This is an excellent means. The prophet in effect foretelleth thus much; "And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first born." This sight must make us mourn, and never rest till we crucify it. When thou hast brought thy sin hither, then say unto it: art thou that, that hast caused all this to fall on my blessed Saviour? hast thou caused all this wo, all these deaths, which now we are subject unto? Certainly thou shalt die the death. Now, as this will stir up hatred in us against the sin, so have I a promise that his death shall help me to subdue and mortify my corruptions, by virtue of his death. "Knowingk this" (saith the apostle) "that our old man is crucified with him: that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin."

So thirdly, look at him in his resurrection, that we may rise with him to newness of life. The apostle joins both together. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Whatsoever was in him, it was for me. There is no act of Christ, he did, or suffered, nor no virtue in him, but, being in him, thou hast a part of all. Is he dead? He died that thou mightest die unto sin. Is he buried? It is, that thy sins might be buried with him in his grave. Or is he risen again? It is, that thou mightest rise with him now unto newness of life, and at last unto eternal glory for ever. Thus a man must go along with him, in his life, his death, and unto his resurrection, rising with him, as the apostle speaks, "Ifm ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

THIRD HELP

Then all this seen, thirdly, I would have a man spend a meditation, how foul a thing sin is, as Psal. 36. ver. 1. See there what the degrees of sin are.

1. That there is no fear of God before a sinful man's eyes.

2. Then that he flattereth himself in his own eyes, till his iniquity be found worthy to be hated.

3. So next, he shows: the words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he hath left off to be wise and to do good; he deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.

A man will say, this and that sin is evil. But if a man would abhor sin indeed, this is the way to get out of it, to aggravate all the circumstances of sin to the full. Even as at the King's Bench, or some other court of justice, the King's attorney aggravates to the utmost all the faults of the offender, for the King. So shouldest thou be in this case, for the King of heaven against thy self. And as he doth so to search all the records, that may make against thyself, justifying thy God so, as being thus humbled in his sight he may raise thee up again in due time.

I would have this to be the recreation of a Christian, to search out and aggravate his corruptions to humble him. There is no recreation like this, if we would use it; there is no gallant would delight so much in hunting, as we would in this. We are almost undone, for want of meditation and serious consideration of these things. Try thou out then all the secret corners of thy heart, even that secret sin thou affectest, and which would hide itself: that sin which thou either mincest or hidest in prayer: bring that forth in his colours, repent, lay load, and make this as odious as may be. This is a special means to bring a man unto this liberty of sanctification, and to be assured that the son hath made him free.

FOURTH HELP

Is, not immediately to strike against the branches, but against the root, and to fire sin out of his den. Look to the degrees. When a man is overtaken to commit the same sin again, it is because he looked upon the sin, but not upon the cause. Thus a man may pray long and never the better. As to instance in one for all. Imagine a man be troubled with covetousness, and this man sees it, and prays against it, but prevails not in his suit, yea rather becomes more covetous and careful. Why hath he no help in prayer? He looks upon the sin, but

not upon the cause. He hath a great charge and many children, and he fears what may come; this makes him care, cark, scrape, and distrust God. What then is the root of his sin? Infidelity. How should we cure such a man? Why thus: strike at the root, by applying and propounding the promises, and strengthening a man in them: show such a man hath not God promised, and entered into covenant to be our God, and the God of our seed? And thus helping a covetous man against infidelity, the sin falls down of itself. So again in passion, a man excuseth it and saith, God forgive me, it is my hasty nature. But look to the root, and you shall find it to be pride: as Solomon speaks, "Only by pride cometh contention." What is the cure? Labour to show such a person the excellency and glory of humility, to beat down his pride. Tell him that a great many far better than he are much worse used, and that he deserves a great deal of harder measure than he hath: in word, bring him to be humble. Look upon the cause, and not upon the sin only; and in sum, do as physicians, who, finding proud blood, open a vein, and turn the stream another way.

FIFTH HELP

The last help is, to look into thy heart first of all. It is a quagmire, and a sink of sin. It is a pond, that will still gather moss and dirt. There will be a sink of filth in us still, so long as we live. What shall we do then? Make a passage: pump out every day, cleanse and mortify thy sinful affections and lusts: let sin have no quiet possession: purge it away by little and little: now a leg and then an arm, and a hand must be cut off. This is the way. Now this is not enough for a man to purge out the evil, to weed out the weeds: but he must also labour to plant it with good things: let no place of thy heart be untilled. Get faith, hope, love, humility, patience, temperance, sobriety, and put these in thy heart: fulness of these will hold out the other. Saith the apostle,

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Yea, and further be sure to put Christ, yea to plant the fulness of him in thy heart. And, for upshot of all, when by praying, striving, and all holy desires, thou hast gotten these graces in thy heart, trust not to faith, or any other grace, but let thy relying and confidence be in Christ alone. You see what the prophet David's resolution is, "I will not trust in my sword, nor in my bow. But my trust is in the Lord my God: he is my shield, buckler, and defence and strong tower." Nay, we must not trust, not in our spiritual weapons, we have: for all graces are creatures, and we must not rely, but on the Creator, from whence those graces come. If a man do these things, then he shall be free. So as in the evil day, when calamity comes upon others, he shall laugh at destruction, when their fears are great and many. God will make thee stand: but how? Perhaps he will never give thee that measure thou lookest for of this freedom in sanctification. But he will give thee so much as shall make thee stand fast, never to be removed. So much as neither all Satan's temptations, nor thy own frailties shall ever hinder thy everlasting salvation. This is our freedom. Now let us pray, O Lord our God, &c.

SERMON XXV:

He That Trusts the Lord - Psalm 32:10

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him.

THIS Psalm, as you have often heard, is a psalm of instruction, wherein the prophet David, after he had showed wherein true blessedness did consist, even in the free forgiveness of sins, by not imputing them, which he afterwards affirmeth by his own experience in the three following verses, where he first showeth the miserable and woful estate of a man who hath not attained to the forgiveness of his sins, by his own woful estate, who being silent, and not confessing his sins, he found his bones consumed, no inward rest, yea, though he roared all the day, yet the hand of God (he confesseth) was heavy upon him, both day and night, so that his moisture was turned into the drought of summer: every thing in him was towards a confusion. Thereafter he showeth, that when he had found the cause of his misery, his hardness of heart; then he resolveth to acknowledge and confess, yea that he confessed them, after which his repentance, he showeth God's infinite mercy, that presently his iniquities were forgiven, and he received into mercy. Which done, he proceedeth by his own experience, to invite all the faithful to a due consideration of these mercies, with assurance upon the like humiliation to have the like forgivenessb. From whence he showeth (by his own experience) the great felicity of the faithful after forgiveness of sins, that then the Lord is unto them, a most secret and most sure place of refuge, whereunto in all extremities they have recourse, not only being freed from all trouble; but also compassed about with a joyful deliverance. Then, knowing our frailty to go astray from this way of life, he showeth by his example, the duty of a good teacher, not only to give them a general warning of these things, but also to guide them with his eye, even to pierce into their private actions, to reform them also. But after this application (because of a brutish humour in every one by nature, which hindereth the practice of good things), he proceedethe to the reprehension and exhortation itself, by two arguments; first showing a man to be a beast, who withstandeth correction, and instruction:

secondly, he telleth such, that if, notwithstanding all these excellent instructions, by his own experience, leading unto true happiness, they would still continue like brute beasts: he now summeth up that which before he had threatened in the latter end of the ninth verse, that "Many sorrows shall be unto the wicked." The effect of which threatening, and reprehension, is briefly summed up by the wise man, "Untog the horse belongeth a whip, unto the ass a bridle; and a rod unto the fool's back." Whosoever will not be tamed by wholesome instructions, the Lord will put a snaffle, a bit, and a bridle in their mouths and turn them by force; they shall have many sorrows.

Let all of us then learn for use hereof to labour to see this judgment betimes, which hangeth over our heads, and not to be thus blockish, like horses, and mules, who must be bound with bit and bridle. A wonderful thing it is that we who are reasonable creatures, should be thus beastly, but we see here, until we be instructed in the way of true happiness, we are worse than beasts, when if being taught, we refuse instruction, then shall we be used like beasts, bound with bit and bridle, his hook put into our nostrils, we shall have many sorrows. The wicked live all safe and think of nothing; they dream not of these sorrows; they of all others ought to trouble and fear; yet they of all others live most carelessly. The godly again, none ought so to rejoice, as they, being freed from these sorrows, and yet they most of all mourn, but if the wicked knew these many sorrows, they would not for all the world rejoice as they do. The children of God, for all this, although they mourn continually, yet have they not so much cause to sorrow as they think; for although (I confess), they wander, and walk through a valley of tears, finding no rest, environed with afflictions and crosses of all sorts, yet ought they to rejoice: for as the apostle to the Corinthians speaketh, when they are judged they are chastened of the Lord, because they should not be condemned with

the world, because they should in the world to come be freed from these many sorrows.

Now we must understand that all sorts of sinners come not within the compass of these many sorrows, but wilful sinners, who refuse instruction, and will none of these wholesome instructions, but despise them all; to these many sorrows shall come, first because the God of consolation is their enemy; and he, being our enemy, oh! then whither shall we flee from his presence? It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of a consuming fire. Again, because their conscience is their enemy, they shall have many sorrows, for they are lulled asleep, and fear nothing, until the judgment cometh suddenly; and when the conscience thus sleepeth in security, then is it a most cruel, yea, a great deal worse than a terrible conscience, for a terrible conscience, being awaked, although it be a most grievous tormentor, yet knowing the danger, there is some hope, that at the last, after so great a storm, a calm may ensue; but the seared conscience, it sleepeth, until it be tumbled headlong into hell. So that I say the wicked they have terrors, they have many sorrows attending them. And now lastly to increase these sorrows, death cometh bringing innumerable, unspeakable sorrows, yea, bringing unto eternal destruction itself for evermore. Aye, but what of all this, is death the greatest sorrow the wicked shall have? oh no! it shall be but the beginning of these many sorrows. They shall with the same be cast into fire and brimstone, which shall be unto them a continual death, wherein they shall be tormented (saith the apostle to the Thessalonians) in flaming fire, striving continually like one in cruel pangs of torments, yet finding no issue, they shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. So saith our Saviour Christ, to the goats on his left hand, at the day of judgment, "Departk from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels:" there shall be weeping, wailing, and

gnashing of teeth. There shall the wicked be sealed with the eternal stamp of God's wrath, which shall be upon them for ever, as a curse of his indignation. Yea there shall Balaam, that false prophet, who both cursed and blessed in his life, be, and all such wicked wilful sinners. If we be mules in this life, with seared consciences, all our peace shall at the length prove vain, and deceitful; it shall but lead us to this eternal fire, to be accursed for ever. But now let us further examine,

Wherein this curse standeth.

I. In want of all comforts to help.

First, if the loss of all earthly things in this life do so grieve us, if the want of them do so vex us here, what a curse will it be in the life to come, to be quite deprived of all kinds of comforts, when they shall not have so much as a cup of cold water to cool them withal. Oh! saith the rich man to Abraham, "have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame." But for all this content thyself, lazy rich man; enjoy now many sorrows for thy former pleasures, thy tongue shall not be cooled with one drop of cold water, and no more shall any the like sinners have, who as it is in the last of Daniel, because they in this life were mules, and did wickedly, having no understanding, therefore shall they live in shame and perpetual contempt, they shall have many sorrows.

Let, therefore, the gallants of these days think now of these things, who mock and spurn at the ministers of the word and the professors thereof, who refuse to be instructed, casting his words behind them, running on in their lewd courses, for if they thus continue, they shall have a bit and a bridle to curb them: they shall at the last have many sorrows.

Secondly, the aggravation of this curse shall be much the greater when the wicked shall consider how that then they are deprived from all hope of recovery to escape those torments. I say it shall increase their sorrow, when they shall remember, what mules they were in this life, how often the message of peace was brought unto them, yet would they not be reconciled. The bitter gnawing remembrance of these things shall also continually torture and rack them with continual sorrow.

Thirdly, they shall be for ever frustrate from the presence of God, they shall never more see his face. If to be banished from the presence of a prince it causeth so great sorrow, and many times death, what sorrows and how many deaths shall it be then, to be banished from the presence of the King and Prince of Glory? There shall be (saith our Saviour Christ) weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of Heaven, and yourselves shut out of doors. The felicity of the faithful shall also help to increase this curse, they being no partakers hereof; as it is in the last of the Revelations, "For without shall be dogs, enchanters, whoremongers, murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth or maketh lies." What a grief shall this be, to be excluded from the presence of God, and the society of his saints. And if Absalomn, I pray you, did take it so grievously to be excluded from the presence of a king, that he choosed rather to die than not to see his face; "Oh!" saith he to Joab, "let me see the king's face, and if there be any trespass in me, let him kill me." If to be banished, Absalom was so loth from the king's face, that he had rather die than so remain, how many hundred thousand deaths shall the wicked endure, being banished from the presence and face of God for ever? What increase of all kinds of torments shall it be? And therefore the wicked, they shall not see the presence of God, but because, as David confesseth, "in his presence is the fulness

of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore," therefore they shall be removed from beholding of this joy; not (as the apostle to the Hebrews speakethp) unto the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem, to the company of innumerable angels, to the congregations which are first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, unto the spirits of just and perfect men, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament: but unto the spirits of unjust and cruel men, banished from God in eternal, unspeakable torments, in the company of innumerable devils. Oh! what sorrow shall it be to want this presence of God. If the children of Israel, after they had committed idolatry with the golden calf, (for which the Lord refusing to go along with them by his presence, although he had promised to send an angel) did put off all their best clothes, and did nothing but mourn, Moses himself saying unto God, "Ifr thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence;" if this little absence of the presence of God was so grievous unto them, although they might have had a mighty angel to conduct them, how many sorrows shall it be unto the wicked; what grievous mournings to be banished for ever from this presence, having the torturing evil angels continually to torment them.

Fourthly, they shall be excluded and banished to an eternal prison, where no ransom (if they were able to pay any) can redeem them; yea unto a eruel dark prison, where shall be no freedom. The apostle Peter saith that Christ by his Spirit shined, and went and preached liberty unto the spirits that were in prison, in the days of Noah. But no such thing shall ever befall these woful prisoners, but to be shut up for ever into a dungeon of darkness; where they shall have like for like. Oh wretched creatures, shall they say, we loved darkness more than light, we loved blindness, we hated the light, the God of the world blinded our eyes, when we were upon earth; and therefore now do we justly dwell in torments, in darkness, in prison, because we

would not be freed when we might. Oh beloved, that we had hearts to think upon these things betimes, before the evil day come. In this life, here, we fly a place haunted or frequented with spirits, or devils, we will not be hired for a world to lie a night therein, and yet, for the most part, our lives show it, we are posting to dwell with devils for ever: yea those who find not Christ in this life, shall dwell with legions of devils for ever. When David (as it is in the second of Samuel) had sinned in numbering the people, the choice of three plagues being offered unto him, by no means he would not fall into the hands of his enemies, but into the hands of God. "Oh!" saith he unto the prophet Gad, "lett us now fall into the hands of God (for his mercies are great) and not into the hands of man." How much more terrible will it be for the wicked to be delivered up unto their cruel enemy the Devil for ever, who will show them no mercy. The complaint of the woman of Canaan to our blessed Saviour was most grievous. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." If one devil in this life, where his power is restrained, be so cruel, what and how many sorrows, what cruel enemies, will an infinite number of devils prove unto the wicked, when they shall be delivered unto the full power of the Devil without exception. When the Lord gave Satan power over Job, he said, Aye but spare his life. But no such exception shall the wicked have, but the Devil shall have full power to torment soul and body for ever, where shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, they shall have many sorrows. And they shall not only be deprived of all outward comforts, but also they shall be tormented.

II. In the highest degree of torments in bodily pains.

1. By his power.

As, Luke 16th we read that the rich man crieth unto Abraham, that he was tormented in that flame, even in most cruel torments; for what, I pray you, is hell, but God's slaughter-house, where his mighty power doth revenge itself upon the wicked in choice of torments, such (as the apostle to the Thessalonians speaketh) shall be punished with everlasting damnation from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? but the revenging anger of his might shall oppress them with many furies without end, his mighty power shall show itself in tormenting them. Yea he shall come upon them with such exceeding power, like one armed with a mighty bow of brass or a target of steel. So God in the power of his might will come upon the wicked in fury and give a strong blow at them, which shall seem to shiver in pieces. For this (as the apostle to the Romans speaketh) hath the Lord prepared for the wicked (as he speaketh of Pharaoh), to show his power in their destruction; and a little after, what and if (saith he) God would to show his wrath, and to make his power known, suffer with long patience, the vessels of wrath appointed to damnation, that he might declare the riches of his glory upon the vessels of mercy: and of the strength of his mighty power, which shall confound the wicked, the prophet David speaketh with acclamation. "Whoy knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear so is thy wrath." It is unspeakable, no tongue can express it. This Job seemeth to confirm, where fearing the power of God, when he wisheth to reason with him, he saith, "Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me." This is a mighty power then, which shall overthrow and torment the wicked. Oh! who knoweth his might in tormenting them? But besides all this,

2. His justice,

Shall be also set on work for their further torment, as the Lord by Moses speaketh that the fury of his justice is being joined to his

power. "If (saith he) I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will execute vengeance on mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me, I will make mine arrows drunken with blood, and my sword shall eat flesh, for the blood of the slain and the captives, when I begin to take vengeance on the enemy." And "Forb fire is kindled in my wrath, and shall burn unto the bottom of hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains: I will spend plagues upon them, I will bestow mine arrows upon them, they shall be burned with hunger, and consumed with heat and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the venom of serpents creeping in the dust, the sword shall kill them without, and in their chambers fear. Oh, if his justice and power be so great in punishments in this life, what will it be in the life to come, when a violent looking for of fire shall devour the adversaries (as the apostle to the Hebrews speaketh). Consider, I pray you, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, when his justice shall set his wrath on fire, for their destruction stirring up the same.

For conclusion then of this point let us all diligently weigh betimes, what this mighty power can do, that the same be never tried upon us. It is well expressed, "The Lord is slow to anger, but great in power, and will not surely clear the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet; he rebuketh the sea and drieth it, and he drieth up all the rivers. The mountains tremble for him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his sight, yea the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his wrath? or who can abide in the fierceness of his wrath? His wrath is poured out like a fire, and the rocks are broken by him." The prophet here meeteth an objection concerning God's great mercy, telling them that although the Lord be slow, yet is he true in anger. He will come at the last and pay soundly for all

together, where he also compareth these great judgments unto fire, because it is the cruellest torment in this life, whose fury universally seizeth upon all the parts of the body, even unto the joints, bones, and marrow, bringing and offering violence unto the whole body at one time, within and without. If a man in this life were bound for every oath he sweareth, to put his finger into the fire, he would quickly leave swearing, and think this a great torment. So every wretched sinner, for all sins that he committeth without repentance, although in this life they escape this burning, yet it abideth for them, they shall have it all scored up unto their last torments. For if Nebuchadnezzar to show his wrath (being an earthly king) gave commandment to heat the oven seven times hotter than usual, what will the King of kings do? who hath all power in the tormenting of his enemies? he will not only heat the fiery furnace of hell seven times, but seventy times seven times, to torment them in the cruelty of his wrath for ever. They shall have many sorrows.

Let us therefore now, who hear these things, pretend no ignorance, but pray unto God to have our eyes opened betimes, that by a holy life we may lay hold on Christ Jesus, escaping these torments. It is not possible to express them. If we should see a man in this life tormented with a headach, toothach, stone, stranguary, cholic, gout, burning fever, convulsions, together with a number of other diseases upon one man all together, what a wretched miserable creature would he seem to be? And this misery by the thousand part is not yet comparable to the woful estate of the damned, whom the Lord shall tread down in the wine-press of his wrath, coming and returning upon them like a thunderbolt, as it were to strike and dash them in pieces immediately, making them whole again, that his fury may return upon them with redoubled force more than ever. But yet here is not all. As the wicked shall be deprived of all outward comforts and be tormented in body,

3. They shall be also tormented in soul.

They shall have many sorrows. But oh! how shall I show forth the sorrows of a wounded forsaken soul? For saith the wise man, a wounded spirit who is able to endure? Job of all others may be a fit pattern, who complaineth that the arrows of the Almighty are in him, that the venom thereof drinketh up his spirit. Thatf the terrors of God fight against him, destroyed with a tempest, his soul cut off alive, God's plagues renewed against him, yea with changes and armies of sorrows taking his flesh in his teeth and his soul in his handh, poureth his gall upon the ground running on him like a giant, his face withered with weepingk, the thoughts of his heart broken, the day being his night, and the night his day; by violence crying out, yet not being heard, destroyed on every side, God's wrath being kindled against him, counted as God's enemy, his armies coming together upon him, his soul pursued as the wind, being poured out upon himselfm, his bones being pierced in the nights, his sinews taking no rest, God cruelly turned against him with the strength of his hand being caused to ride upon the wind, his bowels boiling without rest, mourning without any sun, a brother unto dragons, a companion to ostriches, his bones burned, and what not? This is a taste of a forsaken soul, when confusion of understanding, blindness of light, corruption and obstinacy of will, and terror of conscience shall altogether oppress the ungodly. And this fearful estate of a forsaken soul, is yet further enlarged by Moses, where he threateneth the people, that if they be rebellious, then amongst these nations their neighbours, they should have no rest, "Neither (saith he) shall the soul of thy foot have any rest, for the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and looking to return till thine eyes fall out, and a sorrowful mind, and thy life shall hang before thee, and thou shalt fear both night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were night! and at the

evening, thou shalt say, would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart, and the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." This, beloved, is a miserable estate, but yet all these things are nothing to these sorrows of hell, "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," from a chilling most miserable cold, to a terrible not-consuming heat, and to no end torments, with variety of endless pains, which no heart can sufficiently think of.

Lastly, there shall be no relaxation of these torments, but eternal perpetuity. And who would be so mad, as for one day's play to have eternity of torments.

All this life is but as a day to eternity; nay not so much in God's sight. But what should I speak of this eternity? I dare not enter into the same. The very speaking and thoughts thereof do drown and swallow up my meditations in admiration. The best is, that as it is in the Gospel, we all apply ourselves to believe and live in the Son of God; that freed by him, we may possess eternal life, which is the joy and crown of our labours, rather than to be cast into hell-fire for ever, where (as it is in the 9th of the Revelation) men shall seek deathp, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them, in place of their desired ease, the Lord's cannons, darts, and preparations of war, all being bent against them, to give them ten thousand deaths in one. All these things and a great many worse, passing our imagination to think of, shall come upon us, if we continue mules and rebellious, hard-hearted creatures. Ease, saith the wise man, killeth the foolish, and the prosperity of fools is deceitful. We must not think to go sleeping to heaven, but we must toil and work hard for the same. Of all others, then, righteous men, who wage battle with the enemies of their salvation, ought to rejoice because they see these things, and labour by all means to eschew them betimes. But what should I speak of the great ones, and rich

men of this world? The apostle James pronounceth their doom. "Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupt, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have lived on the earth in wantonness and pleasure, ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; ye have condemned and killed the just, and he hath not resisted you." But yet ye vain worldlings, your persuasions are false, and shall deceive you. But what shall we do in the mean time? A day cometh shall pay for all. Be patient, therefore, (saith he,) brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Then, shall be a time of full payment: they shall have many sorrows.

But now let us come to the uses. First, these terrors of the Lord, these many sorrows of the wicked which they shall endure, being banished from the presence of God for ever serveth to teach us as a most effectual means to drive us from ourselves, and to fly, and stick fast unto Christ. "For (as the prophet Amos speaketh) since the Lion hath roared, who will not now be afraid," who would not now but tremble to hear of these things? Should not all the beasts of the field tremble? So now when the Lord hath laid these sorrows to our hearts for our meditation, let us consider truly whether we be not worse than reprobates if we think lightly of them, and so suffer them to perish from remembrance. It is written of Felix the governor, who though he were a profane reprobate, yet when he heards Paul dispute of righteousness, of temperance, and of the judgment to come, the text saith he trembled. Shall profane Felix tremble and shall not we also, to hear of these many sorrows, be now driven to prayer, to a more earnest begging of mercy at God's hands? to a more settled assurance of salvation than ever?

It is written of wicked Haman, the enemy of God's people, that when he saw the danger, the king's wrath being incensate against him, that he fell presently a begging for mercy. And shall wicked Haman, fearing the wrath of a mortal man, when he saw the danger seek to avoid the same? I say and shall not we, who are Christians, be much more afraid and seek how to avoid the terrible displeasure of the King of kings. Let us then in the name of * * * since we see the danger, fall a praying more earnestly than ever, and never give God rest until by a comfortable answer from the throne of grace, we receive assurance in our souls, that we by Christ Jesus are freed from these many sorrows. And seeing in the sorrows of the children of God in this life, the Lord's intention is to drive us from ourselves, to let us see what miserable wretches we are by nature, to drive us to lay sure hold on Christ and his blood, the means of our salvation: let us therefore be humbled in time. Of all means, this humiliation is best, to pray often and earnestly. But yet the meditation of the passion of Christ availeth most of all to move devotion. "Whox (as the apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) in the days of his flesh did offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death." If Christ then, to save us, did offer up prayers with strong cries and tears, oh! how senseless, and ungrateful to God, and ourselves are we, if we do not work out our salvation (which he now hath already purchased) with fear and trembling, with strong cries, with prayers and tears, as he did?

Yet the special use of this doctrine is first more particular unto God's children, who are daily affrighted with the many combats, and triumphing of the flesh over the spirit, wherein they fear to be left comfortless. But for all this I say unto such, fear not for these combats, be they never so strong and many, nor for these triumphings of the flesh over the spirit, seem they never so terrible. It is a blessed thing to be thus tossed; yea it is just with God to let us

many times see hell, as it were, wide open, bringing us to the brink thereof. And in this all of us are to be blamed, that when the Lord doth chasten us somewhat sharply, and letteth us to see hell open, we forget his former mercies, we fall into distrust, we think he has turned our enemy, we think that the sun will never shine again, because, as we think, it remaineth too long eclipsed, because we are ignorant of the necessity and causes of these afflictions. As the skilful rider, having a stubborn and an unruly horse to master, first trieth fair means, riding him gently, and if it will not help, then breaketh he him in the deepest furrow grounds; which if it master him not, then bringeth he him to the top of some huge steep rock, from the edge whereof causing him to look down, and offering to thrust him over, thus affrighting him, they tame his courage, and bring him in subjection. So the Lord at the first causeth us to walk gently in the means which tameth gentle children, which if they prevail not, then he handleth us more roughly, and bringeth us unto the furrows of great afflictions; after all which, if the flesh will yet be unruly and not tamed, what then? Then the Lord (as a sovereign remedy) setteth hell open, bringeth his children to the brink thereof, causeth them to look down, threateneth to throw them down, bringeth them to the gates thereof, showeth them these many sorrows, giving them a taste of some to sweeten their deliverance: until their corruptions be subdued, their lusts overruled, they being soundly affrighted from sin, do undertake a stricter and a more resolute course of Christianity than ever: thanking God for their deliverance from these many sorrows. Neither ought God's children to be thus dismayed in their fears, seeing Christ Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth (who is able to cast us all into hell-fire), feared and yet had deliverance; being heard in that which he feared. So God's children may many times fear, and be brought to see hell, yet having a joyful deliverance at last by these fears, attaining a securer peace than ever.

Secondly, it is exceeding comfort to God's children, and ought to be, to hear and know how that these unspeakable torments, and those grievous pains, which caused Felix to tremble, are now removed from them, that they can hear of them with comfort to their souls.

Thirdly, this doctrine availeth unto God's children also for others, that if we think of these things seriously ourselves, we also strive to imprint them into others by all means (as Jude speaketh), having compassion of some by putting of difference, and other some of fear, pulling them out of the fire. If we did see a madman running into the Thames to drown himself, would we not run to save him? Nay, would we not think it a deed of charity? So all sinners are madmen running to drown themselves, not in a river of water; but in the eternal burning lake of hell-fire for ever. Oh, let us then stay and win as many as is possible, showing them these dangers of many sorrows: and St. James (for our encouragement) telleth us what shall be the issue of reward. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Secondly, it serveth to show the opposition betwixt the godly and the wicked, wherein they differ, and how far the wicked may proceed, what they are able to attain, where they cannot come. They can never come to lay hold of this mercy, whatsoever else they do. It is then a sure argument unto thee, that thou art freed from hell, and delivered from those many sorrows, if thou canst lay hold of God's mercy, if when thou hast no sense nor feeling, yet thou canst wait for his mercy, who hath hidden his face from Jacob (as the prophet speaketh) if thou canst once settle this assurance, and hang on his mereies, then be cheerful, how miserable soever thou art in thine own eyes. For although perhaps you think this a cold comfort to rely

and trust upon his mercy, who appeareth to be thine enemy, yet I say, as thou lovest thy life, hold fast a persuasion of his infinite mercies, and rely firmly upon the same; for thus far, be thou sure, the wicked cannot go, he cannot for his life rely upon God's mercies. What although the Lord many times stay long, yet thou hast many promises that he will not forsake for ever. So saith the prophet in the Lamentations, "that his compassions fail not, that though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." And the Church in Micah, she resolvethb to bear the wrath of the Lord for awhile, assuring herself at last to be brought forth unto the light, to see his righteousness. And for conclusion, the Apostle to the Romans, after he hath made a catalogue (as it were) of all the afflictions which befalleth the children of God in this life, at last he showeth that the issue is always joyful: concluding triumphantly over all the sorrows of this life. Nevertheless "in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." To whom with the Father and his blessed Spirit, be all glory and power, &c., now and evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVI:

He That Trusts the Lord, Part 2 - Psalm 32:10

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him.

THE prophet David in this verse, you see, singeth both of mercies and judgments; of many sorrows to the wicked, and of infinite mercies to the children of God. All, therefore, must begin betimes to try their estates, whether they be such to whom these mercies, or sorrows belong, whether they be heirs of heaven or of hell; for there is no third estate. All creatures must come within the compass of one of these two estates; either to be vessels of honour, or dishonour, mercy, or wrath. All such (I have already told you) who do refuse wholesome instructions, who, though the voice of the ministry, other admonitions, and checks of conscience, do still give them warnings, yet remain obstinate and hard-hearted. Such be mules. To such the prophet threateneth those sorrows, yea many sorrows, so many and so great as the angry justice, stirring up the power of a mighty and infinite God, is able to inflict. Again, those who can be content to forsake dear pleasures for the glory to come, who will cross their affections, subdue their passions, and master their corruptions, striving against sin unto the blood, offering up their bodies a living and acceptable sacrifice unto God: to these he pronounceth mercy, an infinite store of consolation, a compassing with mercy; to these finally (in whatsoever state of seeming misery), a most safe and secure estate, free from those many sorrows, which shall come upon the wicked. These faithful souls, (he telleth them) shall be compassed with mercy, shall be in a blessed estate, when the wicked (as the apostle to the Thessalonians showeth) shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the

glory of his power. Then shall he be glorified in his saints, and be made marvellous in all them that believe, &c. And as he shall be glorified and made marvellous in his saints; so shall the greatness of his mighty power be marvellous in the destruction of his enemies. Let us, therefore, pray earnestly, and constantly, that it would please God to touch our hearts with a true sense and feeling of our miseries, that we may run unto Him to be compassed with mercy, and take sure hold of the horns of the altar (that immaculate Lamb, his Son Christ Jesus), there to find peace, and be freed from these many sorrows. Hereafter shall be no time, if we labour not hard now. Our blessed Saviour telleth us, the day being omitted, "theb night cometh, when no man can work." Again, let us cry, and seek earnestly to be armed with faith, whereby we may be enabled to fly afar off, to fly from ourselves, and beyond all these earthly things, with Moses, to see things which are invisible. The wicked they run on their wicked courses, because they are as blind as beetles, they do not look upon the joys of God's children; a moment of whose joy is worth all their pleasures. Some will not, and some are so blinded that they cannot. For indeed the best of us all, if we have not spiritual eyes, to discern afar off, that faith may (as it were) pierce within the veil, beholding things believed, if we overlook not all these earthly things, beholding in a manner the joys of God's children, the best of us all will quickly faint in our journey, for to behold the wicked, who do spurn and spit in the face of God, who blaspheme, and do nothing but anger God by all means, yet to see them prosper and lack nothing, to have the world at will, to tyrannize over the faithful, when, by the contrary, they must suffer all injuries, all reproaches; they serve God, strive to do all his will, and yet they have a world of afflictions mingled even with their best joys. If we have not spiritual eyes and thoughts to see into the joys of God's children, is it any wonder we faint and be astonished? Strong David was so overtaken with the prosperity of the wicked, that after that he had reckoned up their great prosperity by

many circumstances, at the last, as it were in admiration, he concludeth, Lo these are the wicked, yet prosper they always, and increase in riches (and not looking upon the joys which remain for God's children) it followeth, certainly, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for daily have I been punished, and chastened every morning. These troubles were grievous unto him, until he began to look upon the joys prepared for God's children, until by spiritual eyes he saw a life after this, a recompense of reward to the faithful, and sorrows to the wicked, far beyond all earthly pleasures or pains suffered here, until he went to the sanctuary, the house of God, being there armed with faith to behold things before unseen, then he beholdeth their estates to be most miserable, being attended with horrible destruction. Then he could confess, Thoud hast set them in slippery places, and casteth them down into desolation. How suddenly are they destroyed, perished and horribly consumed. And also the whole stream of the 37th Psalm tendeth to this purpose, to show the miserable estate of the wicked, and felicity of the faithful in respect of this their woful estate. David at the first sunk, because he did not consider at first, the exceeding glorious inheritance of God's children. If he sunk, surely without his helps, we must not think to stand.

Therefore must we pray, and strive by all means to have eyes given unto us, such eyes, as may overlook all these earthly things, beholding things to come, that we may have a glimmering glimpse of the infinite glory, the joys whereof may so transport us, that thereby we may despise this vain world, and all the vain pleasures thereof, in respect of that glory to come. And then shall we be so far from envying their estate, that we shall rather pity them, and pray in their miseries. So Job he asketh, "Wherefore do the wicked live?" &c. who after he had also looked upon their prosperity with this spiritual sight unto things to come, he at the last seeth that their wealth is not

in their hand; demanding how often their candle should be out (as though it should for ever be put out) their lives being divided in his wrath, being as stubble and chaff before the wind; concluding all at last with this cruel sentenceg, that they are kept unto the day of destruction, and they shall be brought forth in the day of wrath. Let us not then so much look unto their pleasures, as unto their miserable destruction, and our joys: for their joys here are nothing unto those sorrows they shall have: and our sorrows are nothing to the joys we shall possess. So saith the apostle to the Romans, that the afflictions of this present time, are not worthy of the glory which shall be revealed; and again, more fully, in the second to the Corinthiansi, that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, causeth unto us a far more excellent, and an eternal weight of glory, whilst we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen. Thus our afflictions, be they never so great, in respect of the glory to come, be they never so heavy, are but accounted light, and be they never so long in continuance, yet is it counted but a moment, nay, not so much unto eternity. It is not thus with the wicked; for besides all the sorrows, which attend them eternally in the life to come, they shall have also miseries in this earth. And it is most just (as Job speaketh) that seeing in this life they will none of the Almighty, that God in the life to come do send them many sorrows. "They" (saith he) "say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him." But whatsoever their knowledge is, it is, sure, an accursed knowledge, which refuseth to know God, and must have present payment, or no service. Yet, doth Job like of their counsel? No! their counsel and wealth is not in their hand; therefore far (saith he) be their counsel from me, and far be it also from us. God is their enemy. How crafty and politic soever their consultations seem, they must come to confusion at length, all turneth unto many

sorrows. Let us now then make an addition to what hath been said, seeing

1. To whom mercy is given.

Mercy, although it be not given unto any desert of ours, nor by any desert in us for our merits; yet it is most certain, that to whomsoever the Lord is merciful, to such he also giveth an heart to trust and rely in him, an heart with affiance to trust confidently in God: from whence against all wicked men, I ground this doctrine for our instruction, that that man who purposeth to live in sin, it is in vain for him to hope for mercy. Some man I know may here object, But what, will you restrain mercy within so narrow limits? I answer, No; no more than God doth. God's mercy is offered to the wickedest alive, freely tendered: yet when this mercy (as the effects show) is contemned and refused, we dare not bless where he curseth, we dare not, without our warrant, offer mercy to such.

Now that this is true that mercy is restrained from the wicked. In no place more than in Psalm 103 are the mercies of God extolled. "He" (saith the prophet) will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever, he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy (but because there is a generation, who live according to the lusts of the flesh, who scorn piety, mock at religion, and the professors thereof, who will none of this mercy, at the least, will use no means whereby it may be attained: therefore at last the prophet addeth this clause) towards them that fear him;" showing thus much unto the wicked, that how great soever the ocean of his mercy be, yet it shall avail nothing unto them; for it is reserved to those that fear him. If, therefore, we would be sharers in this mercy, let us be sure that we truly fear God. For we must not imagine

that God's mercies come to make us rebels. No, but if thou wilt not fear him, and walk in his ways, thou shalt have no part in this mercy, be it never so great. As also it is said that the loving kindness of the Lord endureth for ever and ever: yet he restraineth only these mercies unto such as fear him, being covenant and commandment keepers; not to every profane wretch, who dare take mercy presumptuously unto them. Therefore I affirm, deceive thyself with as false an opinion as thou wilt, yet sure it is, so long as a sinner's heart is set in rebellion, there is no mercy for him. Aye, but, may some object, In the second commandment, there is no such severity mentioned as you speak of, for in that commandment chiefly there is mention made of worshiping of images, and for this breach there is a cruel threatening, but it is to the haters of God, without any certain number, and yet mercy followeth in a larger extent, naming of thousands. But, I answer profane wretches, it is not for every one to throw themselves in amongst these thousands. There followeth a restraint (excluding all sorts of wicked men) "to them that love me and keep my commandments." Can a wicked man love God? Can he keep his commandments? He cannot. Then must he needs be excluded from this mercy, so long as he is rebellious.

Let us therefore, beloved, examine our hearts, whether or not any of us have taken hold of this mercy, without sure grounds. If thou love not God with that perfection whereby a Christian in this life may: or at least if thou endeavour not with all thy might thereunto, if thou strive not to keep his commandments, to keep all of them, so long as thou continuest thus, thou hast nothing to do with mercy; assure thyself there is no mercy for thee.

But, may some say, what, dare you thus bind up mercy? What power have you to restrain it thus? No; I do not bind up mercy, only I affirm, that to whom the Lord is merciful, to whom mercy is given, to

those he giveth also a new heart, to rely upon him, to love him, to keep his commandments, to fear him, to walk in his ways. So that if there be no change in thee by new birth, it is a sure sign, as yet mercy belongeth not unto thee. Yet some may still object, But what if I come unto Christ, and lay hold on him, I hope then there is mercy for me, if I come from myself unto Christ. I answer to this, that as many times we have a wrong estimation of the nature of the Father: so do we also err in the nature of the Son. As therefore we have seen the Father must be honoured, feared, loved, and obeyed, so must the Son also; for he is a Judge, yea, Judge of all, and his wrath must be appeased, we must likewise fear him, love him, obey him, and keep his commandments. This shall be our assurance, that the hold we take of him is true, and not counterfeit. "Kiss the Son" (saith the prophet) "lest ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Our kissing of the Son, must not be an imaginary fantastical relying upon the Son, but such a kissing which must manifest itself in an holy life, in obedience unto his commandments.

If therefore we call him Lord, we must obey his will. As another prophet (to this purpose speaketh in the person of God) "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honour? if I be a master, where is my fear?" Thus whosoever will say that they take hold of Christ, and yet keep not his commandments, if they will call him Lord, and yet not love him, nor obey his will, such make but a mock lord of him. But a day will come, in which he will bring forth these enemies of his, (as himself in the Gospel speakethp) who would not that he should reign over them, that he may slay them in his wrath. We see then "not every one, which can say Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he" (as our blessed Saviour speaketh) who doth the will of my Father, who is in Heaven," his Father and he being one. Therefore,

now to conclude this point of diversity betwixt the godly and the wicked, in showing to whom this mercy belongeth, he lastly, and no other, who will come unto Christ, to be a partaker of this mercy, must be a subject of Christ's kingdom, must be ruled by him, must be content to be one of his sheep, to receive Christ for his shepherd, to be gathered by him into his sheepfold, to feed and take part with the rest of the sheep; to be obedient, and hear his voices. And for upshot of all, they must be content, that he shall be their leader, their true and only Joshua, who shall lead them unto the land of promise. I say they must never leave off, but follow and stick close unto this their true Joshua, that he at length may conduct them to the land of rest, even to the fulness and storehouse of all mercy. Meanwhile, until we come thither, let us now briefly behold,

2. What this mercy is.

Mercy, although it be but a small word, of few syllables, yet doth it contain in it wonderful and unspeakable consolation to God's children, in that this mercy shall gird them about, it shall compass them about in a most full and plentiful measure, we shall be filled with mercy full of comfort. God's children, indeed, many times have but a small measure of this comfort; but their weak faith is the cause of this want. The cause why they find so little mercy, is because they wax dull and negligent in the means which should preserve a full measure of mercy. We are not diligent, and earnest in the begging of mercy. Therefore no wonder though we have small store of mercy, because we seek it not earnestly, with a vehement thirst after it. We are provoked, (as though he should blame our faint prayers,) "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." We open our mouths, many of us, some for one cause, and some for another; but in opening for mercy, if we have but a little, it is because we open not our mouths wide to ask for it, because we are ignorant of the value of it, not begging

earnestly for the same, as a man in danger would do for his life. If thus we beg, with wide mouths, with inflamed fervent affections for mercy, the Lord, who cannot lie, hath promised, we shall be full of it, and mercy shall compass us. The doctrine, then, from hence for our instruction is, that God hath appointed mercy for all who believe and will receive the same, yea even a full measure of mercy, not by parcels, or certain times, but even at all times. So speaketh Jeremy in his Lamentations. "It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness." There you see no end of these mercies, his compassion never failing, and his mercies ever renewed.

This then is the most blessed estate of a faithful soul,

First in reconciliation, for we are reconciled unto God, (as the apostle to the Romans speaketh,) "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." This is a great mercy then, even this reconciliation. If Christ then hath done so much for us, how ready should we be to embrace and love so merciful and so loving a God, following the counsel of our blessed Saviour. For which of you being about to meet a great man would not prepare every thing fitting to entertain and give him contentment? How much more then should we prepare to meet and make every thing in readiness to please him, who is King of kings? But here is the wonder of this mercy, that what we omitted, not being able to come unto Christ, he, preventing us with his loving kindness, hath sent Christ unto us, clothing him with our flesh, as our elder brother.

Secondly, he not only reconcileth his children unto him, but which is further, he entertaineth them in service also, which is a great mercy and favour: for if we account the service of a king to be so honourable

in this life, what exceeding honour and favour hath he, who is admitted to be a servant to the Lord of glory. Surely we are most dull and senseless, that we prize not this service more highly than we do. If we did seriously think that there is such a thing, and believe the same, we durst not, for all the world, do as we do. Yet here is more mercy. We read, that though Achish, King of Gath, did entertain David into his service; yet, when it came to the main matter, to the choice matter of trust, to be trusted in secrets and matters of war, the princes of the Philistines did expel him. But with God it is not so, for here are two parts of mercy. 1. He admitteth them as servants into his household. 2. They have his secrets, he trusteth them even with most admired love. The prophet David declareth, "thea secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." So the Lord was gracious unto Abraham. "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" Abraham, being one of the faithful, must needs be of God's counsel. This is a wonderful mercy which the faithful enjoy, that before a judgment they have still some warning thereof, although the Lord visibly (as at other times of old) do not appear unto them, yet some secret instinct doth always presage the same. And the prophet saith, "Surelyc the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." So that this also is a wonder of his mercy. Again, not only are they reconciled servants, admitted to his secrets, but they are also friends unto God. What stricter bond can there be, than that of friends in this life? This, if it be surely tied with the right links of Christian love, passeth all other sorts of love, when our soul is (as it were) poured into another; or rather two souls made one, nothing being concealed on either part, but having, as it were, one heart. And yet, so highly doth God honour his servants with so infinite mercy, that he vouchsafeth to make and call them his friends. As we read in the prayer of Jehosaphat: "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the

seed of Abraham thy friend, for ever?" And our blessed Saviour, we know, speaking of dead Lazarus, saith, "Oure friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him." This also is further amplified, where our blessed Saviour saith, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." What can be said more? or what can the heart of man desire more? I know nothing else to be wished for beyond so excellent privileges, which he vouchsafeth unto his children.

The Canaan, therefore, which the children of Israel enjoyed (although it flowed with milk and honey) yet is it nothing unto our Canaan, which we expect, wherein these infinite mercies shall be bestowed upon us. For whatsoever our troubles are in this life, Christ Jesus, our friend (who is of infinite power) he taketh us by the hand, and leadeth us through all miseries, like unto the true Joshua, unto the land of our heavenly Canaan, our eternal habitation. Only let us with assured confidence believe, and trust in him, and then it is not possible, that ever we should be disappointed of our hope. The further we read in this bottomless gulf of mercy, there is still more admirable compassions showed, which may swallow up our senses in admiration. There is yet more and more new mercies. The Lord saith unto Abraham, "Fear not Abraham, for I am thy buckler, and thy exceeding great reward." Here is a wonderful mercy which the Lord bestoweth not only upon Abraham, but also upon all his faithful seed for ever. He willeth first not to fear. And why? The reason is added. First, because he is a buckler, and keepeth off all sorts of troubles from finally overwhelming the faithful, giving still, though after a combat, a joyful victory. Again he saith, I am not only thy buckler, but thy exceeding great reward, an exceeding great reward indeed;

for here is such an infinite store of mercy that the heart of man is no way capable of. Here the Lord promiseth more than if he had promised heaven and earth and all unto him. What, I pray you, can he lack that is possessed of God? Hath not he the whole Trinity? Have we not also all things in heaven and earth at our command, having God for our reward. Do we not, as the apostle to the Ephesians speaketh, in a manner even now sit with him in the heavenly places, possessing a wonderful measure of happiness, being, living, and now moving in him. "Ohi, therefore, that the eyes of our understanding were enlightened, that we might know what the riches of the glory of his inheritance is in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward, who believe." All and a great deal more is included in this, "I am thy buckler, and thy exceeding great reward;" for from hence is the great fountain of mercy and grace set open, by which, as it is in the Revelations, we inherit all things. For then, in the comparison of the following mercies, the former seem nothing. Oftentimes to be made friends with God and reconciled; to be admitted as servants, to be of God's counsel, privy to his secrets, and be called friends. But here followeth the exceeding riches, of his great and infinite mercy. First (as St. John speaketh from hence) to be called sons. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is a wonderful comfort for God's children, that they are admitted to be the sons of God. I say it is an infinite mercy to be admitted as children, being (as it is in another place) ofl the generation of God. Although the world, then, scoff and mock at us, yet it is no matter; we are in an happier estate, being the sons of God we need not be afraid of anything, so long as Christ Jesus, our elder brother (to whom all power in heaven and in earth is given) being the Son of God, is not ashamed to call us brethren. He will still be our defence, and our strong tower of refuge, we shall still be the children of God. This the author to the Hebrews confirmeth, where

he saith, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject in bondage." This is our freedom.

This mercy is yet further amplified, Romans, chap. 8 where from this dignity of being sons, he proceedeth to an higher degree of mercy, showing that we are also heirs, and yet higher, even heirs annexed with Christ; many are children, who are no heirs; but this is the mercy of our God, that to whom he hath given himself for an exceeding great reward, admitting them as children, they are all heirs. "If children (saith the apostle) then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." All are heirs, even heirs annexed with Christ, to reign with him in glory. What can we wish for more? Nay, but yet here is a greater degree of his mercy, saith the Spirit of God in the Revelation, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Are not here wonderful mercies? To be of enemies, reconciled unto God: to be admitted his servants: to be of his Privy Council: to be called friends: to be possessed of God for our buckler: and our exceeding great reward: to be the sons of God: to be heirs, even heirs annexed with Christ: to sit with him in his throne, as he overcame and sitteth with his Father in his throne. This is a marvellous mercy, which produceth so many mercies, which hereafter we shall enjoy fully. We must then be content to go on patiently, walking in this narrow way, through a valley of tears. We must be content, I say, to shed a few tears for a while, until the time of the perfection of our joys appear, though in the meantime we suffer many tentations, yet are they all but arguments unto us of God's fatherly kindness, winnowing us from the pleasures of this

world. But unto the wicked it is far otherwise, for all their afflictions in this life come from another court; they are but as it were a part or earnest of a greater sorrow, a part in payment, a blow to show a greater which shall follow. Therefore are we counselled, by the apostle to the Corinthians, to judge ourselves betimes. "For if we would judge ourselves (saith he) we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." The most part of us, it is our fault that we love to judge others and not ourselves; but we must learn to judge ourselves first, remembering that the end of all our sufferings here, is but to preserve us from greater in the world to come, that we should not be condemned with the world. Such is also St. James's counsel. "My brethrenp, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have her perfect work." For be thou sure that wheresoever the Lord bestoweth any gifts, he will have them put to a trial of patience. Patience must have her perfect work. He armeth us with courage to endure, that we may know what is in ourselves, and whether we be such, to whom the promises belong or not, by our patience causing us to possess our souls (as our blessed Saviour in Luke speaketh). And lastly, the author to the Hebrews affirmeth, "Thatr whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" adding, that if we receive not chastening (whereof all are partakers) then are we bastards, and not sons. But as for the wicked he letteth them alone until another day; for he knoweth when to meet with them, when they shall have many sorrows. But is here all? Doth this mercy us no more good? Doth it end here? No verily; for this mercy doth compass us about in our greatest sorrows; even

3. In sin and death mercy is seen.

He compasseth us about with his mercy in sin and death. Our sins he maketh us occasions to come unto him, to cry for help at his hands maintaining our acquaintance anew. For it is our nature, it is natural unto us to fly from God, to delight in vanities. So that when once we have begun to taste of his favour, obtaining thereby some peace, then we begin to give back, our familiarity with God decayeth, the world and other enticements, by degrees (if not all) yet steal away a great part of our hearts, we begin to be secure, and though we pray, yet is it faintly and coldly, not proceeding from fervent feeling of want, but carnally, for fashion's sake. In this estate the longer we continue, the worse we are. What then? The Lord he seeing us thus secure, he suffereth us to fall into the fire, to teach us to beware hereafter. And, therefore, as Absalom did first send for Joab to come at him again and again, but seeing he would not come, caused Joab's corn therefore to be set on fire; which at the last brought him to come. Even so the Lord, when he seeth us slow, backsliders from him, he sendeth for us again and again, by his servants the prophets, public and private admonitions, checks of conscience, and the like. Which if they avail not, then doth he suffer us to fall into some grievous sins, wherein perhaps we lie mourning for a great while. Then sendeth he fiery trials, burning up our corn, until at last we come unto him to renew our obedience. I say he sendeth sins as serpents to sting us, that we may come to be healed. The wicked, it is their property to fly still from God, whatsoever messengers the Lord sendeth for them. But the child of God, he cometh running unto God with the blood about his heels. So it is said, "Whent he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God."

2. In mercy.

He useth our sins as means of humiliation, to keep us under. We are of a proud wanton nature, which if it were not tamed, warring

continually with some sins would quickly run out in offending God, and therefore our God of his infinite mercy sendeth, yea keepeth his children under the perpetual yoke of some sins and corruptions of divers sorts, according to his great wisdom. Groaning under which burden he giveth them experience of his love, trial of tentations, experience of infirmities, a view of their misery, assurance of mercy, purging their corruptions, exercising and strengthening their faith and hope, teaching them patience, and the true practice of repentance. So that chosen vessel, St. Paul (although he was so beloved of God, as to be wrapped up into the third heavens), yet we see he confesseth that lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given unto him a prick in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, because he should not be exalted out of measure. For this he besought the Lord thrice to have it removed. But it would not be. The Lord did not see it fitting. His answer was, it is enough Paul, that my power shall be made perfect in thy weakness. Thou demandest that which is not expedient for thee. This thy seeming enemy shall do thee best service. This infirmity by my mercy shall keep thee, as a watch over thy ways, until thy course be finished. In the mean time, my power shall be made perfect in thy weakness. My mercy therein shall compass thee. Thy sins shall turn to thy good, keeping thee prepared for the fulness of glory.

Again; death also is turned into mercy to God's children. They triumph over it (as the apostle to the Corinthians speaketh) "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Death is swallowed up in victory, and we have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the child of God he feareth not death. Now sin and death are subdued upon their own dunghill. Death by Christ is overcome, even in the den of death. Whatsoever force it had before, now it hath short horns, it is captived. Death now to us being in Christ, shall do

us good service, how cruel soever it appear in show. It captives the law of sin, and freeeth us that we shall never sin any more, nor anger so gracious a God. It shall free us from all sorrows and cares: and being in show our deadliest enemy, shall yet do us the best service. It shall free us from all corruption, from all kind of our now cruel fears. It shall be unto us that most cunning physician, which shall at one instant ease all our infirmities, and give unto us perfect health. It shall bring us from this valley of tears into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It shall possess us of our ardent desires, it shall bring us into the presence of God, the unspeakable joys of heaven, to the society of saints, since the beginning of the world, to the company of all our dear friends departed, and lastly, to eternal life more than all. Therefore the prophet David, being encouraged with this comfortable help and presence of God in so infinite joys to come, confesseth, that though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, yet would he fear none evil; God's rod and staff still comforting him, though hell were in his way, yet, he saith, he would fly through the same unto heaven. This is that violent affection in God's children, which causeth them with all forcible means to assail this kingdom, contemning all things which oppose against them, for the prize of that eternal weight of glory to come.

So should all of us resolve, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet to fear none evil, because our God is with us; his rod and his staff shall comfort us. All things shall turn to the best unto those who fear him, even in death itself also mercy shall compass us. O infinite unspeakable mercy! But now let us pray, that for Christ Jesus his sake, we may still be compassed with this mercy. To whom with the Father and his Blessed Spirit, be all honour, glory, praise, power, now and evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVII:

He That Trusts the Lord, Part 3 - Psalm 32:10

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth In the Lord, mercy shall compass him.

THE drift of the prophet in this verse (as you have heard) is an exhortation to obedience and submission, following upon the former verse, where the prophet, knowing the vanity of our crooked nature, how stubborn and wayward we are, still seeking rather by other means, than those which lead unto true happiness, to attain our desires, he at the last exhorteth us unto submission to the will of God, which is the way of true happiness; because he saw there was a sort of brutish and hard-hearted men, like mules and horses, who would by no means be subdued unto God's will. Therefore now chiefly, he would have the wicked to cast off the stubbornness of nature, which resisted God, and not to be like horses and mules, who have no understanding, and must be bound with bit and bridle. Such wicked men lay all the blame upon the ministers of the word; their burdens, they cry out, are intolerable. Therefore, say they, let us break their bonds, and cast their cords from us; we will none of their yoke. When yet this their fury is against God; but it is hard for them to kick against the pricks; it shall be hard for them to withstand God;

they shall be curbed with bit and bridle, they (he telleth them in this verse) shall have many sorrows. Again, because there is a generation of the just whose souls are continually ready to seek the face of God, rejoicing in nothing so much, as in his loving kindness, to these he assureth mercy, yea an infinite store of all mercy. Mercy shall compass them, in whatsoever estate; yea, though they should walk even through the valley of the shadow of death, yet even here also shall his mercy show itself for their salvation. His love to them shall be even then as a strong target to shield the whole body from destruction; he will be their buckler, and their exceeding great reward. And yet more than all this, that which seemeth to be the very overthrow of his children, that, as a wonder of his mercy, he converteth unto their most good; in life and death is he advantage unto them, this is an infinite mercy. When the devil desired to winnow the apostle Peter, then the help and mercy of our God interposeth itself. "But I have prayed for thee (saith our blessed Saviour) that thy faith fail not." Did he only pray for Peter? No verily, but for all the rest of the children of God also. So St. Paulc also in his infirmity and prick in the flesh desired some ease; but there was no remedy. We must needs suffer awhile; the time of deliverance was not yet come. But yet he saith, courage Paul, thou shalt not be overwhelmed, although thou beest troubled; this thy greatest sorrow shall I convert by mine exceeding mercy to thy greatest good; thou shalt see my great mercy even in this cross, to keep thee humble and low, lest thou shouldst be exalted through the abundance of my favour, and be lifted up out of measure.

Yea also God's mercy cometh betwixt death and us; it is the gate of our felicity to bring us unto heaven, it endeth all our cares and sorrows. The sum of all briefly is, that we may consider the excellency of our estates, to be the children of God, it is an advantage unto us against all miseries whatsoever; Christ he shall be advantage

unto us. We see, therefore, mercy shall not be showed unto all, there is a sort of men that, let the Lord preach what he will, and give what warning he will, yet they will receive no instruction, they will still continue mules, but unto such the Lord will show no mercy, if they continue thus. For although the Lord find a man miserable, yet he never leaveth him miserable. Therefore, if we be mules, it is a sign of no mercy as yet belonging to us; the Lord as yet he hath not found us, we remaining thus have no portion in him. But here may some man demand. What? How shall I be assured that I enjoy this mercy? I tell thee how. Look if thou find a change in thy soul and body, in all the powers and faculties thereof, look if thou beest now more ready and cheerful in the serving of God than formerly thou wert in serving of the devil. Look if thou hast repented thee of all thy sins to thy remembrance without exception, if thou hast craved pardon for those thou canst not remember, if from henceforth thou resolvest, and to thy power strivest against all sin, unto the blood resisting. If thou, for the glory to come, canst forego thy dear pleasures, endeavouring finally to love God, and keep all his commandments to thy power; then assure thyself of mercy; this mercy then doth and shall compass thee. A great many set all upon the venture of mercy. God, say they, is merciful, although we be sinners, yet we hope well, that he will not be so severe as those preachers make us believe. But let such remember what Moses in the name of God telleth unto all such rebels. If any "when he heareth the words of this curse, bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." But dost thou find this mercy work by newness of life, and repentance? Then settle thyself in the persuasion of this mercy; it is good. Yet, by the contrary, if thou findest not these, and

the like fruits of mercy, thou mayest well doubt of thy persuasion, it is but counterfeit; for, as I said before, although the Lord find us miserable, yet is it most certain that he never leaveth us so, but with his mercy he enableth us to bring forth the fruits of mercy. If we dream of mercy without a warrant, what do we else, but set up an idol in our hearts instead of mercy, and how dangerous it is to set up an idol in our hearts, you may all know, that it is the highway to destruction. Therefore if we would be assured of mercy, we must try what effects mercy hath wrought in the heart, what effects of holiness, what unfeigned deeds of mercy. Neither do I here oppose, or thrust any from mercy. Only I show that of necessity the tree being good it will bring forth good fruits also.

Now, to come to the matter in hand and the next opposition betwixt the godly and the wicked, we must know, that every wicked man is not here meant which committeth sin. But he is a wicked man, who unto all his other sins addeth impenitency, not trusting in the promises of mercy. And my reason is, because there is no sin so great, but there is mercy for it, if we repent. Yea if it were the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet were it pardonable, if it were possible to repent us of the same; because there is no comparison betwixt our sins (how great soever) and his infinite mercies. For when we want mercy it is our own fault, who are ignorant, and will not lay hold on the promises, nor trust in them. Only he then who will not trust in God, nor rely upon the promises, he is here said to be a wicked man, to him many sorrows. First, because if we will trust an earthly prince upon his word, how much more reasonable is it, I pray you, that we should trust God upon his free promises? Not to trust God is to give him the lie. "He (saith St. John) who believeth not God hath made him a liar." And Psalm 2, it is written, "Blessed are all those who trust him," if his wrath once burn, if Christ be never so angry, yet if we trust in him, there is no other voice to salute us, but, "Come ye

blessed of my Father." "Come unto me all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you." A blessed thing It is then to rest upon Christ. So he is said to be blessed who trusteth in the Lord. Andh, the special property of a blessed man is said to be an heart trusting in God; he is described that he doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But above all this is his chief praise, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he doth meditate day and night, he hath an heart to search, believe, and trust in the promises. To this agreeth that of Jeremy "Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." The ground then of all blessedness is to have an heart to trust in God, to anchor assuredly upon him in all tempests whatsoever.

The use hereof is comfort to God's children, that God in mercy looketh for nothing at their hands, for nothing in us good or bad, save an heart to trust in his promises, laying hold on life freely offered unto us without any kind of condition on our part, but accept and lay hold. So that I may truly say, this trusting in God is the strong fortress of a Christian, which maketh him still trust, and drawing nearer and nearer, lay so much the faster hold upon the promises, the more he is beaten back. This trusting in God is even our shield which keepeth off the blows of God.

But, may some man say, how shall I know when I am worthy enough to trust? I tell thee, God respecteth nothing of ours in this act, because his mercy is the object of our trust. As, therefore, he himself is wonderful, so are also his mercies in the pardoning of sinners. So the prophet David prayeth, "Show thy marvellous mercies, thou that art the Saviour of them that trust in thee." Where he, for the object of this trust, calleth them marvellous mercies, as indeed they are. The point then is, that we must all of us examine whether or not we have

a heart to trust God, if we dare trust him. The apostle to Timothy is a fit pattern for us. Look if thou canst say with him, "Ik know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." We must thus trust constantly with the apostle, not only for our final deliverance, but also for all other mercies, we see the grounds of consolation, whereupon the apostle's comfort is settled, is this his trusting in God, which he anchoreth upon, and so must we. This trusting in God must be our only stay.

Neither may any now object that our sureties, whom we put in trust, are insufficient. For I say, that how miserable soever we now appear, yet are we in a safer and better estate than was Adam in his innocency. He indeed had a more inherent sanctity than we by nature. But now we will not change estates with Adam, for all that he had, we know he was put in trust with it himself, he was his own keeper, and so what came of it, we see he quickly lost it all. But for us, it is our exceeding comfort that we are not our own, but Christ's, we are sheep of his fold, are in his custody, have put him in trust with our life and all. And here we rest. We see here then, what is our stay, even this putting of God in trust freely with all. For if wise fathers upon earth, being about to make sure their lands and estates, choose others, whom they put in trust with all, yea sometimes they put one in trust, why may not we also put our God in trust; if mortal men trust mortal men, why should not we rather put Christ in trust? How full of infidelity are we, if then we dare not trust God. But to those who believe Christ is our trust, with whom our life is hid (as the apostle to the Colossians speaketh), and putting him in trust for our life and salvation to come, and that eternal inheritance we expect in the heavens, we now also dare and do put him in trust for all these momentaine and earthly things. The apostle Peter groundeth also the certainty of our salvation upon a trust, even a lively hope in the

abundant mercies of our God. This lively hope he maketh to be unto him the full assurance of that inheritance immortal, which fadeth not away, but is undefiled, and reserved in the heavens. But, may some say, what is this to me? I am far from the crown. If it be in the heavens how shall I attain unto it? It is a far reach thither. But I say unto thee, yet by thy trusting in God it is most sure that it is in heaven for thee, and thou art kept safe by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, which, after thy patience, is prepared to be showed unto thee in the last times. It is sure enough, if thou trust in God: but thou must trust perfectly and attend the time.

Faith is the instrument by which we keep our hold of Christ; but this power of God, whereby we are kept from falling away, and by which we are assured to be enabled so to live as we may at the last possess this crown, is the chief stay of our trust. It is a fault in all of us, that, for the most part, we seek comfort from ourselves, and in our goodness, or from some inherent holiness and good works; we would gladly gather matter of this trust from ourselves. Yet, if we would be assured of true comfort, we must go out of ourselves, relying only upon the free mercies, and free promises of life in Christ. Then shall we indeed obtain sound and perfect comfort, for so long as we rely upon any thing in us, we are miserably deceived. Let our sanctity be never so great, let our holiness and pure life seem never so strict, yet if we rely thereupon, grounding on it our trust, the devil shall pick a number of holes, in the hour of tentation, even in our purest actions, to the least of which we shall not be able to answer; our own evidence shall rather serve to overthrow us, and bring us to confusion, not being able to answer one of a thousand. If yet, leaving ourselves we fly unto Christ, seeing our own imperfections and wickedness, laying hold of his righteousness and perfections, as our only stay, making this the ground of our assurance and trust, this indeed shall be a strong rock unto us against all Satan's tentations, and a shield which

all the force of Satan shall never be able to pierce. This trusting in God must be that sure anchor, which must uphold us in all tempests whatsoever. As therefore, when Paul and all his company were tossed to and fro in the Adriatic Sea, being in danger of their lives, in the night time, yet they did cast forth anchors in the dark out of the stern, wishing for the day; so must all of us who would be assured of any settled comfort, whereupon to rely, we must learn to trust so in God betimes, that we may cast forth an anchor in the dark, waiting for the morning as they did. We must, when all other comforts fail, hold fast this trust.

If, therefore, when the comfort of the Spirit seemeth to have left thee, if, when thou art tossed up and down in raging waves of divers adversities, which come tumbling upon thee, as one wave upon another, yet thou knowest not whither to turn thee: nay, if when God seemeth to be thine enemy, and in thine own thinking to have forgotten to be merciful, thou walking in the shadow of death, here is the trial of thy trust. If then thou canst pick some comfort from these alarms, if then thou canst meditate on the nature of God, trust in his promises, and throw out an anchor in the dark, expecting the morning of deliverance, thou art in an happy and blessed estate, it is not possible that thou shouldest perish. Now our hope to us is a most sure anchor, if (as the apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) we pitch it upwards within the veil, into the holy of holies. Then are we in a safe estate, come life, or death, when by a lively faith, which hath burst through a world of tentations, by many combats, and strong cries, in assurance of the nature of God, we have once laid so sure hold of Christ, that we have now made him our own, that we have bound him perpetually to be ours, with the bonds of his own free promises, and cords of his preventing love, that unless he would now forfeit his bonds, and deny himself (which is impossible) we are sure of his love. Beloved, thus must our hope be pitched upwards within the

veil, if we would attain to this trusting in God by degrees, (as Abraham crept, by little and little, nearer and nearer unto God in begging mercy for the Sodomites,) so must we by all means encroach and creep nearer and nearer unto Christ, until at last, by pitching our anchor within the veil, we have learned in all extremities to trust in Christ. The wicked, they cast their anchors downwards, and therefore they in their troubles are like the raging waves of the sea tossed higher and higher, without any peace. But let us, who have not thus learned Christ, cast our anchors upwards within the veil. This must help us in the dark, when the testimonies of the spirit will fail us; and what shall we then do, if we have not learned to trust in God.

A further benefit also shall come unto us by our trusting in God. For by the same, we shall be marked and discerned from hypocrites.

For, first, if our trust in God be true and not feigned, we will not dare to dissemble with him; we will freely pour out our complaints unto him as our only refuge; yea, we will lay all open unto him in the foulest manner, and make the worst of every thing; because we know that he is faithful and just who hath promised, that if we acknowledge and confess our sins, he will cleanse us from all iniquities. This is a true mark of our trust, not to dissemble with God, but to run unto him, unloading all our cares in his bosom; when thou art all alone, when no eye seeth thee but the Almighty's, then to fall down before him, to mourn and cry, and to make a true confession, making them as ugly as may be, particularly naming them, this is a sure sign that thou trustest in God. Contrary-wise the hypocrite; he cannot for his life make a true confession: let him make what flourish he will at sometimes, yet when he is alone, and no creature present, there is no such matter; these things trouble not him. Or if he pray, yet he never cometh near to the cutting of the throat of his many corruptions, and darling sins; because he cannot trust so in God as

the godly, who, resisting unto the blood, strive to keep all his commandments, being sure thereby that their portion is in all the free promises of mercy.

The second note of this trust, whereby God's children are discerned from hypocrites, is to try how outward things work upon them, what estimation they have of them. 1. To see what trust they have in riches, how they are affected in the loss of these outward things; for if thy treasure be in heaven, thou wilt not pass what cometh, so that thou mayest win Christ, thy riches being with him, where neither the moth can come to consume, nor the thief to steal. And let this be a sure rule to discern of this trust, that the trust which is truly reposed upon God is mingled with nothing else. So it is said, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." But, quite contrary, to the godly he saith, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth unto it, and is safe." If the faithful soul can but enjoy Christ, it is enough unto it, it cleaveth unto him, runneth unto him, trusteth in him, and nothing which can come dismayeth it, so long as it possesseth this strong tower. The young rich man, we knowq he had good beginnings, had gone a great way in Christianity; yet, hearing that he must now forego his idol wherein he trusted, now only to trust in God, this soundeth but harshly in his ears, his many possessions and riches made him go away sorrowful. By riches he lost this goodly inheritance of the saints.

Let our anchor therefore now be to try ourselves, and our estates, how we stand affected, and trust in these outward, perishing things; what trust we have in riches, how we are affected in losses. For if our anchor be pitched within the veil, these things will not so much as move us to any distrustful care, when the wicked (who are wedded to the god of this world) for every little cross and loss are ready to go out of their wits. To such worldlings, whatsoever they are, the Holy

Ghost to Timothy, warneth them to forsake these riches, trusting in God. "Charge them," saith he, "that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." Let us then strive to settle our trust from these earthly things upon the living God, and we shall then obtain a most blessed estate.

Thirdly, a sure mark of this trust is, to try how we are affected with outward dangers, whether then we will rely upon God, or run unto other helps. This is a sound trial, if in outward dangers we can fly unto God as unto our stronghold, trusting in him; but if again we will forsake him, and trust in any earthly helps, the Lord taketh it as an high indignity unto him. Example of both we have in king Asa: for when Zerah, king of Ethiopia, with ten hundred thousand men, came out against him, yet (the text saith) he fainted not. But what doth he? "Then Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee, to help whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee." Thus Asa, trusting in God, found wonderful deliverance; for saith the text, "The Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled." So certainly shall all our enemies, if we trust in him, they shall all fly before us; only, let us trust in God with all our hearts, and then certainly these enemies, who already are begun to fall before us, even all the enemies of our salvation, shall at length be overthrown, because if we trust in God he fighteth for us. But like unto many of us, who begin well, but fainting by the way, this good king doth not continue constant. In place of this former trust, he now again distrusteth the Lord. When Baasha, king of Israel, not so potent an enemy, came against him a little after, then he sendeth the treasures of the house of God unto Benhadad, king of Aram, for a present, that he might come to his

aidt; he now trusteth the king of Aram in place of God. Well, what followed this? Hanani the seer cometh unto him from God, saying, "Because thou hast rested upon the king of Aram, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Aram escaped out of thine hand. The Ethiopians and the Lubims, were they not a strong host, with chariots and horsemen exceeding many, yet because thou didst rest upon the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the Lord behold all the earth, to show himself strong unto all them who are of perfect heart towards him: thou hast then done foolishly in this: from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Beloved, we see that if we rely in any thing else, save in God, if we trust in any thing else, what do we but forsake God, setting up an idol in our hearts in place of him? Nay, nay; as thou trustest in God, so must thou rely only upon him, and nothing else. As his must be all the glory of our deliverance, so must he be the sole object of our trust, it must be mingled with nothing else.

A fourth and further sure mark of this trust is, to see whether in the course of our life we can rely upon God's providence, to see if now that we have trusted him for ourselves, we can also trust his providence in things to come. Canst thou trust his providence for thy wife and children; canst thou rest assured that thy God will provide for all their necessities; canst thou give them freely over unto his providence? Canst thou be content not to care for to-morrow, but let it care for itself, and so forth in all other things, dost thou trust in his providence? O this is a blessed estate; it is a sure sign thy trusting is unfeigned.

But, may some say, What, must we then leave off all caring, and only trust? I say no. Thou must not leave to use the means, but thou must shake off this distrustful care, being assured, that God in thy honest endeavours will bless the means. Thou must trust that he will bring it

to pass, committing thy way unto him. Therefore although thou use the means, yet must he only be trusted with the blessing and issue of the same: thou must trust him in all things. He who trusteth him not in all things, trusteth not God at all. The true child of God, therefore, who must trust God in higher matters of eternity, salvation, and the life to come, he must much more rely upon him for the small things of this earth. We are taught by our Saviour Christ, to trust in God and pray for our daily bread. Now, he who will not trust God in this, that man trusteth not in God at all. For, trust thou God for one thing, thou must as certainly rely upon him for all. The like argument is in the love of our brother. If we trust in God, and love him, we must also love the brethren. If we say we trust in him, and yet love not them, there is no truth in us. He who loveth the brethren, must needs trust and love God; for unless he trusted in God, it were not possible for him to love the brethren. By this love of God's children, we are assured, that "we abide in the light," yea, "that we are transported from death to life." And this is our joy, that, as it is in the third epistle, "Wey walk altogether in verity." Some may object, that such are most contemned, who thus trust and rely upon God; they in the eyes of men are most contemned. But no matter what they do or say, we know that the whole world lieth in blindness, unless with us they find Christ, and trust in him. We know that if we rely upon him, he hath commanded us to be of good comfort, for he hath overcome the world; and in him shall we be more than conquerors in all these things.

Let us therefore trust perfectly in that grace which is brought unto us, when all comforts seem to be absent, assuring ourselves that so long as Christ vouchsafeth to call us brethren, so long are we in a most blessed estate. So long as he taketh us by the hand, presenting us without spot and blameless (by his righteousness made perfect) unto the Father, saying, Behold, here am I, and the children which

thou hast given me, so long let us fear nothing. Let us go on constantly in this trust, "stillb looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the glory which was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of God, in the throne of God." If we be constant in this trusting in God, he hath promised that if we overcome, so shall we sit with him in his throne, as he overcame, and sitteth with the Father in his throne. Which that we may all do, let us now earnestly call upon God, for his own and our Christ's sake, that we may attain to this high degree of Christianity, to trust in God with all our hearts, that so mercy may compass us. To whom with the Father and his blessed Spirit, be all honour, glory, power, might, majesty and dominion, now and evermore. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII:

Rejoice in the Lord - Psalm 32:11

Be glad, ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful (or shout for joy) all ye that are upright of heart.

I HAVE formerly declared unto you the end and scope of this psalm, that it was a psalm of instruction, wherein the whole drift of the prophet is, to show how a man in this life might attain to perfect blessedness; so that he propoundeth, for a most infallible ground thereof, a blessed man only to be he who hath his sins forgiven unto him, sealed, as it were, with the great seal of heaven, having obtained (although with much strife) peace with God. Therefore I show unto you how the prophet having laid this general ground, proceedeth to the application thereof, where knowing that he had to meet with two sorts of men; the wicked first, who are always froward, and negligent in the ways of God; whom he compareth to horses and mules for their hardness of heart;—the godly next, who have tender hearts, striving to love and trust in God; those he comforteth with assurance that mercy shall compass them, though the wicked would have many sorrows; where I show you that the prophet telleth them, that if they would follow the example of his experience, he would guide them in the right way, even in all their actions, if to learn at him, they should make use of God's mercies. But the prophet thereafter (as I show you) changeth his style, knowing, that for the most part mercies are preached in vain unto the wicked. Firstb (to make them inexcusable) having forewarned them not to be as horses and mules, hard-hearted creatures, lest the Lord at length should curb and bind them with bit and bridle, showing his mighty power in taming their rebellion; if,

notwithstanding all these instructions, they would still continue as horses and mules, next he proceedeth to threaten them with many sorrows. I showed you here how exceeding cross it was for flesh and blood to overcome so many lets as seemed to be in their way; to overcome and master affections, crucify darling sins, and being altogether poor and empty of any feeling in ourselves, to rely upon God, and sue unto the throne of grace, as it were in forma pauperis. For we are all of that nature, that we delight rather to run into any other wandering by-paths, than to have recourse unto God in the time of tentations.

Yet must we learn not to strive against God, but rather to hang upon him by faith, forcing acquaintance upon him. Otherwise, if we will not, I showed you how in the tenth verse the prophet threateneth unto them many sorrows, wherein he comprehendeth all manner of sorrows, both in this life, and that to come, in soul and body, in the deprivation of so infinite eternal joys, and the fruition of so many and so infinite torments in hell-fire for ever, where the justice of God should set his mighty power on fire for their eternal torments, being glorified in their destruction. And therefore, although the wicked in this life of all men seem to have fewest sorrows, having the abundance of all earthly things, as though they were the only men who had cause to rejoice. Yet let none of you be discouraged, although the wicked flourish like a palm tree: for if thou couldest but look unto the fearful hearts of most of them, and see how many sorrows do incessantly gnaw and torture their fearful consciences, and their miserable estate, who without the Lord's infinite mercy, are but like oxen fed for the devil, hast thou, I pray thee, any cause to envy their estate? Nay, rather look unto thine own most happy and blessed estate, which the prophet (having threatened them) comforteth thee withal; that mercy shall compass thee. Which (as I showed you) although it be but a short word of few syllables, yet it

comprehendeth all manner of mercies, that are possible to be imagined, both in this life, and in that to come, being freed from all evils, and kept for the abundance of all mercies, even all which so wonderful and so loving a God, is able to give unto thee.

O consider, if this be no small mercy to be thus compassed, when the wicked shall have many sorrows, with infinite and unspeakable torments; when the Lord shall like a mighty giant so often break, bruise and tear them in pieces every moment, yet as it were healing them again, that his wrath may but increase upon them with more fury than ever.

But it may be, that thou reply, I am fearful and weak, and full of infirmities, I cannot go and find these assurances of God's mercies in myself, nor that I am thus compassed with mercy. Yet, I say, fear not, what thou wantest thou shalt have. Only wait, trusting in him, and remember what the Lord answered St. Paul, "My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, although thou canst not see how this work is wrought, yet trust thou in God; he hath said it is so; others have found it so; and thou at the length, if thou be patient, shalt also find the same.

In the meantime, seeing thou art not altogether overthrown of the devil, but hast some power to resist, assure thyself, that this mercy of thy God doth compass thee; and think this a marvellous mercy, that thy God is thus a shield to keep thee. Nay, what speak I of this mercy? It is further amplified for the comfort of God's children by the prophet. "Yet, therefore, will the Lord wait, that he may have mercy upon you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have compassion upon you." Here is a marvellous and wonderful mercy, that the Lord will attend and wait upon his children, being near to help in their greatest miseries, like unto one watching an opportunity

or fit time, when to do his friend a kindness. So that now we need not to fear his absence, if we trust in him, for behold he waiteth but to have a fit time to show mercies unto his children. As a most bountiful King, accounting it greatly to his honour to reward such richly, who trust and rely only in him.

From hence I proceeded to show to whom this mercy belongeth, even only unto such who forsaking and going out of themselves, when there appeareth no sense of love or mercy, could yet, wholly forsaking themselves, by faith lay hold upon Christ, casting and fastening the anchor of their hope within the vail, even in the Holy of holies, so relying upon him; from whence I grounded this point of doctrine, That only he was a wicked man, not he who did sin and live like unto other wicked men: but he who unto all his other sins addeth impenitency, refusing to trust in God, or lay hold of the free promises of mercy in Christ. For the Lord, of all other sins, taketh this for a most heinous offence, not to trust in him; the reason whereof is, because this trusting in God is that plaister which the Lord useth, and hath appointed to cure and bind up our chiefest sores, and heal them. No marvel then, when this sovereign balm of Gilead is gone, that then our diseases and wounds prove deadly.

The use whereof I told you was to examine ourselves, whether or not we had hearts to trust in God, to rely upon his promises, and then howsoever we be clothed with many imperfections, yet such might assure themselves that they were no wicked men. Again to the godly, that howsoever now they were full of sorrow, sowing their seed in tears, yet not to be discouraged, but to look upon the end, which should be joyful, not being so much turmoiled with the present state of things.

Now to proceed in my text, now read. The prophet having a little before denounced God's judgments unto the wicked; who because they do seldom profit by the same (howsoever they are made inexcusable thereby), leaving them, therefore, going on now in this eleventh verse, in comforting those who indeed are most ready to make use of his instructions and all God's mercies. Who because in the former verse he showed were compassed with God's mercies, he now wakeneth up in this verse, with a double alarum. Be glad, rejoice; adding yet again a third charge to awaken them thoroughly. Be joyful (or as it is in the original) shout for joy all ye that are upright of heart.

Surely the Holy Ghost well knew here the dulness of our hearts, and that it is not an easy thing to rejoice here in this valley of tears, when to awaken us thoroughly to this rejoicing he soundeth thrice the alarum, with a shout at last. For God's children, howsoever they are assured, and know, and look for a day wherein all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, whereby they shall be freed from all miseries, being received into infinite joys, yet being hereto encountered with all the enemies of their salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil (their greatest enemies being within themselves), their feeling and sense of God's love many times being removed, and those comforts which they expect long delayed; it is not, I say, so easy a thing (as some think it) to rejoice. Yet what must they do? Still they must trust in God; feed upon the promises, and the fidelity of the promiser in patience. And then at length for all their sorrows, they shall have abundance of joy in the midst thereof; "mercy shall compass them." And howsoever the wicked think the life of God's children full of heaviness, and uncomfortable, yet indeed their life, of all other, is most cheerful, wherein they ought to rejoice. Which point the prophet here groundeth as an infallible doctrine. That it is the privilege and sole property of the children of God, who trust in him

alone, not only to have the only true joy, but also the abundance and height of joy, rejoicing in the midst of afflictions, and therefore he willeth them to rejoice, and rejoice again and again. Wherein we may perceive that he directly crosseth the common opinion, that the life of Christianity is such a tedious task, and uncomfortable life full of sorrows, a narrow way, with a number of other imputations of the like sort; by the contrary proving, that none can truly rejoice, but he who is a godly man, who is compassed with mercy, who hath obtained peace of conscience by a quietus est from heaven, viz., a free discharge and acquittance of all former debts; this man only hath true joy and sound cause of rejoicing, so that he now triumpheth over all afflictions. This St. Paul in the 5th of the Romans well proveth. Who, although he begin the Epistle with terror in the first and second chapters, yet having in the third and fourth chapters brought us from ourselves, without any merit in us, to rely wholly by faith on Christ; in the beginning of the fifth chapter he saith, so then being justified by faith, that is, without any merits or worthiness in ourselves, having by faith apprehended and laid hold of Christ and his righteousness. I confess there is a marvellous strife in this action, when the strong man is to be cast out, he rageth, and keepeth much ado, when these passions and desires of ours must be subdued by faith: yet what of all this? So much the more should we strive to overcome, looking upon this which ensueth. And what is that? "Being justified (saith the Apostle) by faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Howsoever before we were tossed in piteous storms, and were afraid that we should make a final shipwreck of our salvation (as commonly God's children do when they part from this world) howsoever now, whilst the devil is to be thrust out, and the strong man dispossessed, there is much ado and much strife within a man, yet when a stronger than he cometh, having bound him, there is such peace with God as passeth all understanding. So, what followeth this our strife, we have peace,

even a marvellous peace in Christ. O how should this peace be desired, which being once settled, there followeth abundance of joy. But what more? Here is a further matter. After this peace (saith he) through Christ is once settled, there is matter of abundance of joy. "By whom we have access through faith into this grace." So that faith, having once apprehended Christ, whereupon his peace is settled, then is there unto the faithful soul granted this third thing, even an access through Christ with boldness unto the throne of grace. And then (mark the degrees) "wherein we stand, and rejoice under the hope of the glory of God."

Behold how, now in the fourth place, it is (saith he) even this free access by faith, whereby we stand, grounded on the former peace and apprehension of Christ, after which (saith he) we come to rejoice under the hope of the glory of God. Behold, I say, how now in the fourth place, cometh this rejoicing under the hope of the glory of God. Here is matter of true joy, for now hope, being thus grounded, casteth her anchor within the vail, into the Holy of holies, there laying so sure hold upon Christ, that neither height nor depth, principalities, nor powers, things present, nor things to come, is able to make it finally loose that hold again. Then, I say, in this, there is again and again rejoice. Yet our apostle mounteth higher, and as the most exceeding excellency of Christian joy, he saith, "Neither do we so only, but also we rejoice in tribulations." Here is both the wonder and the excellency of the joy, to rejoice in trouble. This joy no wicked man can have, nor yet any true access unto God, because they are strangers unto him, and therefore have no acquaintance or familiarity with God. But his children not only rejoice under the hope of the glory, but also in tribulations, and crosses. But the joy of the wicked, although it make a fair show for a while, yet is it quickly gone, being builded upon a false foundation. For this peace and rejoicing, which we speak of, and which the prophet and apostle

mentioneth, none can attain unto, but he who hath cast (by hoping and trusting in God) his anchor in heaven, within the Holy of holies, those can and do rejoice this true and great joy, even in tribulations. For as wood and timber do serve to augment the flame, so these tribulations and crosses unto them are but the fuel to increase the flame of their joy, considering what wonderful experiences of God's love they have by their continual deliverances, and hope of the glory to come, as St. James telleth us, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." Therefore let us remember in any fiery trial, what the Lord's intention is therein; for he never bestoweth any grace upon any of his children, but at one time or other he putteth it to a sound trial.

In such extremities, therefore, we must not be dismayed, as though the Lord had forsaken us, but rather to think that the Lord is causing us then to repeat our lessons, that we might rejoice so much the more in knowing of ourselves, as St. James speaketh, "My brethren count it exceeding joy when you fall into exceeding temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith bringeth forth patience." Thus our faith being tried bringeth wonderful comfort to the soul of a man; when we have experience of it, it ministers great comfort unto us. The joy of God's children is so great and firm, that the greatest tribulation that can befal them in this world cannot put it away, but is a means to increase the same; which thing the apostle Peter further confirmeth, saying, thath they are "begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance immortal and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for you which are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; which is prepared to be showed in the last time." The ground that the apostle aimeth at is, that although we are tossed up and down in our own eyes, by many tentations and trials, yet that we should rest assuredly in hope not to be overcome of

them; seeing there is an eternal crown of glory reserved for us in heaven, and that we also are reserved for it, by the power of God, so that now we are not our own keepers, as Adam was, but are reserved and kept unto this life, by the mighty power of God, with whom our life is hid in Christ; the one is as sure and sound as the other, that we may now say, it dependeth not upon my power or watchfulness, not upon my weak arm, for the Lord's power is engaged in it, and by him I stand. Do I sin and fall? Why then I know there is a stronger hand to uphold me. The power of God shall keep me to salvation. Here is a sure ground of comfort.

Therefore when we see this sin, or these and these sins to leave us, falling unto the ground before us, rest then assured, that it is this mighty power of God, whereby it is done; therefore, rejoicing in God, assuring yourselves, that both your salvation is sure (although it be locked up in the heavens), and you are as surely reserved until the last time for it by the mighty power of God; so that unless any be able to bereave God of his power, and pull him from heaven, none is able to bereave you of this salvation. From whence this foundation being laid, that God's children are in the state of grace, and shall continue unto the end; the apostle proceedeth, wherein (saith he) we rejoice. But because this joy cometh with many troubles in this world, although it be so, yet shall they not hinder it, wherein ye rejoice (saith the apostle) though now for a season (if need require) you are in heaviness, through manifold tentations. Where let us mark the difference of the estate of God's children, being compared with the wicked man's joy: let the wicked man be at the merriest, yet, as the wiseman speaketh, "evenk in laughing his heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness;" so that they can never certainly have any true joy, but one thing or other abateth it. And it is further said, "That which the wicked feareth, it shall come upon him." So that whatsoever fair show he make, yet is he full of fears, all his joys are

mingled with gall, yea full thereof. Nom peace (saith my God) to the wicked. But the joy which is in God's children, that is far more excellent, their greatest sorrows have some portion of joy, contrary to the wicked. Because (saith the apostle) "that the trial of your faith might be made much more precious than gold that perisheth, and might be found to your praise." Why should then the tribulations of this world hinder their joy and glory, whereas they come for their good? And therefore it followeth in the next verse, "whomo ye have not seen, and yet love him, in whom now though you see him not, yet do ye believe, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Mark here is a wonderful point, and certainly if thou canst find it in thine heart, blessed is thine estate, there is Jesus Christ, a man whom I find I never saw, and yet I find that I love him notwithstanding wonderfully. We say commonly that sight is the original of love, and out of sight, far from affection. But when faith cometh into the heart of a man, though he himself never beheld Christ, who is now ascended into heaven, yet he loveth him, and what love is this? Why a love which filleth our hearts full of unspeakable joy. Whom you have not seen, and yet love him, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and glorious. And indeed here is the end of all our Gospel, to bring unto many this fulness of joy. This joy is only proper to the godly (although I confess mingled with sorrows) yet have they still so much joy, which at last swalloweth up all their sorrows, in endless joys, having the fulness of joy. So St. John speaketh, "These things write I unto you that your joy may be full." Yea this is (as I have said) the end of our Gospel, of all our preaching, the message of angels, which we have heard from the beginning, that we might have this fulness of joy. This joy cometh by apprehending of Christ by a true and lively faith constantly. So that now the point being proved of this point of doctrine, that it is only the proper estate of God's children to rejoice and have true joy in this life. "Be glad

then ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, and shout for joy all ye that are upright of heart."

This serveth to reprove the gross blockish hardheartedness, and error of most part of the worldlings, who will believe no more than they are able to see and conceive. Say they, What is this he telleth me of these and these joys in another world to come? To pursue a flying shadow, must I enter into so strict a course of life? Must I let go all my pleasures in this life for hopes only? Shall I forego a bird in the hand for one in the bush? I will not. O fool, stay but a little, and thou shalt see a great change. Thou lookest indeed upon the present state of things; but I tell thee, but one minute of the joys of the godly is worth all the pleasures a wicked man enjoyeth. O miserable man, have but a little faith, and I dare presume that (if thou follow this narrow way) thou shalt have a true joy in place of the shadow. They think this worldly joy is the only joy indeed, yet are they deceived. And therefore, if a man would have true joy, let him labour to obtain the mercy of God, to be found in Christ; let him labour to have his heart fixed upon him, and he shall then have a comfortable passage out of this life, and shall be joyful indeed, if you have peace with God.

You see the Apostle Peter's exhortation, "If any man long after life and to see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him pursue peace and follow after it, eschew evil and do good." He knew, that many men would desire to see long days; which is the cause that so many do cark and care, toil and labour, spend themselves and break their sleep. Well therefore (saith the apostle) if ye would see good days in good earnest, eschew evil and seek after that which is good. Let them labour for a true sanctified heart; for only such can have true joy. Be glad ye righteous, shout for joy all ye that are upright of heart. Labour then to have thy heart upright, to be friends and at peace with God, and then thou

shalt have good days and follow after peace. O but, say many of God's children, indeed perhaps I would be brought to rejoice in God, but this joy doth not abide with me long; I meet with the sons of Anak in my way, many crosses, mocks, disgraces, afflictions, the which hinder and interrupt this joy, that I cannot attain to this rejoicing, but still one cross is attended with another, and when I think to rejoice, it flieth from me. Yet we see the apostle he propoundeth it, as a thing that is running away; therefore, if peace be running away, see that thou follow hard after it, follow it close at the heels, for therefore it flieth, that thou mayest follow after it, that thou mayest pursue it. Then follow and pursue thou close after it, and at last thou shalt find that all these supposed lets shall but settle, and be in the end the procurers and keepers of this peace and joy.

Now, to have this peace and joy it shall be an especial thing to consider, how to discern the joy and peace of God's children from that of worldlings, which is but an image of joy. This may be seen by the ground of this joy. Be glad, and rejoice ye righteous. In whom? Why in the Lord. That is the point whereby a man must examine himself, whether the ground of his joy be fixed merely upon Almighty God; and not so much upon the gift of God, not so much for the gift as for God himself. God bestoweth riches upon his children, and I deny not but that they may rejoice in them, yet not so much for the gift as because they are the gift of God, in that respect, because they love any thing which cometh from his hand who is so loving a Father, because they are given of such a one as he is. So that now put the case of a righteous man's and a worldling's rejoicing together: then observe, the one rejoiceth only in God, the other in the gift. For example, the wicked he rejoiceth; but doth he rejoice in the Lord? No. For let God take away that which was the cause of his joy, and his joy perisheth. Is there a man who rejoiceth in his riches and promotion, howsoever he adjudgeth it to be the gift of God, yet doth

he rejoice in the gift alone, and not in God. It may be thus tried; for take away that man's riches and preferment, and then away goeth his joy; but it is otherwise with God's children. The righteous rejoice, not only when they have good things, but also when they are taken away. And consider for a second point, to try the truth of this joy, that as a man may discern a difference of this joy in outward things; so secondly,

For the trial of this joy,

Let him compare his joy in outward things with his inward rejoicing, and let him put both in the scales, weighing the one with the other. There are some who when wealth flows unto them, may by their countenance be discerned, that they have many joys, are well pleased, and the like. Consider now then hath God lifted up the light of his countenance upon thee, and canst thou esteem more of his favour than of a kingdom? If thou rejoicest in the favour and loving countenance of God, and his kindness, this is an argument, that thou hast that true comfort which cannot be taken from thee. For proof whereof, look Psalm 4. There is a man who saith, "Who will show us any good?" Every man doth wish good things, and what a great estate would I have? Well, suppose thou wert put to thy choice. What then? I know thou wilt say, I desire riches. But David saith, If I might have my wish, I would say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me."

Here we may try whether our joy be sound. That if it were put to our hearts' desires and choice, whether we would have all the wealth in the world come upon us, our barns and wine-presses filled with corn, wine, and oil; or the Lord to kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, to have his gracious countenance to look upon us, preferring his favour before a world of wealth; if we choose rather to have the light of his

countenance to shine upon us, than the troublesome abundance of the wicked, this is an argument, that our joy is sound and good. Thus you see, if the streams of grace, the narrow way, the house of mourning, the love of God, be the cause and ground of our joy, preferring it before all things, then assure thyself to be in good estate, and thy rejoicing to be true joy. And thus, when we find our joy to be good, we must likewise labour,

How to keep this joy.

For certainly there are many of God's children, who although they have cause to rejoice, yet many times they grieve and sit in sorrow, because they keep not that great treasure committed to them. Well then, what is the ground of this joy? Trust in God: rejoice ye righteous. Now when God's children forget the ground of true joy, their resting upon God, when they repose not themselves upon him, it is no marvel, it is no marvel, if they forget and lose their joy for a time; for look, in what moment of time thou diminishest the least part of thy trust, so also perisheth thy joy; and as thy trust in God increaseth, so shall thy joy. Some object and say, What is the cause that God's children mourn so, and will not be comforted? I answer, sure it is, when they look for comfort in themselves, they cannot choose but then miss thereof. When we shall say, I am a miserable and wretched man, I find nothing in myself answerable to that perfect obedience, sanctification, and holiness of life, which the Lord requireth, and therefore fear, lest the Lord should not be merciful unto me. Now when as men make the perfection of their own goodness, or the virtues within themselves, to be the motives which move God to be merciful unto them, no marvel, if they take away for the time true joy. For the foundation of true joy is, when without anything in ourselves, we repose and trust ourselves in Almighty God. Therefore so long as, like importunate beggars, we will not be

beaten back, nor take our nay say, but the rather, the more miserable we are ourselves, will take so much the faster hold on Christ, apprehending the several parts of his precious redemption unto our sick souls, and apply the same, following him along from his birth to his second coming; so long as we can (losing good manners) thrust in boldly, thirsting after the water of life, so long shall we be sure, whatsoever our feeling be, to keep joy, and no longer, so soon as a man slacks in this, so soon goes away his joy. And so much the rather ought we to trust in God thus to maintain our joy, because God is the founder of this banquet, he makes this feast for us. Well, we must then labour to be thankful and respective to the Benefactor, we must labour to please God; for as it is a property in his children to trust in him, so also is it a property in them to please him, that he may take delight in the showering down his blessings upon them. If otherwise thou beginnest to walk careless of the service of God, negligent in thy profession and slack in using the outward means of thy salvation, why then it is no marvel that thou doest as the world doth, even taste of the bitter cup together with them. But contrary, if thou beest continually upon the watch, walking often with God, as Enoch did, assure thyself thou shalt have joy and comfort in this life. But if otherwise thou wilt do as I have said, do as the world doth, thou must then have as the world hath, thou must be content to do as they do, to have thy joy taken from thee. When the testimony of the Spirit will fail thee what canst thou do, if thou hast not learned betimes to cast up an anchor within the Holy of holies, to rely upon God for this keeping of joy, that thereby thou mayest find true peace and rest, it being a sure haven for thee to repose in, in all tempests. But if following the world (as I have said) thou wilt needs be guided by sense and reason, believing no more than thou seest and feelest, no marvel thou mourn, grieve and want comfort.

Now, when he saith, Rejoice ye righteous in the Lord, one might object and think, that these words were an abridgment to God's children. What, may some say, may they not rejoice in anything, but in the Lord? May they not rejoice in seeing their friends, their children, or their blessings, but only in God? I answer, you must understand that this is no restraint to God's children from their joy, but it is added for a direction for them to moderate their joys. Thou mayest rejoice in thy friends and children, which God hath given thee; but also remember that that which setteth thine heart on work be thy joy in God. I rejoice in my children, my friends, my wealth, yet always I must have an eye unto God, as these are gifts coming from him. And of this there is good reason, because it is the power of God which maketh the joy to be; from him is the life of all: good reason then that in all things we should have respect unto the giver. This should moderate all joy in this life, that always God be the founder of them, that he accompany us in our merry feasts, that he be the founder of them. And this I mark as a special point, because there are many who think this to be the utter destruction of joy; if a man at a merry meeting maketh mention of God, then they think all the sport is spoiled. And if the children of God be at a feast, cannot they rejoice as well as the wicked? I defy that wicked man, which should take any such comfort in these outward things, as the children of God can: they are their's and belong unto them; they are the owners of them, and have them under God's seal; whereas the wicked are but usurpers, and shall one day answer for abusing them.

But here is the point, if in a feast a righteous man talk of God, this puts his heart on work, this is the tune and string of the feast; there is no true joy so long as his tongue is out of tune. It is otherwise with the wicked, who may be censured as the wife was who loured always in her husband's presence, being joyful in his absence. What should we, I pray you, think of such a woman, but that she were not a good

wife, and that all were not well betwixt her husband and she? So may we judge of these men, who think there can be no joy when God standeth by; talk of God, and then all mirth is destroyed: he is counted an indifferent man who, when we come to be merry, is always talking of God; which showeth their joy to be unsound, when the talk of God marreth the feast. It is a wicked thing when he who is our joy, procureth all our joy, without whom we cannot rejoice, should be he who marreth all our joy. Therefore we may so far only rejoice in earthly things as God is amongst us, one eye being always towards the giver. But if otherwise we rejoice with consideration of God's mercy, if we have an eye to God as well in our mirth as otherwise, this is a true sign that our joy is true. The apostle maketh this the ground of all: "Rejoice in the Lord, again and again I say rejoice." There he doubles it as you see. Here he striketh up the drum thrice, "Be glad, ye righteous, rejoice, shout for joy, all ye who are upright of heart." God's children yet, I confess, may be given too much to rejoice in these transitory things. Well, what do they now, when they are thus overtaken? Why where are they now? Surely in dreams; who, as we in dreams desire still the fruition of them, neither be awaked; so they whilst their hearts are affected and taken up with outward comforts, without respect to God, they have but dreams in the stead of the substance, embracing shadows and the like. Well, being awaked, they see the vanities of such illusions, flying to the true substance. Now because the Apostle would lift up those, therefore saith he again and again, Rejoice in the Lord; he biddeth us not always mourn, but to moderate our joy. It is therefore not a restraint but a direction to our joy.

You see, then, for use of this point, the prophet in this place maketh the estate of God's children to be comfortable, and calleth upon them thrice to rejoice; which showeth the slowness of his children to perform this duty. And this reproveth a great many of them, who are

taken with the like faults that the spies were, who sent to view the Land of Canaan, brought back an evil report upon the country. Indeed they said, it was a good and fruitful land, but withal that there was difficulty in winning thereof: that they had better go back to their flesh-pots of Egypt; there being the sons of Anak, great and mighty men, ready to withstand their entrance, gates of brass and the like. The Lord therefore was angry with them. And, beloved, the land of Canaan is the kingdom of Heaven: every man would go that way, but many so estrange themselves, evermore crying, hanging down their heads, sorrowing in their dumps, and never enjoying a cheerful day, and the like, that they discourage the people and bring evil report of the way and entrance into that good land. O can they say there is indeed a good land, flowing with milk and honey, wine, and oil, and all things needful; but there are the sons of Anak, mighty people to be overcome; in this journey to our heavenly Canaan, many afflictions, crosses, trials, tentations and sorrows, hardness and narrowness of way (say they) that it is impossible to be overcome. In so much, that when a wicked man would go, he is discouraged and saith, What, shall I go thus? Must I come to heaven by these means, that I shall never joy? No such matter; no by no means; I will not lose my present joy for hopes. Is this the fault of religion, beloved? No, thou shouldest make religion the comfortablest course that may be. We should say to a wicked man, Wouldest thou have true joy; come, I will show thee the way, though the beginning be hard, yet heaven is worth more than all; and thou shalt get greater joy in the end, than ever thou couldest procure here in that way thou wast careful to walk in.

This also serveth to reprove them who are already entered into the land of promise, discouraging others by their lamentations, sorrows, cast down countenance, and so forth; whereas, Rejoice, again and again I say rejoice, saith the Apostle. I would have God's children in

this case by their joy stir up the wicked men to spite them when he shall see how they rejoice, and what comfort they have, that in poverty they have always fulness of joy. Seeing then that in miseries they can go through with comfort, I would have them to make the wicked's teeth to gnash and water at their joy, that they might provoke them to enter the same way to God. It followeth, Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; where, before I come unto the last point, let us now briefly see,

What is here meant by a righteous man.

The prophet showeth in this, comparing it with the former, that these who before were called such as trusted in God, are here called righteous and upright; you see the same thing is meant by both, those who there were bidden to rejoice, are here bidden to triumph for joy. Now such as God's mercy compasseth about, those men who are here called upright of heart, these must rejoice.

Now some man may object and say, if no man be counted a wicked man, but he that (as I said before) distrusteth in God, this then is true, that that man, who findeth that he can trust in God, all his sins can do him no hurt. Therefore will some say, This is as sure, as sure may be, that by this means I may have a little more liberty to sin. To which I answer, that that man who displeaseth God, cannot say that he trusteth in God, he that trusteth in God is upright of heart; and no man can find in his heart to trust in God, but only that man who is just and upright. So that if a man take liberty to sin, let him have recourse hitherto, and I will oppose him of mercy. The wicked cannot trust in God, but are rebels against him. That man who will lead a life against God, that will be a rebel against him, is to be proclaimed of us a traitor, though he be loth to be called so; I say, that man who will not be broken of his impieties and lewdness, but settleth himself

in a course against Almighty God, he is proclaimed traitor, and we so proclaim him by trumpet, so often as the word of God is read or preached. Now I ask that man, whether he can trust in God for his life? Is it possible that he who delighteth to displease God and cross him, should trust in him? Can a man trust his enemy, with whom he is always at enmity, or at least an enemy to God, for he will never be quiet, but always have a fling at him? And so can this man, who hath this false heart, that hath not a full purpose of heart to cleave unto him, can he trust unto him? No, he cannot; and here this serveth to reprove the Papists, who, whatsoever show they make to keep the commandments, yet fail far in the performance thereof. For remember that which is set down in the commandments, I will show mercy unto thousands; but how are these thousands qualified? They must love him and keep his commandments. Dost thou then love him? But why, Sir, do you think I hate him? Well, let it be tried. "If you love me keep my commandments," saith the apostle, let me know thy love by thy works. This is the point; He that keepeth not the commandments of God, he cannot assure himself that God will be merciful unto him; and the man that apprehendeth God's mercy it is not possible but he should keep his commandments, and love him, and in loving him fulfil his will. But, say the Papists, yet you say God's mercy is free, and God will pardon without works, and then (say they) if the case be so, what need I care how I live? May I for answer say thus, Love God, and do evil, if thou canst. I presume so much upon God's children, that I say it is impossible for them to do evil. He that hath truly apprehended the mercy of God, it is impossible (mark my meaning, I say not that it is impossible that this man should fall, stumble, or step out of his way) but it is impossible that he should lead the course of his life as formerly he did. Let him sin, I say, if he can: St. John saith he cannot sin, he cannot make sin his trade, and walk as before.

For we are to observe the walking of a Christian and not his stumblings. We must look if, as Enoch did, he walk with God here. Then this is the point. That that man who hath apprehended Christ, by a true and lively faith, it is impossible he should haunt the same ways as before; he may stumble in the way, but not finally fall. It is a good horse, which never stumbles or steps aside a little; so that sin is not now his ordinary trade and walk, so that his sins may now rather be called stumblings than walks. Aye, but what is this to the walking? may some say, We must not stumble to attain perfection, we must walk in all the commandments, as St. Luke reporteth of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who were said to walk in all the commandments of God. But did they never transgress? Yes verily; and therefore is their infidelity and spots registered: but this was but a stumbling in the way: they might be overtaken, but that was but a step beside the way; they delighted not in the breaking of any, therefore by the Holy Ghost they are called righteous. If then we would talk and discern of an upright and just man, let us look upon his walk, and not unto a few of his works, to the constant course of his life. A man that buildeth an hospital, is he therefore an honest man? No, I wis; but look unto the course of his life, and see if his face be set towards heaven that is a good man, and not to his fallings and stumblings. If a man fall in talk and the like, we say presently, O there is a wicked man surely; the wicked hypocrite will say so, but he that hath true understanding must remember that there are many enemies, rubs, and strong impediments in the way we go, he will have compassion. It is no wonder that we both still stumble and miss of our way. Be not then so ready for falls and slips of thy brethren rashly to judge them as hypocrites, but rather stay and inquire, what such a one's walk is, whether this manner of life be his trade or not, and then also let us judge in charity; for we know, the godly are not freed from sin in this life, only that sin should not reign and have dominion in their mortal bodies. It is not a few good actions, nor some heinous sins, that shall

make me say, there is a wicked man; but I will look to the ordinary course of his life and walk. Here then is the point, he that is born of God, sinneth not: no (as I said), to make a trade and an occupation of it. As sure as can be, if God hath loved thee, and bestowed faith upon thee, there is a seed thrown into thy heart which will not suffer thee to run into thy former courses. And therefore I say, the free apprehending of the mercy of God is so far from overturning holiness, that it is the true way of establishing of the same. So what I pray you is the apostle's argument, to make a man offer up himself a living sacrifice? "I beseech you (saith he) brethren, by the mercies of God, offer up yourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable serving of God." Here is the motives, even the mercies of God. And I say this hath more force to work upon a good, kind heart, the consideration of God's mercy, than if heaven and hell and all were set open before them. This maketh them crucify their desires, abstain from pleasures, and the like, although there were no hell to affright them. For then the love of God, being shed abroad in our hearts compelleth us, causing our hearts to dissolve and melt in love and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Rejoice then all ye that are upright of heart. But now, because, in these last words of my text, he nameth and stirreth up chiefly those to rejoice,

Who are upright of heart.

Wherein they must not only be glad and rejoice, but also shout for joy, God herein manifesting his great love in our weakest endeavours. O but, may some man say, this is that whereby I am discouraged, that is the matter, I cannot joy. It is not so easy a matter to rejoice, be righteous, trust in the Lord, or have this upright heart. That is the matter that I cannot joy, because I am unprofitable,

unrighteous, and come far short of such and such men, in whom we see many good fruits, themselves in their own sights being but barren trees, and therefore cannot rejoice. I answer, God looketh to the heart, and not to the works, he respecteth neither the number of the works. If yet thy heart be upright, though senseless, this must nourish the faith and hope in thee. Dost thou repine at thy evil deeds? Doth thine heart love God? Doth thine heart resolve to be constant in his service, notwithstanding all lets? Dost thou make a conscience of evil thoughts and strive to expel them, keeping a pure and an upright heart? Dost thou grieve for what thou canst not do? Then I say, shout for joy. And remember all you fearful consciences, that, as faith and hope, which are the evidences of our life and salvation in the life to come, are here in this life; so even the fruits of our sanctity, which are the actions of faith and hope, they are not of outward things; but as faith and hope are of things unseen, even so the fruits of our sanctification, are all, or many times hid up from us in this life, where our life is hid with God in Christ. No wonder then thou want feeling, and a full evidence of these and these graces of sanctification.

O but if thou hang upon Christ, and suck life out of him, yet is thy salvation most sure, and when the things believed and hoped for shall appear, then also shall the fulness of the fruits of thy sanctity be manifested. Then look only that thou keep a good heart, and for the rest remember, that is surely kept for thee, and thou art reserved for it, it is hid with Christ in God. At the furthest, when he who is thy life shall appear, then shall thy hunger be satisfied. Neither let the multitude of good works, which come from others, and which thou canst not perform, so much toss thee. It is not long prayers, frequenting of many sermons, giving alms to the poor, and any outward actions that can assure us of our blessedness. For though a man do many good things, many good works, yet are they no further

pleasing unto God, nor evidences of grace, than as they proceed from a good heart. Hold this ground sure, if thy heart be good, thou art in a most blessed estate. This thou must try betwixt God and thyself, if thy heart be good, then rejoice again, yea shout for joy. Again, for thy comfort, remember yet another ground. That though the Lord judge according to works, yet he judgeth not according to the number, but according to the weight. He considereth the weight, not the number of them: that is he considereth, Is this a sound work? Cometh it from an upright heart? which is the foundation, which God respecteth. Therefore whatsoever thy works, be thou sure to preserve a good heart, and blessed art thou. Therefore it is, that one sigh, with God, which cometh from a good heart, is more accepted of him and regarded, than all those buildings and outward works, which the most part of men boast of. Not that I disallow them; O no, for they are most pleasing unto God, if they come from a good heart. But because for the most part, (chiefly the good works of the Papists,) not coming from a good heart, they are displeasing unto God. And the reason is, because nothing is further acceptable unto God, but as it runneth through the river of the heart. Now every sigh of a faithful soul to God, runneth through the river of the heart, when their good works come not that way; therefore one sigh from a good heart is more worth than all. Let us all then strive with God, that we may obtain this good heart; whereby in the midst of sorrows we may rejoice in God, and then I say with the prophet, Be glad ye righteous, rejoice in the Lord, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright of heart. So much for this time. Now let us pray, &c.

SERMON XXIX:

The oath which he sware to our father Abraham - Luke 1:73-75

The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fears, all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness before him.

THESE words contain God's oath unto the fathers for us, wherein old Zacharie now rejoiceth that those days were now come, wherein the promised blessing unto the fathers, and the faithful their seed (according as God had formerly sworn) was now fulfilled. That the long expected salvation of Israel had now at last fully revealed himself in his human nature. In this he rejoiceth, that according to God's oath to the fathers, the faithful should now have a full deliverance from the power and thraldom of their enemies. And in general the text containeth God's mercy to his saints; wherein we may behold the excellency and privilege of God's children above the wicked, a difference betwixt them and others. The godly (he showeth) are delivered both from the power and freedom of their enemies. Their foes now may well molest and trouble them, and be as thorns to prick and annoy them, but they shall have no power over them, yea they shall also have freedom from them at last; and this freedom to God's children is so sure that my text saith, they shall not serve God like unto the Papists (whose fearful and trembling consciences can have none assurance of their life, no comfort nor assurance of God's love), but they shall serve him joyfully without fear in full assurance of his love, wearing upon their heads the helmet of salvation, looking up boldly when their salvation

appeareth; they shall serve him cheerfully without fear, and more for continuance this their service shall be for ever, there shall be no end of the same, he who hath begun a good work in them, will also finish it, their sins shall not stay his mercies, his preventing love shall ever assist them; whom once he loveth, he shall love unto the end, he will keep and lead them in the way. This is their blessed estate that God hath sworn that they shall not only be freed from the hands of their enemies, but also that they shall serve him without fear all the days of their life, in holiness and righteousness, that is, in justification and sanctification, Christ's righteousness being imputed unto them, they shall bring forth the fruits of holiness in their conversation, they shall be holy as he is holy. This is a wonderful mercy here promised to God's children, that they shall be freed from their enemies, they shall rest assured not to be overcome of any crosses or afflictions, but at last to have a final deliverance of all. Yea also, that now (since God hath sworn it) in spite of all these enemies, they shall serve him for ever without fear, they shall have a joyful and cheerful life with peace of conscience, not being continually tortured with miserable fears, like unto the wicked. Here is the great charter of God to his child, which may make him laugh at hell, sin, and death, and in a glorious disdain triumph over them all; as also over things present and to come, principalities and powers; resolving that neither height nor depth, nor breadth, nor length, nor any other thing shall ever be able to separate them from that love which is in Christ Jesus. And beloved, here is the ground of our assurance which should comfort us to be without fear, with this valiant and brave resolution. Because it is in God who keepeth us, whatsoever we are, yet he is most powerful to accomplish his promises. It is not in me, nor in thee, nor in him; but it is in the gracious goodness of a loving and omnipotent merciful Father; who as he hath loved me freely, and chosen me from all eternity, and in time opened mine eyes, and called me from darkness into his marvellous light; so am I assured this gracious God

will never leave that work imperfect, which he hath began, (because he is perfection itself,) but will go along with me, lead me in the way by his good Spirit, when I stray bring me home again, turn all my sins to my good, bring light out of darkness, perfection out of weakness, make all things work to the best to me. And why so? God, who is the truth, hath sworn it, he cannot deny himself, it must needs be so, that God's children should have deliverance from their enemies, and serve him for ever without fear. God hath sworn it, and it is as true as God's truth.

Then, for the first point we may consider God's infinite mercy in our justification, that there being in us nothing worthy of his love, yet he accepteth of us in his beloved Son Christ Jesus, applying and imputing unto us his righteousness, as though it were our own, thereby reconciling us unto him. And here consider the difference betwixt the wicked and God's children. The reprobates consider not their wicked and fearful estates, and therefore, if at any time they fear nothing, it is because of their security, not knowing the danger, and therefore go on in their wicked courses; but the godly they only do, and can truly fear God, yet so that this slavish fear is far from them, they only have this privilege not to fear their enemies' power. The wicked man again hath no peace, still fearing one thing or other, living amongst the midst of his foes, every moment ready to be devoured. From whence this doctrine may be raised, that a man in his natural estate is left in the hands of his enemies. God's children for all this, knowing that they are freed and redeemed, fear not, yea they live without fear, knowing that they are redeemed from the curse of the law, and that Christ hath made them free. All they in the mean time are in a dreadful estate who know not the same, who have no life in them. So John speaketh, "Heb that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life," and what more? "But the wrath of God abideth upon him," he

who is not ingrafted in Christ, there remaineth no comfort for him, he is left in the hands of his greatest enemies. God's wrath abideth on him, which how fearful it is, oh! who can imagine? to have a full cup of God's wrath prepared for him. In the meantime, what do the godly, how do they escape his wrath? Why they have made an appeal from the throne of justice, to the throne of mercy. This is the first cause, why they fear not, they have again and again, yea continually they appeal thus unto Christ, transferring the burden of their sins upon him, on whom was laid the iniquities of us all, and with whose stripes (as the prophet speaketh) we are healed. Here do they find assured peace and rest, having life in the Son. So saith St. John in his first Epistle, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Therefore, being in the Son they fear not so good a friend, but dare boldly without fear expect his coming to judgment. Oh, but say the wicked, what talk unto me of these fears, I find no such matter in me, I am free from these terrors, but poor wretches, are they free from these terrors, why then are they surely reserved to be the very butt of God's wrath, at whom he may shoot the preparations of his fury. No marvel I say, that a wicked man have no sense and feeling of these things, nor what that cruel wrath is, reserved for sinners in the life to come; for their understandings and minds are blindedd by the God of this world, that they should see that glorious light which should awaken them from their security. With the godly it is far otherwise, for they both know the danger, and from what they are freed by Christ, their eyes are opened, and yet they live without fear. A second reason whereof is because although they sometimes have plunges, and seem to fear, yet doth not this continue, but they gather again full strength against all fears, considering that it was the end of Christ's coming to deliver them from all fears, he being made sin for them, which knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, as St. Paul to the Corinthians speaketh. But the wicked are more brutish than

Balaam's ass, they are in the midst of the danger, and yet see not the same, like unto Balaam, who saw not the danger, when yet the poor ass was afraid of the angel of the Lord, which stood in her way; yea all wicked men live in such dangers, compassed with so many sorrows, that if their eyes were but a little opened, to see the danger, they would not only be afraid, but like unto him, who late in the night had escaped a danger going over a bridge very narrow, and so great a depth under the same that if his horse's foot had slipped, death had immediately followed, who being the next day told what a great danger he had escaped, would needs go view the same, where for fear of his former danger he died. So would these wicked men be overcome with the fearful sight of their estates. For all this the godly see great and fearful sights many times and yet they fear not. Because, as it is in Hebrews, they remember that they have a merciful and a faithful high priest, such a one who took upon him our nature, that therein he might reconcile us unto God. Forasmuch (saith he) then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that he might destroy through death him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and that he might deliver all them, who for fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. As also that they rest assured that Christ's death was to free us, that by him we may have life, as John speakethg. For this cause appeared the Son of God, that he might loose the works of the devil; for these causes therefore do they not fear. But the wicked man is given over into the hands of his enemies; horrible are his fears if he espy them, many times tending to desperation: and most desperate is his estate if he espy them not, most miserable he is howsoever. This freedom of the faithful, to be freed from the fear and hands of their enemies, they shall never attain unto; for God will give their enemy the devil power over them; God will bid Satan do with them what he will without limitation, as he did unto Job. First Satan was forbidden to touch his person, and

next (although to afflict that) yet in any case to save his life; but for the wicked God will use no such restraint: Satan shall use them at his pleasure: both in soul and body they shall follow him at his beck and call. Is not this a pitiful estate, when the devil is the leader of the army, to be bound to follow him as chief captain, who will lead them unto eternal destruction. A pitiful thing I say it is to be given over unto the devil, who having once gotten possession, will not easily be put out again, unless a stronger man come to thrust him out, even Jesus Christ. Neither could Christ do it with ease but with great trouble and anguish, as the prophet showeth he must first be abased and despised, rejected, have experience of infirmities, be smitten, humbled, and judged as plagued of God, wounded and broken for our iniquities, make his grave with the wicked, be cut out of the land of the living, brought as a sheep to the slaughter, briefly a man full of sorrows. Beloved, think you this an easy matter thus to loose the works of the devil, when the Son of God must thus with strong hand come and thrust him out. Oh! that we could learn to prize so great a benefit and keep him forth betimes; for if we do not, if he once get footing there must be cruel wrestling and much ado to expel him, to thy great sorrow. Therefore doth he begin his kingdom in this world, getting in this life possession of those whom he thinketh to retain for ever in perpetual darkness. The apostle Paul tellethk of a strange fornication, willing such a one to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. But not such mercy do wicked men receive, being given over to the devil, both soul and body; the soul of them also shall be tormented with unspeakable torments. They shall be fastened close to their enemy, a miserable thing for them to be glued to the devil, better be galley slaves to the Turk a thousand times than to endure this slavery to Satan's will.

Now let us examine and see in whom, and how this tyranny of Satan is discerned. 1. When the Gospel is preached unto thee, and there is a veil drawn over thy eyes, that thou hast no taste or feeling of the sweetness of the same, when it is taught and hid from thee that thou art no more moved thereat than a stone, that thou feelest no comfort but art still senseless as before, either of mercies or judgments, thou art surely as yet under this tyranny of Satan. Some there are who rejoice thereat, and hear it willingly, yet follow not the same, nor will be ruled thereby; so did Herod to John the Baptist; others again are altogether hardhearted, the more they hear the more obstinate they remain. These remain both under the tyranny of Satan. The Gospel unto such is yet hid; hearing, reading, and the like, they all are rather a custom than any essential matter, without which can be no salvation. But the cause of all this is (saith the apostle) they are blind and lost sheep. If our Gospel be then hid, it is hid unto them who are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds, that is of the infidels, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should not shine unto them. So that whilst the prince of darkness bears sway in us we are blind and can see nothing; and I appeal unto the consciences of long hearers who have profited nothing or little thereby, whether or not this Gospel be hid unto them which daily soundeth in their ears, since they profit nothing thereby, remaining still in their old sins, and first trade of life. Now the devil, when he hath once possession, doth he come alone? No, for death, a second enemy, doth always attend his footing, the devil and death dance both in a string. Deathm then (saith the apostle) is also an enemy. The last enemy that shall be subdued (saith he) is death. So the life of a natural man is but a death, until he be in Christ. Men think it strange for all this, that wicked men's lives should appear in show so full of mirth, and all kinds of pleasure. But the wise man well answereth such, considering the cause of this error. "Because (saith he) judgment is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the

children of men are set upon vanity." God (he showeth) although he send not speedy vengeance upon the wicked, but is of long suffering, yet the delaying of their punishments should not dismay God's children. For what although for a short time they enjoy all the pleasures of this earth, yet are they in the hands of their enemies; before they be aware, this cruel enemy, the first death, seizeth upon them, robbeth them of all comforts, even when they think least of him, not fearing him at all. This is a miserable estate, to be thus suddenly surprised by so cruel an enemy. But what of all this? why the first death is also attended with a crueller enemy, it bringeth thee into the hands of the second death, a third enemy. This death bringeth thee to another, even to the second death, where shall be no end of torments, but a most miserable eternal death, full of unspeakable sorrows, world without end, where also God fourthly shall be thy enemy. This is most of all miserable, when God by tormenting shall also be our enemy. If he were not a party, there might be some hope, but he being an enemy all is gone. The cruelty of this to have God for our enemy old Eli well showeth, reproving of his sons he saith, "if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge it, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall plead for him?" This certainly is a miserable thing, thus to fall having God our enemy; who then can possibly plead our cause, if Christ be our enemy, then, as the Psalmist speaketh, "Blessedo are all they who trust in him, if his anger be once kindled." It is not, as most men think, that God is all mercy. No, I tell thee, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Read Psalm 94, God is also a God of revenge: and in another place he saith, God is known by executing of judgment, and "theq wicked shall turn into hell, and all that forget God." He hath a black day of revenge reserved for his enemies; when he will command to bring forth his enemies, who would not that he should reign over them, that they may be killed before him. Let us then put these things seriously unto our hearts. God hath many times

willed to reign over us, but we would none of him for the most part. Well if we will none of these instructions, what then? "We shall be punished with everlasting perdition, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." We shall then have no society with God, he being our enemy, his power shall be showed in executing his power upon the wicked. Job's complaintst are most grievous; that his soul is pursued as the wind, his health passing away as a cloud, the days of his afflictions piercing his bones in the night, his sinews taking no rest, being cast into the mire and become as ashes and dust; when he prayed not being heard or regarded, God turning cruelly against him, being an enemy unto him with the strength of his hand. If God thus use his own dear children in this life, how much more cruelly will he torture the wicked in the life to come. And the Lord is compared to a strong archer, the wicked being the butt of his wrath, in whom he will shoot venemous arrows, the poison whereof shall drink up their spirits, as he here in anguish under the cross confesseth himself to have felt. For conclusion then of this point let us behold and be afraid of the estate of nature, since a natural man is thus miserable, having so many enemies. All God's creatures are against them, the power of God shall torment them. An earthly master would not be content to be thus used of his servant, upon whom he had bestowed many favours; how much less will the King of kings be thus served of wicked men? But what shall I say? It is a supernatural work of grace to be thus drawn to acknowledge God's mercies to serve him truly. Thus have you seen the fearful estate of a natural man, left in the hands of his greatest enemies.

Let us now come to a second point,

2. Some shall be delivered.

But, may some object and say, if God be so fearful an enemy when his wrath is kindled, who shall deliver me from this first enemy? For do you think, but that the wicked could wish that there were no God? Surely he if he be not in Christ, could wish that there were no God, because he hateth God. Now God being his enemy, it is a hatred, when he could wish his enemy were not at all: God being his enemy, he could wish there were no Deity at all. But hath God no more enemies? Yes, until we were reconciled we were all enemies unto him. So the apostle saith, "if whilst we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." God's children until their reconciliation are also enemies. Now the point is who shall take up the matter betwixt God and us. Old Eli asketh this question of his sons: "Ify one man sin against another, the judge will judge it, but if a man sin against the Lord, who will plead for him?" And Job he complaineth, that God was not a man like unto him to answer him in judgment, neither was there any umpire to lay his hand upon both. This then is no small controversy to end; to find one to lay his hand upon both. But God's mighty power doth it. Our Emanuel, Christ Jesus, he putteth one hand upon the Father and another upon us, so making perfect atonement and reconciliation by the union of his two natures. Now there are a select company who are partakers of this reconciliation, the lintels and posts of whose doors are sealed with the blood of the Lamb. Every one shall not be partaker of the benefit of his redemption, but the chosen of God; the wicked shall have no part therein. It may be, some will here object, that I restrain and shut up this precious redemption in a corner, which was sent unto all; and that I preach desperation. No, I tell you I preach not desperation. I confess the merit and value of this blood to be of infinite price, that it was sufficient for ten thousand worlds much more to one. I confess it was sent, and is freely offered unto all; but if thou refuse it, if thou wilt not accept of it, (it being only powerful unto those who accept the same,) if, I say, thou refuse to receive it, and cleave fast unto

Christ in sign of thy acceptation, what portion hast thou in him? God sendeth continually unto us by the preaching of the word, private and public means desiring us to be reconciled and come unto him, laying hold of Christ's blood and righteousness as means of reconciliation. When we put him off with excuses, and will not come when he calleth, how can we escape damnation? Again, some there are, who embrace the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings cheerfully, the feet of peace being joyful unto them. These may boldly be without fear, they are delivered from the hands, power, and fear of their enemies. The Lord is merciful unto such with a marvellous mercy. This is then our blessed estate, that although all of us deserve to drink a full measure of the cup of his wrath (by nature being enemies), yet such is his love, that he will suffer the Son to take us out of his own hands, thereby to obtain our freedom. After which (whatsoever we were before) he is content to look upon us in his beloved Son, yea, he is well pleased with our persons and actions being in him. So the apostle saith, "that being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Christ being with his righteousness apprehended and made ours, then there is peace with God, there is no fear of enemies. God's children, I confess, so long as they live, shall never be so freed that they shall have no enemies; for the devil, he knows he must fly away, with a broken head at the last, yet he will love to be doing still, and vex such, whom he cannot master at his will. But here is our comfort, we are delivered from the power and fear of our enemies. We fear him not, but know assuredly, as the apostle to the Romans speakethb, that our God, according to his promise, even the God of peace, will tread down Satan under our feet, yet will the Lord have us to be his instruments in this action, for the greater ignominy unto Satan, and our own good. Therefore must we be content to fight in patience the Lord's battles, until by his might we be finally victorious. But what more? The Lord will have Satan even to be our drudge; he shall, in spite of him, do us service.

The devil, he buffeted Saint Paul, but to what end did the Lord suffer him? Was it not to master and tame his corruptions, to keep him humble, and the like. The devil is but a drudge to Paul and all the faithful in this kind. So also Christ telleth unto Peter, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to winnow thee, as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." We know that any kind of corn is so much the better when the chaff is removed. The devil doth the faithful this service, he winnoweth their corruptions away by his temptations, and buffetings, that they may be clean wheat for the Lord's garner; he shall do us this drudgery service in spite of him, he shall do us good service. It is no wonder that we be buffeted by him many times, for though we escape his thraldom, yet can we as yet not fly so far but he will overtake us; no wonder then thou endure many skirmishes, and that thy enemies' fury be great and full of rage, when thou hast escaped him, and yet he beset thee with more fury than ever. The children of God for the most part have most cause to rejoice in their greatest afflictions and trials. For be thou sure if the devil and thy spiritual enemies had that possession of thee which thou under the cross fearest, if thou wert shut up in their prison, what needed all this stir for a thing in possession. Thou shouldest surely then have peace. Let us then comfort ourselves in whatsoever troubles, for God is our help and stay in trouble, ready to be found, if we be too weak for our enemies. God he will fight for us, he will put the devil to flight.

And here is our exceeding comfort that now also the captain being put to flight, the soldiers will likewise quickly fly: the devil being subdued, death also, and all the rest of our enemies, they shall also fly away. Death it shall not hurt us; of an enemy and a cruel enemy it shall prove our best friend. The apostle Paul, having found his great misery, by the continual combats betwixt the flesh and the spirit, with his own weakness to resist and the excellency of our freedom

from such heavy crosses, at last you see he wishes deliverance, crying out: "Oh wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Why dost thou ask who shall deliver thee? I tell thee being in Christ death itself shall deliver thee, even this enemy shall prove thy faithful friend. Death shall do thee this good service. It shall bring thee pure unto heaven. All this lumpish heaviness and corruption which now procureth unto thee so many sorrows, shall all by death be taken away; it shall be unto thee the Lord's refining pot, to purge away all the dross of thy corruptions, that thou mayest be pure gold for the Lord's treasury.

And lastly, death shall be unto thee but as the porter of Heaven, to open the door of thy celestial Canaan and new Jerusalem unto thee. Who although he be a churlish porter, yet courage, for he will lead thee unto Heaven. Do you think that a weary prisoner (who had long lain miserably afflicted and loaded with bolts and chains) would much respect the ugliness of his jailor, who should come for his enlargement; nay, would not rather the joyful expectation of liberty to see his own country, rejoice with his friends, and acquaintance, and the like, rather so transport him with joy, that he would not regard the ugliness of the porter. So we are all in prison here in this life, fettered with the cords of sin, and our own corruptions, whereby we live in continual sorrow, longing for liberty, to be clothed with our house which is from heaven. This is our country, death he cometh to set us at liberty; let us not then regard the ugliness of his shape, nor his grim countenance; but rather let our minds be wrapped up with joyful liberty at hand, to come unto our heavenly country, to have eternal life free from all miseries, to have the fruition of God's countenance. The company of all saints, and our dear friends and acquaintance, let these and the like meditations sweeten the bitterness of death, and then our supposed enemy will prove our faithful friend. The Papists dream of a Purgatory, a third place by the

way; but let them and this accursed doctrine, which hath no warrant from Scripture, perish. Let us who have not thus learned Christ, never think of these fooleries; we acknowledge no such thing, but an immediate passage after death, either to eternal joys, or perpetual shame and contempt.

Thus you see we are freed by death, and as the apostle speaketh, yet are we not hurt thereby. Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death (saith he) where is thy sting? Oh grave where is thy victory? The apostle triumpheth over all, giving thanks unto God at last for our victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Death indeed was fearful with a sting, but now the sting of death is gone and the strength thereof also, we ought not to fear it. I confess death at first is ugly, like unto a serpent whose sting we fear. Aye, but I say look nearer unto him, and if thou be in Christ, the sting is gone; and then as men take a stingless serpent into their bosom, playing with it boldly, so mayest thou do unto death, now that sin the sting thereof is gone, fear not him now who is thy friend. Death is swallowed up in victory. Yet, that we may be freed from our enemies, and not fear them, it is here further required, to attain unto this assurance; we must observe yet a third point, which is that,

Such must serve him for ever in holiness and righteousness.

But, may some object, we like this very well; if the sting of death be gone, then will we fear no more, we will be careless and live as we list. But, I would ask of such, Aye, but how knowest thou the truth of thy justification? it is not enough that thou see, but thou must show evidence to prove the same by an holy life. Thou must serve him therefore without fear all the days of thy life, in holiness and righteousness, in justification and sanctification, these must go together. Those who are assured of the truth of their justification, it

is impossible that they should be the servants of sin. No justification unto thee without serving of God in holiness. Neither let any say or object that in this I preach desperation; no, I preach not desperation; I confess there is no sin so great, but there is mercy for the same, if we repent. And that nothing can bar us of the same but our impenitence. But withal I affirm that if there be not a change made in thy heart, by a supernatural power, mastering and overruling thy corruptions, subduing thee from thyself to serve God in holiness of life, that as yet thy brags of thy justification are but in vain. For it is most certain where Christ's blood hath wrought justification there doth it also work sanctification, in holiness of life. For Christ's blood in justification is like unto a plaster to hide our sins that the ugliness of them appear not. But as in a plaster there is more virtue than only to hide the sore, which pierceth also inwardly in the wound, eating away the corruptions and infectious matter, until by degrees it cleanse and heal again. So the blood of Christ in justification, (if it be rightly applied,) is I confess unto thee as a sufficient plaster to hide the sore of thy sins, but it hath also a further virtue, it must also search into the sore, meet with the humour, and eat away by degrees thy corruptions, subdue thy rebellious passions and affections, make thee a new man to live an holy life, and serve him without fear constantly for ever, now pulling away one piece of corruption and then another. So that I say thou canst not have justification without sanctification; and sanctification hath also further notes of assurance in it. For then the Spirit also giveth further testimonies to our consciences by an holy life. St. John he joineth them thus together, "Except (saith he) that a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven." But this were a bottomless gulf to speak of. So much then for this time. Now let us pray, &c.

SERMON XXX:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things - Hebrews 2:14-15

Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that he might destroy through death him that had the power of death, that is the devil.

And that he might deliver all them, which for fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

WHAT the natural estate of a man unredeemed is, (to be as a branch cut off from the root, a child of death; and an heir of hell; for ever to be banished from the presence of God, &c.) if we knew or did rightly consider, it would so astonish us, that we would never be merry in this life, until a better had freed us from these fears. This certainly is a cruel estate which giveth a man no peace, but maketh him always fear. Most miserable is this estate before deliverance, being enthralled unto sin and death, so that no slave is so servile to his lord, as a man in this estate is to his vile and corrupt affections;

wherein being fallen from grace, in the state of bondage we now remain. This fall of bondage from so glorious a freedom which we once had, is a most fearful fall, to be bond-slaves now unto sin, Satan, and our own corruptions. Yea, whosoever he be who is not redeemed, he is a bond slave, being fettered to the devil and his own corruptions. Yet for all this, all mankind is not thus left, but some have redemption and freedom, some are partakers of deliverance, by the merits and death of Christ. Neither must we think this was an easy thing for our Blessed Saviour thus to die for us, for he could not die in his palace of Heaven, but must come to a miserable world, environed with sinners and all kind of troubles, there to be abased, humbled, disgraced, and contemned. Lastly, dying in bitterness of soul, when for our sins he appeared as a man forsaken, being made a spectacle of angels and men; such was and is the fearful estate of nature, that to redeem some it cost the Son of God so dear. From whence the point for our instruction is that death seizeth upon a natural man in the estate of nature, as his proper prey and due debt; if he be not changed and renewed by regeneration. If this were rightly weighed and duly considered, and laid to heart as we should, it would give us no rest until we had found ourselves engrafted in Christ, until our consciences had settled a secure peace by anchoring upon him, never resting until we had found such means, whereby all our sins might be reckoned up on his score. This point is very necessary to be urged and stood upon; for such is our dulness, that although we hear of these things, yet we weigh them not seriously, we meditate not, nor lay them to our hearts carefully, as things effectually belonging unto us, and briefly, the present alluring face of things doth so carry us away with their deceits, that we cannot (I am sure we do not) think seriously of the greatness of our sins, of what heavy curse for the least of them we stand guilty; we think not of the pains of the damned, what horror it shall be to be banished for ever from the presence of God; we prize not aright the great benefit of

redemption, the glory to come, nor the excellency of this deliverance from the fear of death now to be spoken of: we are, I say, marvellous dull creatures.

Well to proceed: death seizes, as I have said, upon a natural man as his prey. For this look Rom. chap. 6. The apostle there showeth that "the wages of sin is death." Death as a due debt, seizeth upon the natural sinful man as his prey, death must prey and live upon him for continuance, and that sin is of this nature that it calleth continually for death, as an hireling for his wages. So Saint James speaketh to rich worldly men, "Beholdb the hire of your labourers, which have reaped your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts." Not only this sin therefore, but every sin a man committeth, is like unto an hireling continually crying unto God for vengeance. So in another place this apostle telleth us, "that lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death;" sin crieth still for death. So the blood of Abeld, it was a quiet thing done in secret, and the earth drunk up the blood; O! but the guilt thereof ascended, crying unto God for vengeance. Saith the Lord to Cain, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the earth." It gave the Lord no rest, importuning speedy vengeance. So the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah cried unto God for vengeance so instantly, that the Lord at last revealeth the matter to his friend Abraham, saying, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is exceeding grievous, I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to that cry." I will go down, saith he, their grievous sins give me no rest, but still call for death, and destruction.

Let us now therefore consider the fearful estate of sinful natural man, that so many sins as he committeth, he hath so many

importunate suitors unto God for vengeance to come upon him; nay now these sins (such is their misery) give the Lord no rest until he send down vengeance for them. They further plead equity unto God. That death and vengeance are the wages of sin, and he being a just God, must needs give every one what belongeth unto him. So that tribulation and anguish must needs come upon the soul which sinneth, both Jew and Gentile. So the apostle demandeth there, putting them in mind of the bitter fruits of sin, whereof, being in some sort freed, we are ashamed, "whatg fruit had ye in these things, whereof ye are now ashamed, for the end of those things is death;" whatsoever the beginning be, the end is fearful, even death; one death leading unto the eternity of another. Sinners in this life act a tragedy, which although in the beginning you see nothing but mirth, and joy on all parts, yet stay but a little and look upon the end, and you shall see the destruction of soul and body, a bloody tragical conclusion, a cruel and bitter death, shall make a fearful and final end of them. They shall be the prey of death, which shall bring them unto hell fire for ever. The apostle he also saith, that at first the deceitfulness of sin slew him, until Christ had freed him, he was as a prey of death, a dead man, so long as sin had dominion over him, for, saith he, "sin took occasion by the commandment and deceived me, and thereby slew me."

Thus you see that sin and death go hand in hand together; if thou continue in sin, look unto it, for it will surely bring death before thou be aware. We use to fly from, or earnestly resist our enemies; yet here is our misery, that sin being so fearful an enemy, yet we neither resist nor fly from it, we fear it not, but we will dally with it so long, until it will destroy us. Every sin we commit giveth unto us a wound, until a number of them at last prove deadly. Every oath thou swearest it giveth a stab unto the soul, until it bring destruction. Sin, saith the apostle, revived, and I died. No sooner doth sin revive, but

death also taketh footing therewith. He calleth it also towards the end of the chapter, a body of death; it is not a parcel, a leg or an arm of death, but sin is strong, with united forces it cometh on strongly, it will surely kill, it is a body of death. Nay, which is worse and more dangerous, sin is like a body within a body, having like unto a woman with child, a quick thing within thee, which if thou destroy not betimes it will kill thee. And who would be so mad, as willingly or any wise entertain or cherish that which in the end will kill him. So we have the sting of death within us, even sin, which without help will bring us unto death. For after sin, then cometh the sting to prove deadly, whereupon death ensueth. As when Paul was assailed with the viper, which leaped out of the fire upon his hand, which he shook off again without harm. The barbarians looked, when he should have swollen and fallen down dead, death continually amongst them following the like accidents. So we being stung with the viper sin, it is the Lord's mercies that we are not all consumed. Though such who are in Christ cast off this viper, that it hurt them not, yet the custom of the world is not so, the custom of our isle is not so. If this viper sin leap upon us and sting us, death doth follow, the custom is to swell thereafter and fall down dead. And why so? Must death needs follow? The apostle James telleth us of a birth in sin. "Whenl lust (saith he) hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." Sinners he sheweth are (as it were) with child, and travail to bring forth, as it is said of the woman. That she was with child, and cried, travailing of birth, and was pained ready to be delivered. So wicked men are all great with child with sin, sin is this whereof they cry and travail in birth and are pained with, ready to be delivered, they must bring forth, and when all is done, it is but an unfavourable, untimely birth; sin when it is finished, it bringeth forth death.

The use

Hereof shall be then, to consider seriously the most wretched and miserable estate of a sinner a natural man. Oh! who would exchange estates with him, for all his pleasures when every sin woundeth him, and death at last seizes upon him to eternal perdition and misery irrevocable. Can a sinner think of these things seriously, and live thus merrily as he doth, without care, until he be swallowed up of death. It is a wonder to see how men pass their time here, as though there were continually a spring of pleasures, which in this life would always flourish, as though there were neither heaven nor hell, nor a life hereafter. And sure if we did seriously think of these things, they would so daunt and tame our proud spirits that we would never be merry again, until we had both this assurance, to be freed of these fears and possessed of those joys we expect.

Neither for all this are the wicked left inexcusable to plead ignorance, for as the Lord giveth unto his children even a taste in this life of those blessed joys which are reserved for them in heaven, by the inward and unspeakable joys which his spirit worketh in their hearts; so doth the Lord also loose the cords of these sorrows to come unto the wicked, even here letting them hear of hell and damnation, eternal death, the cruelty of the devil, the horror of sin and the like, as also God's mercies unto humble and penitent sinners. But although his ministers call continually unto them, yet will they by no means be reclaimed, but contemn and despise them and their admonitions, answering them as the devils did our Saviour Christ (in the two men which were possessed) when he came to expel them. "What have we to do with thee, Jesus the Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" So these wicked men are made inexcusable, when they will not hear the voice of God in the ministry. They think in so doing we torment them before the time. But askest thou miserable man, if we come to torment thee before the time? I tell thee we are come to torment thee in this life, before thy last

torments in hell, that if this powerful voice of the ministry be not unto thee salvation, it may harden thee so much the more for thy condemnation, we are come to shut the gates of heaven upon thy teeth, and by our threatenings to torture thee, by affrighting and threatening unto those fearful torments which thou shalt endure after this life for ever in hell. We are come by the power of God and warrant of his word (if thou continue rebellious and hard hearted) to deliver thee over unto the power of Satan, and all thy cruel enemies. We indeed are sent to torment such before their time. Yet is it a worse estate for a wicked man to have a benumbed conscience, than to be troubled with these cruel fears, because at one time or other it may please the Lord to touch his heart and give unto him repentance by a sight of his miseries. But the benumbed conscience seeth no danger, knoweth nothing, is (as it were) ready to be tumbled into hell, adding sin unto sin to increase the measure of future wrath, as the apostle speaketh of such wicked men. "But thou after the hardness of thy heart, and heart that cannot repent, heapest up wrath against the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the just judgment of God." If neither mercy nor judgments will move us, then will he one day manifest in our faces fully his indignation, and wrath, and tribulation, and anguish shall come upon the rebellious and hard hearted sinners. The Spirit of God complaineth of such senseless creatures; that when they had seen the Lord spend his terrible plagues upon their neighbours and other people, the least of which might have softened and affrighted the stoniest hearts of the world, yet what did they? Were the remainder any whit moved? saith the Spirit of God. "Andp the remnant of the men, which were not killed by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should worship devils and idols of gold and silver, and of brass; also they repented not of their murder, and of their sorcery, neither of their fornication, nor of their theft."

Thus all of us are by nature most miserable and hardhearted, infected with Adam's sin; which though it seemed at first but small, had in it (if rightly viewed) a seed of disobedience to all the commandments, which now we will omit, only touching in general his wilful disobedience. God, he telleth unto Adam, after he had placed him in Paradise, "Thou shalt freely eat of all the trees of the garden, that of good and evil only excepted, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death." Satan again, he cometh unto him, and saith; eat freely, ye shall not die. Here Satan was preferred with his wicked counsel before the commandment of God.

Let us therefore examine ourselves whether or not we be all sick of Adam's sin, like unto these wicked men who when death is pronounced unto them by the voice of the ministry to humble them, put the evil day far from them, rather believing the suggestions of the father of lies, who telleth them that they shall not die, there is no danger, these things are not thus and thus true, which silly fellows prattle; than unto the commandments and voice of God in his word, giving any credit. But no remedy, if we will needs soothe and bless ourselves from cursing, as though we had no part therein, destruction must suddenly overtake us, death must seize upon us. Yet some may object, what is death? Death is nothing, it is easy to pass through it. I tell thee no, it is not an easy thing to pass through the gates of death: whatsoever we do or say, yet the fear of death is most terrible. Death is a most cruel enemy unless the sting thereof be removed. It spareth none. If we did rightly consider and weigh the terror thereof, it would change, like unto Belshazzar, our wantonness into a sad countenance, it would make us tremble, and loose the joints of our loins, it would make our knees smite one against another, and wonderfully tame our pride of life. Let us then come to the proof of this doctrine, beholding the cruelty of death, and how terrible an enemy he is. For

1. Death is an enemy if death prevail over us, we by Christ not being freed from the tyranny thereof. It hath sworn our death, there is no remedy, we must die, death is an enemy, that will procure our death. So the apostle calleth death an enemy. The last enemy (saith he) which shall be destroyed is death, it is an enemy which hath sworn our death. It indeed, I confess, doth us good service, in freeing us from a world of misery, to bring us to immortality of joys. But yet this service it doth is against our will, we would not willingly in our life die often, nor at the last exchange willingly: but this service which death doth us, it cometh of the infinite mercy of God, who bringeth light out of darkness, &c., making his power perfect thereby, but of its own nature death is an enemy unto us; let our policies reach never so far, our counsels never so grave, let our thoughts and devices be never so many, yet death, when he cometh, he forceth us to alter all things, he causeth us to change all our resolutions, so death is an enemy.

2. Death is a cruel enemy, for if we go on in sin, since death our death hath sworn, it will be sure to watch us an evil turn, and meet with us at one time or other; we shall not be able to escape the same. As the Jews did bind themselves by an oath, neither to eat bread, nor drink drink, until they had killed Paul; so hath death vowed and sworn thy death. Now this enemy is so much the more terrible, in that he cannot be avoided, there is no means to escape him. David, he calleth deathu, the way of all flesh, "I go (saith he) the way of all the earth." There is no remedy, I must die. And he saith, "it is appointed for all men once to die," so that death is a cruel enemy also, he hath moved our death.

3. Death is also a treacherous enemy. For if he, like a valiant soldier, did either point time, hour, month, year, place, or weapon, for the fight, it were somewhat, we might perhaps make some provision to

resist his fury. But death appointeth neither time, place, nor weapon, but overtaketh us still unprovided, when we think least of the same. But as this is our misery, that death hangeth before our eyes and we see not the same, we live, yet have we no assurance of our life, it hangeth before our eyes, it cometh suddenly upon us; and the sudden assaults (you know) of an enemy (without force to resist) is most dangerous; they come suddenly, take us in fear, and we are overthrown. Our life thus is very short in continuance, and full of trouble, yet is it so much the more miserable, in that we have none assurance of our life.

But, may some object, it is true which you say, death is a most cruel enemy, but I will pray against him ere I die, and then he shall not hurt me, I shall be freed from his power. But, I reply, thou will not be heard then, if thou wilt not watch now betimes, and prevent the judgment by humiliation to the will of God, we must not soothe ourselves with such vain hopes. The Lord commandeth us to hold fast and repent, threatening that if we will not watch he will come upon us as a thief, and we shall not know the hour of his coming. If we watch not continually, death is treacherous, he will take us suddenly.

Let all of us therefore, in the name of God, learn to prevent death betimes by a continual watchfulness, that our life may be such that be he never so cruel or treacherous, let him come when or how he will, he may still find us afoot, ready watching for his coming, that by him we may be dissolved to meet our Saviour in the clouds. Aye, but may some object, I will have a strong guard about me, and death shall not surprise me so easily as you think. All thou canst do, I tell thee, is in vain. Oh no, thou canst not resist him so, (unless thou be in Christ,) but in spite of thee he will come suddenly upon thee. For this is most certain, keep thyself guarded as thou wilt, death always

findeth a breach to enter where there is either sin inherent or imputed. The reason is, because the thief is within doors, the weapon is within us which woundeth us. Sin it is this weapon, which within us fighteth for death, and slayeth us, by which means death suddenly destroyeth the wicked like unto a treacherous enemy.

4. It marcheth under a strong leader. Again death is so much the more terrible, as it cometh under the conduct of so strong a leader, whose hatred is unspeakable, whose policy unmatchable, whose power so great that if the Lord would suffer him, he would quickly destroy and devour all mankind, who, (as our Saviour speaketh,) for his cruelty, is called a murderer from the beginning, which moveth our apostle here to tell us, that therefore Christ came to loose the works of the devil, and deliver his children, who for fear of death, were all their life-time kept in bondage. So Christ only he must free us from this cruel strong enemy, encountering hand in hand with the sorrows of death.

5. Death is terrible in regard of attendance. Again death is a cruel enemy, in respect of the train wherewith it is attended, bringing unto the second death, to eternal and unspeakable torments, to dwell in unquenchable fire with legions of devils for ever; where the breath of the Lord, like a river in brimstone, shall increase the measure of perpetual torments; so that the first is so much the more terrible, in that it bringeth unto a state irrevocable. If therefore, when we refuse the means of grace, we walk on still in our own lusts, there is no remedy; when death cometh, he is that cruel sergeant that will admit of no bail, do what they can do, die they shall, and this first death shall bring them to the eternity of the second. Again

6. Death is a terrible enemy, his power considered, who overcame the same.

The fearfulness thereof appeareth by him who conquered the same, Christ Jesus the Son of God, equal with the Father in glory, only he could overcome death, he it was who for us must wrestle with it, yea not only so, but also in a manner, must yield unto the foil thereof in his human nature, that by death (as it is in my text) he might destroy him which had the power of death, that is the devil. When kings have wars abroad, they use for the most part to send forth their lieutenants and generals (to quiet such small broils) with small armies. But when the king himself cometh unto the field, displaying the royal standard, then every one knoweth there is a most strong and potent enemy to encounter withal, which none but the king himself can subdue, leaving his court, and putting himself to the hazard of a dangerous battle. So we may perceive what a cruel enemy death is, when Christ the King of glory could not subdue this enemy, neither by general nor lieutenant, but must come himself into the field, leaving his courts and royal palace, humbling himself as a servant. As David flying from his son Absalom, after they had passed the brook Kidron, going up Mount Olivet did, as he went up weeping and lamenting, his head covered, bare-footed, mourn in an humble manner full of sorrow and anguish, so the Son of God (to free us) was (as it were) pulled from the heavens to encounter this strong enemy, in abject, humble, and despised manner, chased from place to place, not having whereon to lay his head, until at last, having passed the brook Kedron, the forerunners of his great afflictions, going up unto Mount Olivet, he offered up prayers with strong cries and tears, his sweat drops of blood trickling on the ground, with lamentations, unto him who was able to save him. Doth not he yet appear a strong enemy? Nay more, this was not enough, but

7. The terror of this enemy appeareth in the death of Christ; for it was not enough, nor could it satisfy this cruel foe to pull down the Son of God from his palace of heaven, having him abased, humbled,

afflicted, and condemned, but he must also be wounded, and slain in the fight, he must have a full cup of the sorrows of death: he could not overcome death but by death. Is not death then a terrible, cruel enemy which could not otherwise be overcome, but by the death of Christ? Is not his ugly face then (without life in Christ) enough to cause us to tremble, and shiver in pieces? And lastly,

In the eighth place, if death could not be conquered, but by the death of Christ, let us consider how miserable the estate of a natural man is without Christ. They are branches cut from the root, they shall have no part in him, his death shall nothing profit them; although he by his mighty power hath subdued and taken away the sting of death to his children; they are none of that society, they are strangers unto him, they heard not his voice; therefore his mighty power shall nothing avail them, but leave them not only to die, but also to be swallowed up of death for ever. It shall not be so with his children, die they must too, but death shall not hurt them, which is,

The second general point, that there is no condemnation to them, that are in Christ Jesus. I say not, but there is matter of condemnation, but that there is no condemnation. There are stripes due unto us, but Christ he took upon him the strokes due unto us, he was wounded for our transgressions, and with his stripes are we healed. He hath fought the battle for us, and killed death on his own dunghill. This was the wonder of God's love unto us, that because he foresaw, that unless Christ died for us, there was no life for us, so therefore Christ would needs die for us (such was his love) that by his blood we might have deliverance. So it is said that Christ hath redeemed and washed the Church with his blood. So the virtue of this blood, whereby it is so powerful in redeeming, is well showed, where he saith (making a comparison with the blood of bulls and goats in the law) "howd much more shall the blood of Christ, which,

through the eternal Spirit, offered himself unto God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" Aye, but may some man object, what is this to me, how shall I have interest in this blood of Christ, since it washeth not all, but those who are his children. I confess the virtue of this blood is reserved only for those to whom it is appointed, and shall only be powerful unto them, for we must not think that rebellious, hard-hearted wretches shall be partakers thereof, of whom the Lord complaineth, saying, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" Do we think that such who dishonour God's name, profane the sabbath, and the like, can have any comfort to be washed with this blood, since they continually dishonour him? Surely no! I confess there is no creature so miserable, but if he lay hold and accept of this blood, and walk forwards in the same, but to him it shall be effectual, and he washed thereby, from all the terror of his sins; but I speak of such sinners, who sin with an high hand, in whom sin hath a peaceable dwelling, in his full strength, such can have no part, nor be washed with this blood, continuing in their sins.

But to clear this question, it is written, that "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power." The first death then you see is but a drudge to God's children, it but bringeth them unto the state of immortal glory, his cruellest stroke hath this comfortable issue. But wouldest thou know indeed, if the second death shall have no power over thee and that thou art freed therefrom? Look to it, there is no overcoming without holiness; mock at it as thou wilt, blessing is joined with holiness, and without holiness look for no blessing. But still it may be thou wilt object, But how shall I know this holiness to be assured of blessing? How shouldest thou know, I say, thou must examine thyself, whether thou hast attained unto a resurrection before the second death; unto

a resurrection before the resurrection. It is called the first resurrection, a dying to sin, and living unto Christ, a forsaking of ourselves, becoming new creatures, &c. You cannot be ignorant, what our Saviour Christ answered unto that disciple, who before he would follow him, did crave leave to bury his father, you know our Saviour's answer was, "Follow me, and let the dead bury the dead;" a strange thing for dead men to bury dead men, but it is so, and he ranketh those who are spiritually dead in sin, with such as were dead by nature. So that as there is a resurrection before a resurrection, so we see here is a death being alive, a death before a death. So the apostle speakethh of the voluptuous widow, who is dead even whilst she is alive. And our blessed Saviour speaketh of a time, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live. So that all of us are but dead men in the estate of nature, although we live until we attain unto this first resurrection. Andk it is further amplified, where after he had made mention of the first resurrection of the soul, from the death of sin by hearing the voice of the Son of God in the Gospel, he there mentioneth also, that they must not marvel at his former doctrine, for even a time should come, when he would finish that which he had begun, as in this life, they who were his, had tasted of the first resurrection of the soul from sin; even so by the same power, he would also raise up the dead bodies from out the graves in the second resurrection. So that as his mighty voice should then raise up our dead bodies from the graves, and the dead should hear this voice and arise, so here is the excellency of his power, that a dead soul in this life (although it be dead and seem to be rotten in sin) yet shall it hear the voice of Christ and live.

Let us then examine ourselves, whether as yet we have attained to this first resurrection, whether we have as yet heard the voice of Christ, like unto a shrill trumpet, awakening up our dead souls unto newness of life, and then blessed and holy are we, if we have attained

to this first resurrection, for on such the second death shall have no power. The natural man he laugheth at us when we speak of these things; they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned. And no marvel, since they are asleep and dead in sin, that they think so. For here is the first work, which is done in this spiritual first resurrection of a dead soul, a voice cometh with a mighty power, and awakens us to live. But, may some say, yet have I but small or no sense of this life, I find no kind of sense for mine assurance, I feel not that I am awakened, this resurrection to my sense is not yet wrought. But I ask thee, canst thou hear the voice of Christ in the word, is it joyful unto thee, hast thou any life in Christ, by a touch from Christ? (for when we are awakened by the voice of his word from senseless security, this is a touch of Christ,) then I say this virtue of Christ toucheth us, when it forceth us to do things against nature, repugnant to nature, above the reach of nature. It is the nature of the Gospel to awaken thee by this mighty voice, to affright and tame thy proud heart, and cause thee to be humble in thine own eyes, when Christ therein toucheth thee. Whatsoever then thy sense be, look for thy comfort, if this power of Christ by his mighty voice in the word, hath made sin grievous unto thee, that thou wouldest gladly do better, and art grieved for what thou canst not do; look if thou hast a delight in good duties, in love to God's children, a delight in the sabbath, a delight in prayer, a delight to pour out thy soul unto God when thou art alone, to wait upon God. A dead man can do none of these things, they are most assured tokens of life. But yet remember that because we are as prisoners in this life, we cannot go without shackles, many afflictions, crosses, imperfections, and troubles will annoy us, keeping us that we shall be neither able to walk apace, nor as we would; yet courage, let us see if our pulse beat, if there be any kind of sense, any motion, any touch of Christ by the voice of the word, any life conveyed from him unto thy dead soul; and then be cheerful, how weak, senseless, and miserable

soever thou art in thine own eyes, be thou sure, that Christ hath touched thee, and thou art alive in him; thy spark, in his good time, he will turn into a mighty flame, and thou shalt have thy desires; the second death shall have no power over thee. But in the meantime (as I have said) we must be content to walk on with shackles through this valley of tears, yea, and in much weakness, until the happy day of deliverance, that our God bring us home, and wipe away all tears from our eyes. The time is spent. Now let us pray. O eternal and everliving God, &c. &c.

SERMON XXXI:

The Fulness of Time - Galatians 4:4

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law. That he might redeem them which were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of the sons.

THE apostle, in the former words which I have read, yieldeth a reason (I mean in the words before my text) why now at the coming of the Gospel, the ceremonies of the law were to be abolished, which had endured so long a time. Because (as he showeth) the Gospel all this while was under nonage, as a child under tutory, who although for a time he be kept under, yet when the time is spent, and he of ripe

years, he then can no more be under tutory. So (saith he) it is with the Gospel, although all this while it hath been under tutory, when the ceremonies of the law, like tutors, did guide us, yet now when the fulness of time was come, there must be a change, a new course must be taken, all things being become new, old things must be abolished, God's worship must not now be guided, as before, with ceremonies, darkly, partly, obscurely, typically, but fully, plainly, and evidently, all shadows being removed. Now he saith, there shall be quite another form, as God himself, the author of all, is a Spirit, so the Spirit now under the Gospel shall speak spirituallyb, plainly, evidently, and profitably, that even little children shall understand. All things he therefore showeth unto them, are by the Gospel abolished, which were before in use and ceremonial, nothing now remaining in place of them but things spiritual from above, which must serve to be our guide, to assure and confirm the heart, to strengthen the affection more than ever. Bare and naked ceremonies, he telleth them, served for children, which were not able otherwise to go, but now is the time of reformation, when dark things are made clear and evident, and therefore they must not return again to darkness.

By fulness of time, therefore, he meaneth a ripe and full age, than which it is not possible to detain any thing under tutory any longer, when the course of time declareth the date to be outspent, when, as here he declareth by his fulness of age, the work of redemption to be fully wrought, and a full deliverance thereby, to be purchased to the Church before loaded with ceremonies. And here we may behold a great difference betwixt the Fathers and us, and what great advantage we have of them, that we have Christ now under the Gospel in fulness, and see him (as it were) clearly face to face, being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, &c. They only,

under the dark shadows and types of the law, saw him afar off darkly and obscurely.

To this purpose is that speech of our blessed Saviour, that amongst the sons of men was there not a greater prophet than John the Baptist, and yet that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; this is the great prerogative of our estate. For our Saviour meaneth, that although John was a great prophet, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he, that is, that the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom under the Gospel, are plainer and clearer delivered and manifested by the least minister thereof than John could. And therefore in respect of the prerogative of the Gospel, and clear manifestation of it, by the law but obscurely shadowed, the least minister under the Gospel is greater than John Baptist. He pointed only at Christ, saying, beholde the Lamb of God. But those who followed him do as it were deliver the Lord Jesus, and we possess him fully, and feed upon him: he saw only a beginning, but (as the apostle saith) of his fulness have we all received, where now in the fulness of time, let us first consider, with our apostle here, what Christ the Son did for our deliverance.

I. In the person of the mediator.

II. In the end of the work.

A strange thing it is, that the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, should be holden of the law by impossibility, and to free us must needs undergo the same. A wonderful thing it is, I say, to see him under the law, who is Lord of the law; to see the lawgiver in our nature then under the law. Again, if we consider the end of this work, it was to free us, that he might stand in our room, to acquit us. So that whatsoever is upon our head, he beareth the burden of all, and all to redeem those who were under the law, that of enemies we

might be made friends, and receive the adoption of sons; and here he cometh to be our Emanuel.

I. In that nature of the Mediator, God and man, whereby he purchaseth our peace; and overcometh death and hell for us.

II. In that in one person he is God with us, by an unspeakable and inseparable conjunction.

For the first then of his office, the work which he performeth is strange, being an high eternal priest for ever, like unto Melchisedeck, where as he is most strange in himself, so is he most wonderful in that which he undertook and did. For the second person of the Trinity, the wisdom of the Father, unto the unity of his Deity (not making two persons which were horrible to imagine) assumed our nature. A strange thing to our vile nature to subsist in the glorious second person of God. If then it be so that our human nature dwelleth with the glory of the Godhead, herein may we behold our dignity, who have this adoption of sons, that for all our misery, yet our frail nature subsisteth with the Godhead, by a marvellous and unspeakable union and conjunction. But a question may here be moved, why this should be so? How could it be so, that the Son of God should assume unto his Deity our nature, and become our Mediator? Such a strange work (I confess) must needs be for a strange cause, as indeed it was for our redemption, to bring life unto us who have forfeited the same. Nay, there was no other way but this, that God should remain just and we acquitted: no other ransom could suffice but such an high prize.

For thus stood the case betwixt God and us. We were at variance with God, without any means of reconcilement, on our part. There cometh in the meantime the middleman to take up the matter, by assuming unto himself these two offices. First he becometh our intercessor, to

solicit and make peace for us; secondly, he becometh our advocate, to plead the justice of our cause. He must in this (you see) first seek God's mercy, and then also challenge God's justice, what it can exact.

This variance betwixt God and man Job well showeth, where he affirmeth, that though he were righteous, yet he would submit himself to his judge, not answer and make replication. And againi, "he is not a man as I am that I should answer him, if we come together to judgment, neither is there any umpire that should lay his hand upon both." Old Eli also reproving his sons to this purpose telleth them, if one man sin against another, the judge shall judge it: but if a man sin against the Lord, who will plead for him, who will lay his hand upon both? This is an hard and a strange matter. There must then of necessity be an Emanuel to plead our cause, who will not be ashamed for us to appear before the throne of justice, clothed with our nature, and there challenge righteousness for us, laying his hand upon both; one hand upon the Father, whose wrath he appeaseth, keeping it from us, and the other upon us, whom he cherisheth from sinking under so great a burden, upholding us by his reconcilement. Yea such a one he must needs be, who first for intercession must be high in favour with God, who in himself, or for himself, hath no spot or blemish, who hath nothing to do for himself but all for us; whose person in the Father's sight is already accepted, and he well pleased therein, &c. Again such a one he must be, who is tender-hearted to us, in a compassionate feeling of our sorrows, taking part with us (as the apostle speaks) that we might obtain so much the surer deliverance and victory by his fellow feeling with us. The angels they could not, for they have enough ado to keep in for themselves, and we see those of them who have fallen have not the power to rise again, and intercede for themselves, much less for others.

But our Emanuel, and elder brother Christ Jesus, he taketh us by the hand, and presenteth himself with us before the Father, saying, Behold O Father, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me, be pleased for my sake to pardon these, they are my brethren, and thou canst not be angry with them, unless thou be also angry with me, who am thy well-beloved Son. Here am I ready to satisfy thy justice for them. Neither was this indeed an easy matter thus to appear before God for us, for indeed if God, in the work of our redemption, had intended only one thing, viz., to be merciful, then it had not been so much. But as those who have eyes may easily see, God intended in this great work, to set not only his mercy but also all his other attributes on work; his justice, his power, his greatness, his anger, his goodness, &c. To this purpose the apostle reasoneth for the law, that the law, notwithstanding of mercy and forgiveness of sins, must have the own work, and not be in vain, and that the redemption purchased must not make void his justice, where after he had spoken of that redemption, and reconciliation set forth by God, through faith in Christ's blood, and the declaration of that righteousness, by forgiveness of sins passed through the patience of God, he addeth, to show at this time, this righteousness, that he might be just, and a justifier of him, who is of the faith of Jesus. Although therefore the Lord intend mercy, yet he will have us appear guilty, and as he is just, so his justice must not be in vain. Christ therefore thus standing for us, before his Father thus pleadeth our cause.

Plea.

These men indeed, O Father, stand indebted unto thy justice, but such is their misery, that they are not able to satisfy thee, another therefore shall give thee satisfaction. I, O Father, will undertake to pay their debt, destroy not therefore the work of thine hands. Thou

art not so rigorous, that the party indebted (since he is not able) must needs give satisfaction. I, thy wisdom, will in their nature pay all. The perfection of my obedience shall outstrip their disobedience, &c. And the parties thus relieved must have such an interest in him, who is the Mediator, that in justice, God cannot deny to impute unto them whatsoever he hath done, that all be as though themselves had done it. They must be mystically knit and joined unto him by a secret conjunction of faith and love by his spirit. Again for him he must have these properties: 1, he must be our Mediator and satisfy our debt with all satisfaction; 2, he must be such a one who is able to transfer, and convey his estate from himself unto them, who are of the blood royal, and of his kindred, he must interest them in his right.

First then he must satisfy our debts by justice; many think not so, but that his mere death without obedience, and satisfaction to the law, was sufficient. But we here see the contrary; we see Christ tied to the law, born of a woman, and made under the law. Now in the law must be considered two things: 1. Strict obedience, sound payment. 2. The penalty due to the breach of the law. First there must be full account, as at the beginning was due. By reason of our insufficiency, Christ giveth us a bill under his hand unto the Father, that all our debts are satisfied, all are reckoned up upon his score, and therefore now being in him, we need not fear.

Neither must we account of Adam's fall, as of a light confused sin, but as an heavy great sin, distinct (by reason of a breach). A particular thing, which must have a particular remedy. Christ, therefore, because Adam did not fulfil the law, he undertook to fulfil the same to relieve us, and that God's justice should not be in vain.

Secondly, the penalty due to the breach of the law, Christ, he also doth this: the Godhead and the manhood performeth this work, the Deity assisting the humanity, therein not to be overcome. And because the law in our weak nature could never thus have been satisfied (as the apostle speaketh) for that which was impossible to the law, God sending his own Son, in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, &c. First then the law exacteth satisfaction of the nature trespassing; that nature which transgressed must satisfy. Christ therefore he taketh upon him our nature, bindeth himself unto all, to satisfy whatsoever might be exacted of us by his cleanness and pureness, blotting out whatsoever stains or spots we are infected with in our nature. For it pleaseth him, as from Adam all of us are infected with the leprosy of sin, sending forth a spring of filthy corruptions, which cry for judgment and provoke God's vengeance; so from him he sendeth forth a counter spring of his merits, obedience, and righteousness, satisfaction, and the like, which outrunning ours, and being of so infinite a value, and perfect, standeth betwixt God's wrath and us, making perfect atonement and peace, being as it were the mirror through which God beholdeth us and our actions, whom he also by degrees transformeth into his image by little and little, until at last this river of our corruptions be quite dried up in the ocean of his righteousness, as it were, hiding us in the holds of the rock, until by dissolution we be fully glorified.

But here a question, and that a great one, may be moved. What needeth all this stir for our Mediator of the second person in the Trinity?

Why might not God have created a man without sin to have been our Mediator?

I answer no, no man could have performed this work of the Mediator, and that for two reasons. The first, for what were that obedience but the obedience of one single man; and what were that to the obedience of so many due? He might perhaps have saved one.

Secondly, I say, he might not have saved one, for how perfect soever we should imagine this man of our's, yet to the fulfilling of the law was due all that he was able to perform: so that whatsoever he was able to do must have all been for himself, nothing for others. But that man who must satisfy for others, although he be tied to the law, made under the law, yet we see that he must also be above the law, Lord of the law, &c. For concerning Christ our Mediator, although in this work he become a servant, and do service to the Father, yet is there a great difference betwixt his service and that of base men. For Christ took that upon him which was base, and which he needed not, and which was not belonging to him. So he was circumcised the eighth day, that he might, being born under the law, truly fulfil the same, &c. Soq would he needs be baptized of John, who, when he was at first put back of John, answereth, let it be now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness, thereby giving witness to both Testaments, and that he came to receive both Jew and Gentile unto mercy.

Therefore it is certain, that although the human nature was base, yet might he (if he would) presently have sitten at the right hand of the Father in majesty and power, and that he had power of himself to take up and lay down his life. A man, he and his service whatsoever were a constrained service. Then here is the difference, though the King's Son be free, yet he will presently submit himself. Although he be the lawgiver, yet he will submit himself to be made under the law, that he may purchase our freedom.

Again, the second part of the law is the penalty due to the breach thereof, now we know that although a man be loyal all his days, and commit treason in the end, he must suffer the penalty due to the same. So whatsoever obedience was by our Saviour fulfilled to the law, yet because there was a penalty due for the breach thereof, he must needs suffer. For we must not restrain the work of redemption to mercy only, but (as I have said) God would set all his attributes on work therein, that his justice, and power also, may appear chiefly with his mercy, therefore Christ he must needs suffer that which was due unto us. The human nature must suffer, by which was due obedience. He that would satisfy then, though he be God, yet must he not die in his divine nature, but because that nature could not die, here is that wonder of his love to us, that rather than we should perish and die he chooseth to assume another nature, even our nature, and die therein, that so the nature offending might give absolute satisfaction. But here a question ariseth again. What, could God find no other means for our redemption, but by the death of his Son? Must God of necessity become man, or (to speak properly) must our Mediator needs be God and man; Emanuel? Must he needs be such a one, who must lay his hand upon both? One hand upon the Father in heaven, and the other upon us on earth? must such a one, and no other, needs be this umpire? To end this controversy, let us again bring in our former man upon the stage, that we may a little behold what possibly he might have done, though we grant unto him a great deal more than any man (how perfect soever) could possibly have performed, and then it will evidently appear that our Emanuel, and no other, could possibly have performed this work.

Imagine that this man could possibly have fulfilled this perfect obedience to the law, both for himself and others, yet when he cometh to die, what is this to us? He could but have died for himself, not for us nor others. But for us we must have one, for the many of

Daniel, yea for his many thousands. This our man could never have done, but to effect this, here Christ to his Deity joineth our nature, not that I say the Godhead suffered which could not die. But this I say, that Christ Jesus, the second Person in the Trinity, being God and man, suffered in his human nature (which before to this end he had assumed) his Deity assisting the same, that he should not be overcome nor kept of the sorrows of death. Therefore the apostle in the Acts doth highly value this blood. "Taket heed unto yourselves (saith he) and unto all the flock whereof the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This conjunction of the Deity assisting the humanity, is that altar which giveth an infinite value to the sacrifice, making the offering of an infinite merit, to purchase God's favour for us, giving a full satisfaction. So Christ, in Matthew, speaketh, "ye fools, and blind, whether is greater the offering, or the altar, which sanctifieth the offering." So it is said that it was his eternal spirit which gave the price, and value to the offering of his humanity, which he offered upon the altar of his divinity. Aye but yet, why must needs God in the second person of the Trinity, give satisfaction, was there no remedy? I say none. For imagine our former man could not only have satisfied for himself, but also for others, and that he might also have died, not only for himself, but for others also, suffering all which was due to God's justice; yet what were that to us, unless he could also both overcome death, for himself and us also? But our Mediator must not only do that which I have showed, but also he must overcome, and triumph over all. Our supposed man could not, for there is no power in a man, if he be but a mere man; but the power of a man, which could never have overcome death of itself, for himself, much less for others. To this purpose our blessed Saviour (to show the power of his Deity) in St. John speaketh, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up again in three days." This then is the mighty power of our Mediator, not only to die, but to overcome also

and rise again. His Godhead indeed could not suffer, but by the mighty power thereof, he was enabled to overcome and be victorious over all his sufferings, obtaining a perfect peace for us by trampling down the power of the grave, leading all principalities and powers captive, even all the power of darkness. Therefore then had he of necessity those two natures, that the one (his humanity) might suffer in full obedience unto God's justice. And that other (his divinity) that it might overcome and satisfy; so making perfect atonement for us. Therefore, it is plain (I say) his death and blood only were not sufficient for our redemption, but he must also rise again from the death by his own power. For this cause we see the apostle contenteth not himself only with death and bloody, but says (he urging resurrection from the death also), "if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." This then is a main thing, our Mediator must needs not only die, but be also able to rise again from the death and overcome. Christ Jesus only, the second person in the Trinity, God from all eternity, who in the fulness of time assumed our nature, was also to do, and did this, which no man (how perfect soever from sin) could have done. Now followeth the second part.

The great work of conveyance of his spirit, and power unto us, by an inseparable union and conjunction. A further thing of necessity inherent in our Mediator for our redemption is, his conveyance of that which is his, unto us by his spirit, that he investeth us with the same, by imputation, making all that which he hath performed for us, as available unto us, as though we ourselves had performed it. This then is our quickening, that whatsoever by nature we are, yet being of the household of faith, we may and are made perfect by his perfection.

This our former imagined man could never have done, whom let us once more view again. For imagine that he might not only have suffered all, and for all, and have died, overcame and risen again also, yet he not being God, when it came to this conveyance, his mediation must have ceased, and have gone no further. Nay, all the angels in heaven could not have raised from the death one dead body, but only the spirit of our Redeemer. What then although we had had the medicine of such a Mediator in readiness, yet what had that been to us? we are all dead, not able to receive the same. Our Redeemer, he must be able to quicken us, by his mighty spirit, and to raise us from the dead, to give life to our dead souls. He must be able to send the spirit of his Father into our hearts to make us cry Abba Father. He must convey the same, which he hath done and yet daily doth, unto his elect, by the marvellous conveyance of the spirit. All then who are Christ's, they must be members of his mystical body, and knit to the same that he may be partaker of our sorrows, and we hereby enabled to overcome, being encouraged in the fight, by having him a fellow-feeler of infirmities. So that by this secret conjunction and union of the body and members, one of them cannot be touched, but the other also suffereth in the same; yea when either of them is troubled, the same is attributed to the whole. And any one action, either of body or member, is attributed unto all. As in a natural body, when the eye seeth any thing, the body is said to see, and when the hand reacheth a thing to give away, yet the body is said to do the same, and soforth in other actions. So it is also in feeling, for when as one member suffereth (as the apostle speaketh) all suffer, whatsoever troubleth any one joint, annoyeth also the whole and every part of the body, and whatsoever suffering any part or member hath, the whole body in that is said to suffer. If the head ache, we say I am ill. If the eye see not, I cannot see. If the feet be lame, I am lame; the whole body cometh for a part. Even so it is in our spiritual union and conjunction with Christ by his spirit. That

what is his is ours, what he hath done we are partakers of the same, being united there can be no separation; so that now it is not possible, but that we have a part in his righteousness, since he by a fellow-feeling suffereth with us. As he cried, when his members were persecuted, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me. If there were not such a strict union betwixt Christ and his members, that as a member of our body cannot be touched, but the whole body presently hath a sense of the same; so by reason of our union with Christ the faithful have no kind of sufferings, but Christ suffereth with them. This our union with Christ, the apostle fully (though darkly) declareth, when he saith, thata rejoicing in his sufferings for them, he yet fulfilled the rest of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake; which is the Church.

What, may some object, were not Christ's suffering then perfect, dare any mortal man say that he can add unto them? I say no! his sufferings were most perfect and none can add unto them, but here is the matter: by virtue of this union with him, when any of his members suffer, he suffereth also, in which respect the apostle calleth his sufferings the sufferings of Christ, because they suffering he of necessity suffereth with them unto the end of the world. Thus then, being one with him, whatsoever he hath done, is as though we had performed the same. If the devil now accuse us of any thing; what then? Send him to Christ, he can accuse thee of nothing, but thou in Christ hast performed the same. Now the case is altered (as our blessed Saviour speaketh). "All mine are thine and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, even them, whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."

Here then is our comfort, even in this unspeakable mystical union, to be thus knit unto Christ, that in all our troubles he is troubled. This

union I say with him: that even as one spirit giveth life unto this natural body, coupling all the members by joints and bands; so by the virtue of the communion of the same spirit, which is in him the head, and us the members, which he conveyeth unto us (giving life unto a dead soul and maintaining the same) we are one with him. Neither can it be otherwise possibly, for that very life which is in the head, causeth, and sendeth life unto the toe, the same life is in both. So that the head no sooner wisheth the foot or toe to stir, but immediately by the same life it moveth. No distance of place can stay the same; for, imagine a man were as high as heaven is betwixt heaven and earth, yet the same rule would hold. That very life which were in the head, would also be in the toe, and cause it to move. So that self-same spirit, which is in Christ Jesus, being poured into us also, and we of dead carcases made living, by his life we live. Thus (saith the apostle) "not live I, but Christ liveth in me." So that (as I have said) by his life, we live and are united, having the same spirit in us. So certainly, is the working and life of this mighty spirit, as Ezekiel describeth his vision of the beasts and the wheels. Thatd as when the beasts went, the wheels went with them, and when the beasts were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up also, whither the spirit led them they went, and thither did the spirit of the wheels lead them, and the wheels were lifted up besides them, for the spirit of the beasts was in the wheels; when the beasts went they went, and when they stood, they stood. So by the same spirit which is ours in communion, conveyed from Christ, when he moveth we move, when he is abased we must also suffer. As he is exalted, so are we lifted up in the heavenly places in him. If he triumph, we triumph with him, whither he goeth, thither must we go also. "They shall follow (saith John) the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." It were a strange thing to see beasts and wheels asunder, the one following the other with the same motion, but you see the reason is added. The spirit of the beasts was in the wheels. So the spirit of God in us, by a

continual motion, causeth us to move here with Christ, and he with us by an inseparable union of spirit, at length also bringing us to the perfection of our glorification for ever with him. So then we see the communion of his spirit is our's, whereby we are assured of our continual life, motion, and union with him. This the apostle confirmeth when he saith: "hereby we know that he abideth in us, even by that spirit which he hath given us." So to the Ephesians the apostle telleth us thatg through Christ we both have an entrance unto the Father by one spirit, adding, in the end of the same chapter, that in Christ they were built together, to be the habitation of God by the spirit. Thus we see, (as our blessed Saviour speaketh,) "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." None could be our Redeemer but the second Person of the Trinity.

It must also be in our nature, this obedience of his, so that the head and members must be one thereby. The Divine nature, being therefore an high thing, and such and so full of infinite and unspeakable majesty, that we durst never have approached unto the same; without some other way we had perished. But we come now unto Christ, as unto our elder brother, by his human nature as he is clothed with flesh, which is that which Christ so urgeth unto the Capernaites, to eat the flesh of the Son of Man, to drink his blood, to take hold of that bread, which came down from heaven, to apprehend him as God and man in the person of the Mediator. This is that sure way which the apostle exhorteth unto, seeing we aspire unto heaven, even by the blood of Jesus. This is that Jacob's ladder, whereupon the angels ascend and descend, whereupon by degrees, we creep up to be partakers of immortality, in the Divine Nature of Christ. But what way? Even that of his flesh. It is that way which openeth a passage unto the Holy of holies, entering us into that which is within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered. Our Saviour, therefore, when he died, the veil of the temple rent from the

top to the bottom, showing that all shadows were abolished by the true substance. I say, as Christ entered through the veil of his flesh unto the Holy of holies, the veil of the temple rent, showing that now there was an evident and plain way opened by an eternal High Priest, to the once forbidden tree of life. Even by such a one, who is an high priest and ruler over the house of God. This is that new and living way which (the apostle saith) he hath prepared for us, through the veil which is his flesh, whereby with boldness and assurance we may draw near unto the holy place. Thus Christ (you see) linketh us unto himself by strict bonds of union, and here marrieth himself unto us by assuming our nature. There is no stricter bond than that of marriage, whereby two distinct persons are made one. So Christ, with an eternal greater bond of communion of spirit and nature, hath hereby married himself unto us for ever, that we should be holy as he is holy, and be partakers of all his virtues, so that whatsoever is his is ours also. Hereby he is as much interested in our debt as we ourselves, and we have interest in whatsoever is his. Though we be poor, yet he is rich; though weak, yet he is strong, though fearful, yet it is he who strengtheneth the weak hands and feeble knees; though filthy, yet he is most pure, though dead, yet is he the resurrection and the life, &c., and so in all other things in him, whereof we are partakers, which is the first benefit of our adoption.

Again by adoption, how vile and wretched soever we were before, yet Christ now is our brother, and we are of the blood royal, who shall lack nothing, which either king or kingdom can afford. There we may boldly now make claim unto Christ, as unto our brother, saying thus, since I am his brother, I am assured my Saviour and brother will not be ashamed of me. If loving kindred on earth be so kind, how great then is the kindness which I may expect from my heavenly brother, who is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone.

Thirdly, by adoption the angels are all our servants (as the author to the Hebrews speaketh) are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to watch over them which shall be heirs of salvation. So that here are special privileges of God's children, which passeth our imagination to conceive; to be thus united and incorporated into Christ, to be married unto him, to have him our brother, and the heavenly army to compass, keep, and watch over us in all our ways.

How should we then all strive to be daily more and more united unto Christ, that thereby we may be partakers of him and all his benefits, and receive the adoption of the sons. But now let us praise God, and pray for these graces. O eternal and everliving God, &c.

SERMON XXXII:

Not Under Law, but Under Grace - Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

THE apostle in this Epistle setteth down the grounds of Christianity, what all our estates are both by nature and grace, that no man in the trial should deceive himself. Where first (to stop all mouths) having proved in the beginning thereof, both Jew and Gentile to be under the curse of the law, wretched and forlorn by nature, slaves of death and heirs of hell fire; he then secondly showeth (having beaten all down from any kind of goodness in themselves whatsoever) that yet God had not left all mankind in this miserable estate, but had provided a means of reconciliation, under the kingdom of grace, by the preaching and glad tidings of the Gospel; in which there was deliverance and freedom, unto such, who seeing their own misery, did lay hold therein on Christ Jesus, by whose grace only, he showeth they could be saved, without any thing in themselves. So that whosoever by faith had apprehended his free grace offered (howsoever miserable they were before) yet now they might have perfect peace in Christ Jesus, being justified by faith in his blood, which he at length proveth throughout in the fifth chapter. And knowing how ready men are to build upon a false ground, that they think if once they be justified, settling this persuasion, they care not how they take this as an occasion unto them of the more liberty. He, therefore, thirdly in this chapter, beginneth to urge sanctification, proving by many arguments, that sanctification must needs follow, as a companion unto justification, and that if there were a death unto sin, it would surely be attended with newness of life; they would serve God in holiness and righteousness.

The apostle, you see, encountereth divers objections, chiefly that of the Romanists of those days, who, bragging of their excellent and secure estate (like unto our proud Romanists now-a-days) after he had warned them not to brag of their estate, he telleth them that if the Jews, God's own people, did thus fall away, which were the true branches, how much more might they which were engrafted only.

Therefore he warneth them not to be proud of any thing in themselves. And so may we also truly think of the Papists' doctrine, of their own inherent righteousness, that if this were so we overthrow grace. Our apostle, therefore, giveth all unto grace from us, arguing and urging (chiefly sanctification) to contain in it no such pride, but to be a true submission in humility to the will of God; wherein a man, viewing his total misery, ascribeth all the glory unto God; and therefore he showeth that this sanctification, and change of estates from death unto life, must needs be joined inseparably to serve God. For indeed we know that the sceptre of sin and grace will not, nor cannot stand together. Dagon must needs fall on his face before the ark of God. The apostle, therefore, alloweth of no mixture in our justification, he answereth not that we are justified by grace and works, but excluding everything in us, he giveth all unto grace. This grace is it, which doth all in all, it is this grace, whereby we stand. So that it is not possible after our new birth to sin. The dominion of sin being past, the child of God cannot sin, being once under grace. The apostle therefore maketh quite a contrary argument to that of the Papists. He showeth that by the works of the law (by any thing in us) no flesh shall be justified. They might object, but why? May not we be justified by works and grace? and therefore are in a secure estate. The stream of the apostle's disputation answereth them flatly, No. They might rather reason thus. Because I am under grace, having renounced myself wholly, to rely upon Christ's righteousness. Therefore we are in a secure estate.

First then, from this necessity of being under one of these two estates; either, 1, the dominion and the thraldom of the law; or, 2, the freedom of grace. We may see the miserable estate of all under sin, whatsoever he be who liveth under sin. So long as a man seeth sin to have dominion over him, he hath no part of life, he is yet under the law. If then, thou wouldst be assured of thy estate, thou must go to

the law, look if thou be yet under the same, look if sin hath yet dominion over thee, if thou live in thy sins, brag as thou wilt of thy justification, yet it is most certain, thou art yet holden of the law, and hast no part in Christ, for howsoever Christ when his grace quickeneth thee, findeth thee wicked, yet is it most certain that his grace never leaveth thee so in a wretched estate. For whensoever this blood of justification is truly applied to thy soul, it is most certain, that it not only covereth the wound, but it goeth further unto the root of sin, and also pulleth up that which is the very same thing the apostle in my text urgeth. That being now under grace, sin is dead, it hath no more dominion over them, who are not under the law, but under grace.

This is the comfort of God's children. From whence we may see for our instruction this first point of doctrine to be considered. That a man is in a woful and miserable estate so long as he is under the law; so long as sin hath dominion over, so long as he is without Christ. This is a most miserable slavery, when a man in this estate must be tried by the law, so cruel and severe an exactor of full payment. Now the reason of this fearfulness is, because a man who is yet under the law is cursed. If he fulfil not all which the law requireth, even a full obedience to all, which is a thing impossible. But God's children rejoice, because they are not under the law, but under grace. The law exacteth full obedience; it exacteth, I say, of the wicked perfect satisfaction to all the commandments; yea it searcheth unto the very thoughts, claiming the perfection of those also. Such wicked men, therefore, who will not repent, they must go to the law, they shall have no other trial. And what then? When thou art come to be tried by the law, thou shalt find small comfort there, for if thou wert miserable before, it will never a whit help thee, but give an addition to thy sorrows, for the law unto a wretched sinner is like those cruel taskmasters of Egypt. Who if we complain to it, it will lay a greater

and heavier task than before, so far is it from relieving our sorrows. No matter, will the law tell thee, whatsoever power thou wantest, or means to perform this great task of obedience, yet all must be fulfilled. But what, may some object, is not this an hard matter for the Lord to exact such perfection where it is not? To reap where he sowed not. I tell thee no; it is no injustice. The Lord is not hard, in reaping where he sowed not. It is no injustice, I say, in God to require of us the stock we once had. The law, therefore, looketh at that which we might have had, not that which we have. It is therefore by the benefit of grace, that there is any freedom from this heavy yoke of the law, and therein do we escape the burden of the law. But now, as for us, we were planted a noble vine, if now we bring forth the fruits of sin, let us look unto it, it will cost us dear in the end. The end of the commandment (saith the apostle) isc love out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned (here is a perfection required of all) and of a good conscience. Let us build, therefore, as we list, if we lay not this foundation of a pure heart, unfeigned faith, and a good conscience, all our buildings fall unto the ground; for that sinner in whom sin beareth sway, he must expect no good. He must not think to have part in Christ. I preach not desperation, but this is most certain, that although I confess, all that repent and lay hold of Christ shall have mercy, yet what is this to thee, thou wretched man? so long as sin hath dominion over thee, what art thou? So long we are not only dead but also rotten in sin, so that it may be said of us, as it was of Lazarus, "Lord, (saith Martha,) he stinketh already." So we are not only dead and rotten in sin, but we even stink thereof, so long as any sin or sins hath dominion over us. All this while I pray you, what doth our bodies carry about with us, but a sink of hell, and an image of destruction. It is true (I confess) that if we look upon a man we cannot perceive his misery until it break forth in some actions. Yet I look upon mine own heart, and finding it to be so wicked, I thereby judge of others. It is a sink of hell, until it be renewed. Many think it

strange to be judged of. But may not a man know thou art a wicked man, when he seeth thy profane life, and dissolute courses, when he seeth thee neglect and contemn God and his servants, and piety? May not a man judge that there is fire when he seeth sparks fly. So when evil speeches, dissolute blasphemous thoughts, and deeds come from thee by action. It is a sure sign, when these sparks fly from thee, that that fire is in thy heart, which without mercy and repentance will at last bring thy soul to destruction. Yet herein is our misery so much the more fearful, that in this miserable estate of bondage to the law, not only ourselves, but also all our actions are impure, every thing which doth issue from us, every work we work, whatsoever, is abominable, and tendeth to incense and anger God against us. And then if (as it is said) the King's anger be death, how much more grievous, I pray you consider, will the anger of the King of kings be, if once his wrath be kindled against thee?

Aye, but may some wicked man say, although God the Father be thus severe, yet I will run unto Christ, he is merciful. I confess so, but to whom? Yet he is a most cruel judge, who acquitteth not but condemneth the wicked, there thou shalt be condemned, and have a cruel sentence of "Depart ye cursed," from him. Nay imagine not thou art to receive any comfort from Christ in this estate; for so long as sin reigneth in thee, thou art but a dead creature, thou art dead. This the apostle maketh to be the sting of death. The sting of death is sin. Sin, if thou harbour it, it will assuredly bring death, and death eternal destruction. This to be true the apostle Paul confesseth, where,f saith he, sin slew me, he all this while was but as a dead man. A most miserable thing it is to be still a dying, without any fear of death, when this death shall presently lead us to eternal destruction. The cry of Sodom was great, when yet they were lulled asleep in security, until fire and brimstone did awaken them. When a man is a sleeping, yet his sins are still a crying for vengeance to God. Many of

us are like unto Cain, when we have sinned, we live secure, without any remorse for sin, or any care of the same, as though we were well. But doth thy sin for all this leave thee? Oh no! as the Lord said to Cain, sin but lyeth at thy doors sleeping, it haunteth thee but up and down; it watcheth but a fit opportunity, it watcheth but to send thee some mischief or other. It will surely kill thee at last.

Further, so long as we are under the dominion of sin and the law, we are in the power of our enemies, our most terrible foes. If then the apostle so exceedingly rejoiceth to be freed from the power of these enemies, saying, if God be on our side who shall be against us, &c. Do we then think it possible for those to rejoice, who are under the power of so cruel enemies. If there the apostle so triumpheth to be freed from principalities and powers, and other inferior enemies, how much more cause of exceeding sorrow unto the wicked, is it to have God their enemy. That man whom God hateth, God is his enemy; and he in this being a wretched creature, in his conceits wishing there were no God at all. Let a wicked man consider of this, whether or not he could wish there were no God, whether or not he could wish that there were nobody to punish him. Can a man wish well unto his enemy, could he not rather wish his enemy were not at all; a wicked man could wish there were no God, for oh, the cruel wrath that abideth from God in the life to come for miserable sinners! I cannot speak of it. Let us pray unto God that we never feel it. In the 2 Thess. chap. 1, 2, there is mention made of two sorts of people who shall be judged with these cruel punishments, who shall have God for their enemy. The ignorant and wicked people of this world, who know not the truth, and delight in wickedness, who are drunk in pleasures, and will not return nor have no pleasure or knowledge of God, speaking evil of those things they know not, such shall not be excused. The Lord created us in Adam full of knowledge, therefore ignorance shall not excuse thee. A second sort, who shall be

thus judged, are scholars in this world, those who know and daily hear their master's will delivered, and yet will not be reclaimed. The Gospel, thou hearest its sound in thine ears, it biddeth thee strike sail, it biddeth thee pull down thy proud heart and stoop unto Jesus Christ: it telleth thee that thou art in the way of death, offering thee freely Christ's blood, the means of reconciliation; it putteth thee in mind of thy covenant by baptism, that even here at thy baptizing, we have promised to war at first with all our enemies, and die unto sin daily by newness of life. Shall we then imagine that if now in our riper years, from loyal bound subjects, if we turn traitors again, and false unto him unto whom we are sworn, it is possible to escape cruel punishment by eternal death? Certainly no. Terrible are the punishments which abide for such miserable creatures, who are perjured traitors to God.

For, first, if we consider, a continual dying, a great deal more terrible than any death. Again the perpetuity thereof, that it shall endure for ever, no time, age, or ages shall finish the same. Oh! if we did but once settle in our hearts, by a deep meditation, this eternity, we would tremble, every joint of us, at the least offence we commit, we would never rest after the committing of any sin, until we had washed it soundly with the tears of repentance. But so much the more terrible shall this perpetuity of torments be, in that they shall be tormented from beholding him in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. And again to increase their misery, he will bring his whole power against them, even the whole strength of his army.

This is a mighty power. What and if (saith the apostle to the Romans) God would, to show his wrath and to make his power known, suffer the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction, &c. Here you see the power of God, and the greatness of his indignation shall meet the

wicked with a full cup, although he suffer long. If we should see a mighty man come with a terrible force, and cleave a shield of brass at a blow. So the Lord with a more mighty force will come upon the wicked in the great day of vengeance, renewing his plagues upon them with redoubled forces from time to time, for indeed, although, like parrots, we can be content to talk with God, yet the course of our lives showeth that we make but a mock Lord of him, and give unto him no part of his honour due. But if we thus contemn the Lord, he will discharge his cannons against us, and so bruise us in pieces.

Let us consider then diligently what wages sin will pay unto us, for a reward of our long service; a most doleful reward. The apostle he telleth us what this goodly purchase of our's is in the end; saith he, "The wages of sin is death." This is a wondrous misery of ours, that one way, by all means we fly from death, yet otherwise (unperceived) we hasten on to that which we so fly (I mean) both the first and second death. It is said, thatk the woman there did travail in pain to bring forth her child, &c. So wicked and miserable sinners, they are all great with child of sin, and they travail fast to bring forth: when, notwithstanding, all proveth but miserable; sin, when it is conceived, bringeth forth death, saith the apostle James.

Oh, but may some object, what is this you say? you speak to those who are under the law. I will leave the law, I will take hold of Christ and then I shall be sure of mercy. I say thou canst not so long as thou remainest in a profane course of life, how close soever thou carry it before the world. Nay, bring a rabble of thy good works along with thee like unto the Papists. They shall not avail thee. The law and Gospel shall both condemn thee; the one, because thou art still under the dominion of sin, and the other, because in place of thy due submission, thou art yet a rebel thereunto in thine heart, being neither hot nor cold, therefore the Lord shall spew thee out of his

mouth; because thou abusest both the law and Gospel. Neither do I here bar penitent sinners from the riches of his marvellous mercies, for I confess Christ's blood saveth all such, but sinners who despise and mock him and his members, and will none of him, how is it possible such should think of mercy? Aye, but may some say, will you yet not grant that God is merciful. And I again reply, do you thus ask to mock and tempt God, to make his mercy a cloak for thy sin? That his mercy thereby may be prostitute to every filthy sinner? It must not be so. St. Paul he there affirmeth only, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, when we look for this trial, who be freed from condemnation? Let us look upon their walk, whether it be after the flesh or the spirit, the apostle maketh this true trial. If thy walk be after the flesh (profess what thou wilt) thou as yet hath no part in Christ. And yet I say, let us look upon their walks. Many dear children of God may stumble and make slips, and yet their walks be after the spirit. Let us, therefore, not mistake slips for walks. But unto thee who remainest yet in thy sins, under the dominion of the law, yet soothing thyself that thou art freed by grace, I say, deceive not thyself. All those who are partakers of justification, are also partakers of sanctification. It is as certain as God is true: look unto that oath which God hath swornm. There the Lord's oath is, that those who serve him truly shall serve him for ever in holiness and righteousness, in justification and sanctification. Otherwise if these two go not together, thou hast no freedom of thine enemies, thou art still under the curse of the law. So long, therefore, as thou remainest hard-hearted, under the dominion of sin, and wilt not repent, or if thou willingly harbour any one sin, so long it availeth thee not to say unto me, that thou wilt pray unto God, for he will not hear thee. Read the first chapter of Proverbs, there he saith, "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out mine hand, and none would regard. But ye have despised all my counsel, and would none of my correction, I will also laugh at your

destruction, and mock when your fear cometh." This is our folly, that we will never hear wisdom until death come, or some great misery, the forerunner thereof.

And then he will not hear thee. This is a fearful thing, thou delayest to come unto him, and thinkest him lavish of his mercies, and that thou mayest have them at thy pleasure, and yet in thy greatest need he will not hear thee. Aye, but may some object, those call but slightly and seldom. But I in my greatest passion will call earnestly and often, and so prevail. But it followeth in the same chapter. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but they shall not find me: because they hated knowledge." So the Spirit of God by Moses, dasheth this fond conceit of mercy without newness of life. "Ifp (saith he) there be any root of gall or wormwood in any, who when he heareth the words of this curse, he blesseth himself in his heart, saying I shall have peace, although I walk after the stubbornness of mine own heart, thus adding drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him." They think, let ministers speak as they list, I will yet presume upon God's mercy. But I ask thee, wilt thou needs do so, poor wretch? upon what acquaintance dost thou thus presume? A day will come (as the great Judge of all judges hath told us) when Christ Jesus the Judge of all will disclaim thee, with this cruel sentence, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity unto hell fire. Thou who reckonest without thy host thou must reckon over again. It followeth in the former allegation. "The Lord will not be merciful unto such a one, but the wrath of God and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and every curse which is written in the law shall come upon him." A most miserable thing it is to be tied to the law without redemption. But the child of God being freed by grace, he must be a new creature; sin may still stick close unto them, but they are freed from the law of sin; sin shall have, nor can have no dominion over them, they are not under

the law, but under grace, sin shall not reign in their mortal bodies. You see it then plain by the word of God, that the wicked and unregenerate man is still under the curse of the law, that there is no peace to the wicked. Ministers, you see then, must not always speak peace unto the people, but they must also use the bitter medicines of the law, where they are needful. We see, there is a charge given unto us to do so, there they have power to set sin upon thy head, and by such and such tokens to pronounce thee accursed. They have I say a charge to shut heaven upon wretched sinners, to bind them in chains of darkness, and deliver them over unto Satan. And if thou (whatsoever thou art) who heareth me at this instant do not change from thy stubborn heartedness, I say in the name of God I arrest thee. I protest against thee, leave thou not thy sins, and this shall stand up in judgment for thy condemnation. And the sin thou harbourest, it shall kill thee, it shall slay thee at unawares.

Now to come unto the second point, their privilege, and excellent estate, who are freed by grace. In which as we have seen their misery who are under the law; let us take a brief view of their happiness, who are freed from sin and the law, being under grace. Exceedingly may such rejoice, who have attained to enjoy this privilege, for in that last and great day when the wicked shall call unto the hills and mountains to cover them from the presence of the great Judge, not being able to stand before him; they shall appear with boldness, knowing that their redemption draweth near: because they are of another court, they did appeal betimes from the court to the Chancery, where they found peace and reconciliation in this life. And first for justification, he is free from that, that he is not tied unto, he will not be tried by the law, he applieth and layeth hold of the merits of Christ, he leaveth his own righteousness, and cleaveth close unto Christ, saying thus unto himself, my debt indeed is great, and I am able to pay nothing thereof, but Christ and I stand together, we now

are one, what he hath done by virtue of our union, is also truly mine and for me. And now let the devil and the world do what they can, here I will rest, here I will stay, and if I perish, I perish. Again for righteousness, although I have none of mine own yet will I plead Christ's righteousness, who is made unto me of God the Father, righteousness, justice, sanctification, and redemption.

And as for the imperfection of my sanctification, the law in this shall be my counsellor to direct me, not my judge to judge me. And let the law exact never so much of me, let it exact what it can, yet I fear it not, it can exact nothing but I in Christ Jesus have fulfilled the same. The law (beloved) unto us who are under grace, is like unto a man who writeth out a fair copy for his scholar to imitate, as near as he can, not forcing him to anything beyond his power. So the law is now unto us, but as a fair copy written by our heavenly schoolmaster, which we must endeavour to imitate, and follow daily nearer and nearer, as we can, wherein neither the ill nor the good scholars are forced beyond their ability; if they all with one heart travel towards the mark diligently to their power. So that I say, the law now is unto us, as a rule and fair copy, whereby to guide our life. It being our comfort that it is now our counsellor, not our judge, we shall not be tried by it, we fear not to be tried by it, we fear not the sentence thereof. All our works, I confess, do smell of many imperfections. But the angel with the golden censer in his hand, he mingleth sweet odours therewith, pouring sweet incense upon them, which together with our prayers, mount up unto the presence of God, that thereby our God smelleth a sweet savour of rest, and we have peace with him: so passing by all our imperfections, by which means we are freed from the law, being now under grace. But what more, is this all? Nay we are also freed from the dominion of sin by being under grace. Now to make this appear the more evident, we must first see and consider, what things be in sin; there are two in number.

1. The penalty, death.

2. The taint and corruption of sin, a general infection in soul and body.

Now for the first, the penalty of sin. Behold how we are freed from death. Sin, when it cannot work in its own element, as before; when it altereth the course, and natural working, then it is dead unto us, it hurteth us not when it worketh in another kind, out of its own climate, when the ordinary course and streams thereof are so stopped, that it seeketh for new beginnings, for even as those bright streaming lamps (which we call stars) falling out of their proper natural region of light, unto the earth, the nearer they come unto us from their proper orb, the darker they are still, until at last falling on the ground, their light cometh quite to be extinguished. So sin in the regenerate, now working unwillingly, by compulsion and violence, not naturally by willing consent, as before, having altered kind, is now as dead unto them, because the longer they live the more they strive against it. It is now a falling towards the ground daily, where it hath less and less light, until at last it be quite extinguished. It is their comfort, it cannot rise again, to its own former and proper place of natural working. It is still falling downwards, and daily as it falleth it loseth some light, until at last it be quite dead. If thou beest sure, that sin once be a falling before thee, assure thyself it must by degrees fall unto the ground. It was the complaint of the children of the prophet to Elisha, when coloquintila had by some unawares been shred into the pottage: "O thou man of God death is in the pot," which he presently healed by casting a little meal amongst them. So, I confess, for all this we may complain of poison, and still cry out that death is in the pot. But here is our comfort, that the blood of Christ is sprinkled into it, and keepeth us safe, that the venom thereof doth not hurt us. So that now, although death be in our pot, yet doth it

also lie sprawling, wounded at our feet, not able to hurt us. For even as the three children were preserved in the midst of the fiery furnace, from being burned thereby, and from the heat of the flame, so it is with God's children, although death be in their pot, and sin still haunt them as a troublesome guest (more bold than welcome); yet the heat and venom of sin is delayed and taken away, by the mighty mercies and power of our God, that it is not able to kill them, which our blessed Saviour further confirmeth, telling us, that amongst other things, and privileges of believers in his name, this should be one especial property. "Andu if (saith he) they shall drink any thing, it shall not hurt them." This is an especial privilege of the child of God under grace. Thus you see the venom of sin is killed. It hurteth not God's children, they are freed from the penalty of sin.

A further second thing there is to be considered in sin, which is, the taint and corruption thereof, which hurteth, and is as a general infection, infused into soul and body. But yet for all this, when a man hath once apprehended the blood of Christ, all this taint and corruption is washed away at an instant, and forgiven. Even as a traitor who hath been forfeited and tainted of blood, and cut off from being a member of the state, when it pleaseth the prince to restore him again by act of parliament, this man is no more a traitor, but hath forgiveness granted unto him at one instant, both from the penalty of the law, and guilt, and corruption of tainture of blood. So I say we having apprehended this most precious blood of Christ, the charter of reconciliation with him, having our hearts sprinkled therewith, at one instant we are restored from being any more traitors to God, having thereby both freedom from the severe exaction of the law, as also the taint and corruption of our sins infection taken away, being restored again at one instant to the blood royal, as the Lord speaketh: "In those days, and at that time (saith the Lord) the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be

none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will be merciful unto them whom I reserve." So, even so, I say, having apprehended the blood of Christ, whereby we are restored at one instant, all is forgiven. We are freed both from the penalty of sin, and from the taint and corruption thereof, yea so clean (in respect of imputation) that you see the Lord promiseth that though the iniquities of Israel, and the sins of Judah should be sought for, yet this work of apprehending Christ, and regeneration being once wrought, there should none be found; all is swallowed up in mercy. God's children in this life deprive themselves of much comfort by mistaking this point. They go on without this strong consolation I speak of. And because they would gladly judge of their good estate by the perfection of their regeneration and sanctification, being full of imperfections, they live in many sorrows. When indeed they should look unto the truth of the business. Am I truly, howsoever in much weakness, regenerate? Am I within the doors of the covenant of grace, although I come not so far in as others? Have I laid hold of Christ? Am I within the king's proclamation of free grace? Have I entered my name to him, and turned from my former rebellions? Why then, no question, I am within the doors, howsoever I was a traitor before. Why now all is forgiven and quite taken away, as though it had never been. I am no more under the law, but under grace. The penalty and guilt of sin are both taken away from me. Soy the Lord hath covenanted with us, that with that new fleshy heart in regeneration, the blood of Christ (like unto nitre) should wash away all our iniquities. And (saith he) I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, yea from all your filthiness.

Let us then comfort ourselves with these things and be thankful, learning to weigh them aright, and praying continually that we find the continuance of this happy and blessed estate; not to be under the law, but under grace, and that for Christ Jesus' sake, &c.

SERMON XXXIII:

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Treasure - Matthew 13:44

Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in the field; which when a man hath found, he hideth it, and for joy thereof departeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

IN this chapter, well beloved, are set down a number of parables, which were uttered by our Saviour Christ, to declare the mystery of the Gospel; wherein was fulfilled that prophecy which went before in Psalm 78. "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundations of the world." The disciples of our Saviour Christ, asked him why he used this kind of obscure teaching? Why he delivered not the doctrine of the Gospel plainly; but covered and veiled with parables, that every man could not understand the same? Unto whom our Saviour Christ giveth this answer and reply, that his drift in so delivering the Gospel thus veiled with parables was this: that he might keep it from those who were not the children of life; that he might conceal it from those who would not inquire into the same, nor the meaning thereof, reserving the husks only for such hogs; that in them might be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, that they might hear and not understand, that they might plainly see, and not perceive, that their ears might be heavy, and their eyes shut, lest they hear with their ears, and see with their eyes, and so convert and be healed. This restraint then he showeth them is first in regard of the reprobate, who will take no pains to search into these mysteries, but tread and trample them under their feet. As also in regard of the knowledge of God's children, the elect, who are careful to make a search and inquiry into the deepest of these parables.

Parables are so far from obscuring a thing, that by them a point of doctrine is made more clear and manifest. Now amongst the parables whereby our Saviour setteth forth the nature of the kingdom of heaven, some signify the power and force of the kingdom. Such were the foregoing parables, where our Saviour compareth the same to a grain of mustard seed, and to apiece of leaven.c A mean and base thing you will think; and yet as this by a secret power in nature groweth to a great tree, and as a piece of leaven, by a hidden operation overspreadeth the whole lump; so this kingdom of the powerful preaching of God's word hath like effects, and the same operation in the soul of man. So that these two parables are set down to signify the force and operation of the Gospel. Now, in this verse now read, and in these following, are set down two other parables, to signify the high value and price of the Gospel. That as by the parables foregoing was proved the powerful and effectual operation of his Gospel, so is it also likened unto a pearl, yea to such a precious pearl, that he, which hath any understanding thereof, will sell all that he hath to buy and purchase it. And here again in my text, it is compared to a treasure hid in the ground, which when a man hath found, he hideth it, and for joy thereof departeth, and selleth all that he hath to buy that field. In which two things are to be considered.

1. What the thing is which is found.

2. How the party who findeth it is affected. How this treasure affecteth him who hath understanding to know the price thereof.

Concerning the first, the thing found, which is like unto a treasure hid in the field; in this first, before we proceed we must understand, what is meant by this kingdom? A kind of speech it is which is used in all these parables. The kingdom of God is like unto this or that, &c. For answering of which question we must understand that kingdom,

in this place, is to be taken in the most general signification, to signify the outward ministry of the Gospel by the delivery of the word and sacraments, as also the inward operation of God's spirit, accompanying this outward ministry. As, whensoever any man heareth the words of this kingdom, and understandeth it not, the evil one cometh, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. Some there are upon whom this word (though powerfully delivered) yet it worketh not effectually. And yet saith our Saviour, where his sceptre is held up, where his mace is carried before him, there is his kingdom powerful, there is it effectual.

In verse 41 it is said also, that the Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity. Where kingdom is taken for the visible company, amongst whom the word of God is powerfully preached, which hath in it things which offend, which are not yet, but shall be in the day of judgment separated. They who now carry their faces aloft like sheep, shall then be thrust out like dogs, and set on the left hand like goats. So again, when our Saviour had proved that by the finger of God he had cast forth devils, he gathers this conclusion. If it be so that by the finger of God I have cast out devils, if the name of God be with me, then is the kingdom of God come among you. Where the kingdom of God is taken for the outward ministry of the Gospel, which kingdom we may rather resemble to the field than to the treasure. But we have this treasure (as the apostle speaketh) in earthen vessels, it lieth hid in this field. It is not every one who beholdeth this generally, who can see this treasure contained therein. We may therefore cry out with the prophetf, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is a treasure enclosed in the field: and therefore if we do but generally behold it, if we hear not Christ's inward voice quickening and raising up our dead souls, and his power ruling in

our conscience, we have not this treasure. But his outward ministry in this case is no otherwise unto us, but like unto a trumpet sounded in a dead man's ear. And thus you see the kingdom of God taken in a general sense for the outward ministry of the Gospel, accompanied with the inward operation of God's spirit; for which it is likened unto a treasure hid in a field. Now, therefore, let us proceed in the next place to see,

Wherefore it is called a kingdom.

It is called a kingdom, and yet upon the earth. The kingdom of God is come amongst you. To this I answer, the Lord would intimate unto us thus much, that he in this earth erecteth up his throne, gathereth subjects unto himself; and that none can be added unto that everlasting kingdom (properly called the kingdom of glory), unless he be a citizen in the kingdom of grace, and submit himself to the sceptre of God's Son here upon earth. God hath here established a kingdom upon earth, he hath placed his Son here to rule in the midst of his enemies, he hath charged every soul to submit itself unto his government. Here are heaven-gates either opened or shut against every sinner. And therefore, if here we will not have this man to rule over us now, hereafter he shall utterly reject us before men and angels, where we shall have shame for evermore. This is beyond the conceit of ordinary men, who think we cannot know the estate of men until hereafter. But in the mean time these little think that the foundation must be laid upon earth, and that Christ must first rule here in our hearts, by his kingdom of grace, before we can reign with him in his kingdom of glory. Now we see, Matt. chap. 16. ver. 19 there the message of God is tendered by his ministers, who have commission either to open or shut heaven-gates. I will give unto thee (saith Christ) the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou loosest in earth shall be loosed in heaven; whatsoever also you shall

bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven. We have then the keys of this kingdom. Will you enter into an house when the doors are shut? Wilt thou enter into heaven? Why you must have an entrance, and he hath given unto us the message of peace, and the ministry of reconciliation; we tender it unto you. Is there then a son of peace? Is there any who will receive our report, is there any who will entertain our message, that will have Christ to rule and govern him, and will willingly submit himself prisoner for his cause? Why to him we may open heaven-gates here, and they shall be opened unto him hereafter. But contrarily, will he be rebellious, will he reject his message, will he not have Christ to reign over him? But will voluntarily cast off his yoke, and refuse that reconciliation offered? Against that man we may shut heaven-gates: we may clap them upon his face, and the Lord will ratify this in heaven (saith he); if the case be so, that a man discern the law of Christ, and yet will not submit himself to that law, power and authority are given unto us to shut up the gates against that man, to pronounce him to have no interest in God, to arrest him with the Lord's mace, and to deliver him up unto Satan. And therefore when the kingdom of God cometh unto a man, when the Lord dispatcheth a messenger from the court of heaven, and this, like heavenly manna, is dropped down at the doors, it is a fearful thing to refuse it, it is a matter which concerneth our life. Here, at this time, are life and deathset before us. If we will not receive life, the Lord accounteth us rebellious, and the rebellion against the ministry of the Gospel to be the highest rebellion that may be.

But you will object and say, was Christ our king before the Gospel? I answer there was another king before Christ came, that ruled over our hearts, even the strong man Satan; he held possession, and sat as a lord, and a tyrant in the wicked natural man, making him subject and obedient unto him. For if thou swear, profane the sabbath, and

follow the lusts of thine own wicked heart, let Satan but instil his suggestions, and presently thou canst not choose but do his will, which is the most vile slavery that can be, when a man is thus made a drudge to Satan, and to his own corruptions. The apostle, speaking of that kind of bondage, saith, "Know ye not, that to whomsoever ye give yourselves, as servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye have been the servants unto sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart unto the form of doctrine, whereunto ye were delivered." Here is our estate before Christ's kingdom cometh into our hearts. We are not without a lord, but the prince of darkness, and our own corruptions sit as lords and tyrants in us, that, beloved, did the Lord but open the eyes of a wicked sinner, to see in what a thraldom he were, before Christ did unloose the works of Satan, he would be afraid of himself, and would pray the Lord to dislodge that tyrant. Seeing then the matter is thus, that before the Gospel be entertained, we are slaves and vassals to Satan and our own corruptions, let us learn to make use hereof.

Seeing that our wages then shall be but a dead pay, and that for sin we shall be tormented, world without end. This should draw us from the kingdom of sin unto the kingdom of grace in Christ Jesus; for when the kingdom is brought to our doors, and the Lord findeth that we seek him not, how shall we escape damnation so great, if we neglect so great salvation? I appeal unto the conscience of a profane man, that will say Lord, Lord, but yet will not do his commandments, whether he make him not a mock God. The Lord complaineth, "ifh I be a father, where is mine honour," And our Saviour asketh the Jews, why they call him Master, yet not doing these things which he spake? Truth it is that a wicked man maketh a mock of him, he putteth a sceptre of a reed into his hands, and a crown of thorns upon his head, when in this case he is rebellious against him, when he cares

not for his commandments, but although his messengers charge and threaten him, he respecteth not, further than it may not cross his corrupt lusts.

Consider, then, whether or not thou hast this spirit of rebellion, against the sceptre of righteousness. You see Christ is there installed in his kingdom, there is his coronation, and there is the large extent of his dominions: he that is the prophet of his Church publisheth the will of his Father. The Lord will say "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession, thou shalt crush them with a sceptre of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." So that we now, who are in the uttermost parts of the earth, may not think but that we must yield subjection to his kingdom. Now I appeal unto your consciences, whether you are in the number of those rebels there set down. They rage, murmur, they band themselves, and are assembled against the Lord and against his Christ anointed; let us break their bands (say they), and cast their cords from us. Here are the speeches of a mutinous heart: they will not speak against God, but against those poor ones that are employed in his service. They say they put upon us such burdens, we cannot take them; they cannot endure that a man should increase his estate by usury; they cry out against us when we go unto plays, dancings, feasts of mirth, and other the like sins. Let us therefore reject their yokes, and not be subject to those vassals. So long as a man, beloved, hath these thoughts, so long as he findeth this rebellion in his heart, that he thinketh it a burden when God speaketh by his ministers, and the heart is ready to burst, let him assure himself that the Lord shall break and dash him in pieces, if he will not strike sail, when the message of Christ Jesus is brought unto him. Howsoever he may think God to be nothing but mercy, yet let him know that howsoever he loved his children, with that infinite

love, that he gave his only Son, and that to death for them, yet hath he a bar of iron in his hand, whereby he will dash his enemies in a thousand pieces.

Seeing then Christ is set as a king over all the nations, when there is a messenger despatched from heaven, and the kingdom of grace is tendered unto thee, subject thyself unto him, lest his anger be kindled but a little; for then who is able to endure it? O then blessed are all they that put their trust in him. And thus much of that, that this treasure is likened to the kingdom of heaven.

Now the reason why this kingdom is resembled to a treasure, is because, howsoever the ministry of the Gospel to fools is accounted but foolishness, yet unto those who have true understanding to judge aright, the Gospel of having Christ and his righteousness is accounted for the most precious thing that can be. I say, howsoever the submitting of a man's self unto the Gospel may be accounted base, in the eyes of base men, who hereafter shall be made more vile than dung, yet to them who are wise they are accounted the greatest treasure in the world. So that here is set down by the Holy Ghost the highway how a man may be truly rich. Wouldst thou have a treasure, in the having whereof thou shalt never want, be thou then a subject to the kingdom of God, and then shall thy riches be such as shall never be taken from thee. Riches are here called a treasure, that is a great quantity of riches (for all riches are not a treasure), but that is said to be a treasure which is abundance. We see in the word of God, how this wisdom is not only compared to a treasure, but the compare is thought too base. What do we talk of earthly treasures? Why, the richest thing we have, compared with the treasure of Christ, is nothing. It is said to be a treasure hid, and deeply hid, that unless God discovers it, man naturally cannot find it out. "Where is wisdom found, and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not

the price thereof," neither the value and quality of this treasure, what it is. "It is not found in the land of the living: the deep saith it is not in me. The sea also saith it is not with me; gold shall not be given for it, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof; it shall not be valued with the gold of Ophir, nor with the precious onyx, nor with the sapphire, the gold nor the crystal shall be equal unto it, for it is more precious than pearls." Here you see Job, a skilful lapidary, bringeth forth the finest gold that might be imagined, the coral, the gabish, and a great sort of precious stones, and yet, comparing them with wisdom, they are found too light, there is no comparison, no valuation between them. The like we may see. "Happy is that man who findeth wisdom, and that man who gets understanding, for the merchandise thereof is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof is better than gold. It is more precious than pearls, and all things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her; length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand pleasures and honour." There is one word which comprehendeth all; consider all the things thy heart can desire, let it be filled with whatsoever it will, yet all is not comparable to this spiritual wisdom. Thus, you see, God comparing this message, this wisdom, this treasure offered unto us (though in earthen vessels) in an homely dish, with all that the heart of man can desire, with all treasures, and precious stones, all are nothing comparable to it. Consider, then, and weigh with thyself, what is brought unto thee in a homely dish, even the most precious thing that thou canst desire; here is tendered the son of God, God is offered to be thy portion, the Lord of all things, thou mayest receive him, it standeth either upon thy acceptance or refusal. We see it was accounted a great honour which God did unto Abraham, when he accounted him his familiar friend. As it is said in the Scriptures, "Didstm not thou, O God, cast out the inhabitants of this land, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend?" To which also St. James agreeth, where Abraham is called the friend of God. It was a

great matter that God should call him friend, not servant, who knoweth not the secrets of his master, but his friend, to know his mind. Many have friends, and yet they are never the better for them; but God he giveth unto his friend Abraham the land of Canaan, and he maketh him to possess it, in despite of the nations; but what is this to the gift behind? He bringeth him into that land, for all the sons of Anak. in spite of them, for to possess the same, yea the possession of this earthly Canaan was so esteemed of the Patriarchs, that (as you know) it made them so strict to have their bodies buried there. For, I pray you, what kindled this desire in them, some to be carried thither, and some to have their bones removed after hundreds of years (as the bones of Joseph were) but because it was a type of the heavenly Canaan, of the certain possession whereof hereafter, in the fulness of glorification, this their burial was a type and figure.

So God, by our ministry, offereth unto you the possession of that heavenly Canaan, notwithstanding the sons of Anak, and all the adverse power of hell, and hellish men, that withstand the same. Take possession thereof then, by the ministry, in the kingdom of grace, that thereby you may be possessed of heaven, as he which hath heaven hath he not a treasure? And yet God giveth Abraham a greater treasure than this, he giveth him more than heaven and earth, and all. "After these things (saith the text) the word of the Lord come unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham, I am thy buckler, and thine exceeding great reward." Wouldst thou have a reward? Thou shalt not only have heaven, but thou shalt have myself also. Now, was this spoken, think you, to Abraham only, or to his children also? Yea, it is that which every faithful soul may say, God is my portion, "Thep Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him." How then can that man be poor, which hath such a treasure? that hath such a portion as God is? So that the soul which

hath this portion, which hath attained to this treasure, may truly confess with the prophet David, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage." So also we may see upon this ground (the consideration of this great treasure procured by the Gospel) the children of God are comforted against the discontentments arising unto them by the prosperity of the wicked. When David had seen the flourishing estate of the wicked, and all treasures to flow unto them; "Certainlyr (saith he) I have cleansed mine heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency; for daily have I been punished, and chastened every morning." David, seeing the wicked in prosperity, but himself punished; surely (saith he) my feet had almost fallen. But did not David, before he had ended the Psalm, see that he had a greater portion than the wicked? He falleth out in acclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and I have desired none in the earth with thee." Let whatsoever misery come upon me, yet I would not be a wicked man, because the Lord is the strength of mine heart, and my portion for ever: so that the consideration of this great treasure given to God's children, is a means to keep them from that discontentment, whereunto otherwise they are likely to be subject. You see, David contenteth himself with this treasure. "Thet Lord (saith he) is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; he shall maintain my lot." Let the wicked rejoice in their abundance of their wealth, thou hast given me more joy of heart and comfort than they, when their corn, wine, and oil have yielded great increase. You see the point verified, he to whom God hath given an heart to receive grace, and a willingness to subject himself to this kingdom, that man cannot want: all that the heart of man can desire is not comparable to that which this man shall possess.

The apostle, he standeth upon this point; "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us?" They shall do us

no harm, if God be on our side: who shall condemn us if he acquit us? Though all the devils in hell, and hellhounds upon earth should belch out their venom against us, yet shall they do us no harm. The ground then is, if he spared not his own son, but delivered unto death for us, how then shall he not with him give us all things else? You must think that when Christ, God's principal jewel, is made our stock, and given unto us by God, God himself, that he will not stick to give us petty matters of less moment. Nay, the having of these things or wanting are truly our's, all are our's, all is for our good.

As it is, after the apostle had concluded against the vanity of worldly men, he inferreth, "let no man rejoice in men, for all things are your's." Never make comparison between a righteous and a wicked man, for the wicked are but cyphers to them; there is no comparison, all things are your's, Paul and Apollos, or the world, or life, or death, things present, or things to comey. This one thing the apostle maketh to draw on all the rest. Christ is God's, and God hath bestowed him upon us, who, being heir of all things, all things belong unto us. The best preachers, Paul so powerful, Apollos so eloquent, and Cephas so mighty, all are our's, and their gifts were given them for our good. It is saida, that for this cause were gifts given unto men. Nay, which is a greater matter, you have heard the apostle say, the world and death are our's; they are our enemies indeed, and yet he is not content to say, they shall do us no hurt, but that they shall do us good service. And, which may comfort God's children, as it is also, not only things present, but also things to come shall work for their good. Neither principalities nor powers, nor height, nor depth, shall separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; though they should live as long as Methuselah, yet need they not fear anything, nothing can sever them from him. So that may we not boldly say, that he which is God's hath found a treasure, and is rich? We will now therefore briefly come to an issue of this point with exhortation.

Wouldest thou have true riches? Then doat not upon the transitory things of this world; let not the pleasures thereof deceive thee, which may be taken from thee, or thou from them; which the wise man warneth thee of; that "riches taketh unto her wings as an eagle, and flieth unto heaven." Only this treasure remaineth constant, it cannot be taken away, when thou sendest thy carriage before thee unto heaven, it is not in Satan's power, nor in the power of any other creature, to take it from thee. Thy dearest friends bring thee to the grave, but the works of God's sanctifying spirit shall follow thee, as it is said, "Blessed are they that die in the Lord, their works shall follow them." They carry that which will be their crown and rejoicing. Thus you see the kingdom of heaven is a rich treasure. But though it be a treasure, yet every eye cannot discern it; for we may speak with many men of the excellency thereof, and yet still they esteem it not; and the reason is because it is a treasure hid in the ground. Well, it is a treasure still, and howsoever wicked men have not eyes to behold it, howsoever such who are out of their wits, and therefore esteem lightly of the favour of God in Christ, neither can value rightly the price thereof (because these things are hidden from them) nor yet find the same, yet is it not long of the thing valued, but the point is this. Because it is hidden, yea, so hidden, that unless God opens our eyes (as he did Hagar'se) we can never find it out, neither shall we ever be able to discover the value and exceeding worth thereof. Could we rightly discern it, it would make us sell all that we have for the attaining of it. I say, that it is a mystery, that it is a secret, it is a thing hidden, which by the light of nature man is never able to discover. The reason is, because the natural man wanteth eyes, that howsoever the Gospel of Christ shine as brightly upon him as the sun in his strength, yet (like blind men, though it shine in their faces with an exceeding splendour) they cannot see the brightness thereof. This is our estate; by nature every man is thus. And I appeal unto the consciences of many, who have been long hearers of the word of God,

whether they do not think as men do in dreams, when we speak of a certain powerful operation, which the word worketh in the hearts of God's children, what wonders it worketh in them. If they find this strangeness of working in themselves, and that these things are but dreams unto them, let them know this for a certain, that they are no subjects of Christ's kingdom; it is hidden; it lieth not above ground, the Lord must discover it, or else it shall always lie hidden. The apostle, showeth that, first, they are such things as the heart of man could never find out; and secondly, although they were found unto his hand, yet could the natural man never discern the worth thereof. "We speak wisdom (saith he) amongst those who are perfect, not the wisdom of the world, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God hath determined before the world to our glory, which none of the princes of this world hath known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of life." Here is the hidden treasure, which none of the princes of this world know, that God hath brought that to pass, which never entered into the heart of a natural man to think of. In these words the apostle speaketh not of those joys, which are reserved for God's children in the world to come; for it followeth, "thatg God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;" but he speaketh of the discovery of the mystery of the Gospel to the consciences of men, whilst they live here. We speak mysteries; but in whose judgments? Why in their judgments who are not perfect. Now he accounteth all the princes of this world to be but babes and children; who, albeit they may excel in wisdom and knowledge, yet take the chiefest, that which is accounted the most excellent in them, and compare it with the wisdom of God's children (though carried in a mean dish), and, in the judgment of those who are well instructed, it will hold no comparison. They cannot discern the worth of this treasure, that is thus propounded, we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which all the philosophers, had they laid their heads together, could never have found out,

unless the Lord should have discovered it. Then cometh the second point. Admit the heart of man is not able to find it out, yet when it is once discovered in the preaching of the Gospel, may not a man then give the true valuation thereof? The apostle addeth, no. He cannot only not find it out, but also, when it is revealed, he hath no eyes to see it, no eyes to behold it. The natural man (one that is destitute of God's spirit) he thinketh the preaching of God's word, and this Gospel, to be foolishness, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. You see then, it may truly be said to be hidden, and so hidden that the wit of man can never find it out, neither being found to his hand can rightly value it. Because it is only revealed by God; man carries about him that blindness, that he cannot discern the riches thereof, until the Lord reveal it. But as the flesh hindereth this; so the world and Satan hinder the same. The world, when as they value the things of this life at so high a rate, the living in prosperity, the having of thousands, and the like, that there is no room left to esteem of these spiritual matters. And the devil, when as he also blindeth their eyes, that the light of the glorious Gospel shineth not unto them. You see the apostle: "Ifi our Gospel be then hid, it is not hid from all, but from them who are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should not shine amongst them." It is not hid from all; for some can find it out. But admit thou findest it not out; wilt thou therefore put the fault in the Gospel? No, the fault is not in that, for, besides thine own natural blindness, there is another cause. If it be hid, it is hid unto them who are lost, whom the God of this world hath blinded, that they see not the light of the Gospel.

This, then, is a most fearful thing, that when this treasure, of itself hid, is revealed, brought to our eyes, and a price set thereon, that yet we have no hearts to esteem and value it as we ought. Satan

hindereth us in this case, lest we should subject ourselves unto this yoke, lest we should find out this treasure, and the light of this Gospel should shine in us, he envieth at this. And, therefore, seeing the case is thus, that unless a man be enlightened to see the price of this precious treasure, it is in vain for him to seek for it; and seeing we are by nature dead and possessed with Satan more fearfully than any bodily possession (which is yet very fearful) and accounted miserable. "My daughter is miserably tormented with a devil." Let us for use hereof remember, that if this be a fearful slavery, how much more fearful is it, to be spiritually possessed by Satan in the soul? As, therefore, the blind men in the Gospel, when we discern that the Lord would open our eyes, that we may see this treasure, as they for redeeming of their bodily sight cried, "Lordl, thou Son of David, have mercy upon us;" so we, for the enlightening of our understandings, whereby we may see this hidden treasure, must call upon him for mercy. And as they, for the redeeming of their sight, desired him to open their eyes, so must we earnestly desire him to dispossess us of the prince of this world, who hindereth our eyes that we cannot see it, and like unto blind Bartimeus we must be earnest for the same, and being rebuked by impediments, we must call again and again, with so much the more vehemency. With him also, we must cast away all impediments and lets which hinder us from coming unto Christ, be they never so dear unto us. For you see what it is, which is here found, namely, a treasure, no small matter; and a treasure, though not seen by all, yet discerned by some; a treasure of infinite value. It followeth now, that we come to

The second part, how the party, who findeth this treasure, is affected. It is hid, valued above all things, all sold to purchase it.

When God now hath enlightened the eyes of a man, that he can see where this treasure is, that he discerneth it (for the richest) to be

invaluable, that he is so inflamed with the love thereof, that he resolveth that he will have it, whatsoever it cost him, what doth he now? Why first his affections are full of joys, he is so glad of it, it is unspeakable. Then will he say, I have discerned mine own misery, my poverty, and nakedness. And I have found a treasure, Christ Jesus, and his righteousness. It shall go hard but I will get it. Aye, but there is a price put upon it. It must cost thee dear, a great deal of sorrow, trouble, and other crosses. Tush, tell me not of any price; speak not of it: whatsoever I have shall go for it; I will do any thing for it. Why, wilt thou curb thine affections? Wilt thou give up thy life? Wilt thou be content to sell all that thou hast, and beg all thy life-time, so thou mayest have this treasure? I will do it with all mine heart, I am content to sell all that I have. Nothing is so dear unto me but I will part with it, my right hand, my right eye; nay if hell itself should stand between me and Christ, yet would I pass through the same unto him. This is that violent affection which God putteth into the hearts of his children, that they will have Christ, whatsoever it cost them. There are many excellent things which may be brought from hence, things very needful to be pressed, concerning the joys which God's children have, which is a property in them, when they hear the word. They joy not only in the bare hearing thereof, as did Herod, and as in the parable before, where mention is made of some, who heard it joyfully, and yet fell back again; but also when it crosseth their desires, in such things as are near unto them. Herod heard many things, yet he would not abide to be reproved of his beloved sin, to part with his brother's wife, this was contrary to his desire, and therefore he obeyed not. If, therefore, you will have God's mercy to be this treasure to you, you must forsake your sin. You cannot serve God and Belialo. You must forsake the service of honour; which thing will be, unto a natural man, most bitter, and maketh him (like the young man in the Gospel) depart sorrowful. Farewell Christ, I will have none of thee, at such a price. But he is the

joy of God's children, who, finding the enjoying of Christ to be joyful unto them, nothing can separate them from them, but he will have him, though he were unto them in the harshest terms that may be. Our Saviour maketh this conclusion: he whosoever, who forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple. Our Saviour meaneth not that a man should cast away all the wealth which God hath given him; but that we must cast away our corrupt dispositions, or whatsoever hindereth us from coming unto God, we must tread over them. Now it importeth thus much, our Saviour he propoundeth this to the multitude. Great multitudes follow him, but art thou his true follower, wilt thou know what it will cost thee? Why he giveth it thee for nothing, but yet thou must walk worthy of that heavenly vocation, when thou hast it.

Well then, if any man will come unto him, he must forsake all, his father, his mother, if they may hinder him. A man would think this to be a dear price, and there are many, when they hear of this, will be well advised, whether or not they will have him at such a rate. But let such know what our Saviour saith, which is this, that their lives they have, in regard of that love they should bear to their Redeemer, should be nothing. We should even hate them. "Heq that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Now for the matter of cost. Consider with yourselves (as he that buildeth a tower), first, what it will stand you in, first set down the charges, for howsoever thou mayest have him freely, yet, notwithstanding, thou must have him as thy Lord, thou must be his subject, he thy king, and thou his servant. If thou thinkest his service nothing, thou hadst best to sit down and see what it will cost thee. Consider the matter well. Thou must account upon thy crosses, losses, and many troubles that will befal thee; for thou must not think to be carried to heaven upon a feather bed.

If then we can say and endeavour so, that we will undergo any thing, whatsoever befalls, for Christ; assuredly then this treasure is ours. The parables are many and full of depths, and there remaineth yet a great deal of this. Thus much for this time shall suffice to have spoken of this treasure. Now let us pray, &c.

SERMON XXXIV:

Not the Word of Men But the Word of God - 1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, that when ye received of us the word of the preaching of God, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.

IN the former words of this chapter, the apostle propoundeth to the Thessalonians, the great love which he bare to their persons, and the great care he took to bring them into the love of the truth, wherein he

showeth that the pastor must put on tender affections to the people, that thereby they may win them unto the love of the truth. And the people in this case who carry not, nor are kindled with the like affections to their pastors again mutually, it is, I say, a miserable thing, and no good is done. Again he showeth that this work of the ministry is no idle business, that there must be a great deal of care and pains taken in travail therein night and day, and at all times; he saith he spared no pains with such an affection, that he would willingly not only thus bestow the Gospel amongst them, but even his own soul to have done them good, so dear they were unto him, whom he (gently sparing them in their weakness) did nurse as children. This was his tender affection unto them, and should also be of every pastor to his people, and also, as he now speaketh, to take pains, and not be loitering in their business. For he showeth that he would not be chargeable unto them in any wise, rather (as in another place he showeth) he would work in the night that thereby he should not be chargeable unto them. Heb proceedeth, appealing unto themselves, as witnesses of all. Ye are witnesses and God also (saith he) how boldly, and justly, and unblameable we behaved ourselves among you that believe; and notwithstanding that these things have not been without offence unto some, whatsoever slanders be, yet I appeal unto your conscience of my diligence in the ministry, in all things, which became a faithful pastor. As he taketh them as witnesses that he is free from the blood of all men, and that he had not ceased night nor day, to preach and admonish them with tears, these hands of his ministering to his necessities. So here he telleth them (showing his great pains amongst them) that he had exhorted them diligently by all means, yea he had comforted them, and besought them as children to walk worthy of God, and of that high calling of the kingdom of glory, whereunto they were called.

Now in this 13th verse which I have read, the apostle cometh to show what fruits these his great labours had brought forth amongst them, how they entertained it, they received it as the word of God, and not as the word of man, as the powerful word of faith in them which believed. Now from hence we may mark this particular observation, that the thankful receiving of the word here comforteth the apostle, to hear of the joyful effects the word had wrought, producing such excellent fruits in their hearts. From whence we may observe the point of doctrine, that there is no comfort equal to the comfort a minister receiveth in the fruits of his labours when he seeth people drawn unto God. Sometimes, I confess, there ariseth small comfort unto him of his pains. But what, must they therefore give over? Ezekiel also had but small comfort, being sent to stiff-necked, hardhearted, and rebellious people. They are thus, and thus, they will not hear, yet the Lord commandeth him to go on, So (saith he) for all this, discharge thou a good conscience amongst them, make them inexcusable, let them know that there hath been a prophet amongst them. There are some who will still be stiff-necked and rebellious, who, let the Lord threaten judgments, let his ministers pipe or dance, never so sweetly, yet they will none of his yoke, this man (say they) shall not reign over us. But no marvel, saith the Lord, they will not hear me, much less will they give ear unto thee. Yet for all this, the Lord many times gives great comfort unto his servants in their ministry, seeing a number converted and confirmed to the end. So our apostle here had experience of God's mercies this way, where rejoicing exceedingly he demandeth no other thing, for "what (saith he) is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you it, at the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming." As also the apostle telleth unto the Corinthians, "youe are my epistle, written in our hearts, in that ye are manifest to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, and written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the

heart." And "we give thanks always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, without ceasing, remembering your effectual faith, and diligent love, and the patience of your hope, in the sight of our Lord Jesus Christ, even our Father." And he addeth, "for our Gospel was not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." So the question is asked, "Who will show us any good?" but David he rejoiceth more in the light of God's countenance, than in all. "Lordg (saith he) lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me," for I have more joy of heart in the fruit of thy love, conveyed from thy law, than in all the world besides. We are all now received into the Lord's vineyard in this life, where some do sow, and others reap, and some do both sow and reap, yet all must be content. For our Saviour Christ he biddeth his disciples to lift up their eyes to the regions all round about, which were already white unto harvest, encouraging them unto their labours in the spiritual vineyard, with the encouragement of eternal life, their sure reward, where both sowers and reapers shall both rejoice together, reaping the sweet fruits of the Gospel, compared to a ripe harvest, in respect of the green rudiments of the law and the prophets. The harvest now of the Gospel is greater a great deal than that other of the law, wherefore the labourers must reap hard and labour much to bring his spiritual corn unto the Lord's barns, and to see the comfort of their labours (if it be possible), that they may rejoice so much the more, yet are they sure of their crown, howsoever another reap their labours they shall be crowned. A pitiful thing it is to see a poor minister toil and labour, to have few comforted by his labours, and he to receive comfort of a few, many resisting him of purpose to oppugn him. But poor souls, when they thus grieve and vex him who must give account for their souls, little know they, as the apostle speaketh, that this their resisting shall be unprofitable unto them, they shall be more and more hardened in their wickedness for destruction, although the grief come unto their ministers. Let us then

make use of these things unto ourselves, and if we would have joy of the ministry, let us be diligent to give ear to their admonition, that we may profit by them, and they receive comfort of their labours. Many think that they have done enough, when they present themselves, or come to church to hear, they think this enough, and that then you have done all that is to do. But I tell thee, if thou wouldest come to the good of thy soul, thou must come as a subject to obey, and to subject thy heart and affections to be ruled by the word, to be commanded by the power thereof. The minister he hath power to bind thee like a king, if thou wilt be disobedient to the word. What, I pray you, is the cause, why so few profit, in hearing of the word, but because they come without due preparation, like unto a judge, to judge and censure, not like unto an hungry hearer, with sober hearts to learn wisdom.

Thou, therefore, whatsoever thou art, must suffer Christ in his ministry to reign over thee, and over all thy affections; thou must subject thyself wholly unto his will, or else the day will come when he will bid, Bring forth these mine enemies (who would not that I should reign over them) to the slaughter, that I may tear and devour them in pieces, that most cruelly I may devour them. These wicked men! they blaspheme, and speak evil against God's ministers, although not against himself, yet they would have (as it is Psalm 2.) the yokes put off, the bands broken and taken away which he enjoineth. But Christ (let all such remember), when he cometh, will bring with him a sceptre of iron to crush such in pieces, if they repent not betimes and submit themselves to his yoke. Thou hadst best, therefore, let the ministry reign over thee betimes, that it may bring thee in subjection to the will of God, before this black day come upon thee. But whatsoever thou doest, they shall be gainers, they shall have their reward, and be crowned with eternal life; therefore, we must labour and watch, whatsoever come of it.

But now a second point to be observed is, that ministers must have a care to labour that they be not in the default of their own wants, in depriving themselves of this comfort and joy. They must strive to entertain love amongst the people, and towards them, not envying others who do better than themselves. If therefore thou hast not so much comfort in thy ministry, being followed as others, strive not by envy to stay the work of God, to discomfort, cast down, and hinder others by thy strife. But labour thou to do as well as others do; and then, out of question, thou wilt be followed as well as he, at least thou shalt have a joyful reward. The prophet, in the person (as it were) of Christ, speaketh of the exceeding power of this ministry, which yet for the time had not those wished effects. "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; under the shadow of his hand hath he hidden me, and made me a chosen shaft, and hid me in his quiver, and said unto me, Thou art my servant Israel, for I will be glorious in thee." And yet for all this it followeth. "And I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength in vain, and for nothing. But my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." It grieveth him to seem to labour in vain, and that there is no more good done by him. But his comfort is, He who set me on work will pay me my wages. My judgment is with the Lord. So, I say, all must labour in the ministry: I will promise him who laboureth not, that he shall have a discomfortable ministry, and many sorrows for his negligence. Then, I say, the second point of doctrine is, that you see God is here praised for a blessing of the effects of the word, in that they entertain it willingly as the word of God, which is able to breed faith in their souls; so we see, the first footstep of mercy to a people is, when the Lord sendeth faithful preachers among them, who are able to divide the word of truth aright. This is that true and only means to create faith in the heart and bring salvation, "As, whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But if there be no true preacher, he addeth, how can there then be any faith? "But how shall

they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Aye but, say some, if there be no more a-do but to believe only, that is soon done; what need I then take so much care as some do? I shall do as well as they, though I live not so sorry life. But, I tell thee, deceive not thyself: it is not every faith that will save. But those who believe and apprehend Christ by a true and a lively faith, to these appertaineth salvation. Neither shall we have this salvation of every faith we hear from the pulpit, but that which we receive from the word of God, truly preached by him who is truly sent. Faith to us is the ground of this comfort, and hearing the ground whereupon faith buildeth, as upon a sure foundation, and what, I pray you, can be expected from a dumb minister? Where prophecy faileth, there must needs come the height of all sorrows. Where the Word is restrained, and not powerfully preached, from thence floweth a general apostacy to the whole land, to run as a plague over it, until it have made a consumption. And the reason is, because the Word is the ground of this our faith, and it failing, what can ensue unto our souls but sorrow?

Now that a preacher may be faithful, two things are required. 1. He must be able to scatter good seed. This is a great reproach unto our state, that some are sent forth by them to labour in the Lord's vineyard, who are ignorant of their Catechism. This is most lamentable. Oh! what sincere milk of the Word can we draw out of such drynurses, who had need of instruction themselves, and to be set to school again. Again, a second duty is knowledge, which many pastors have, but yet they conceal it to themselves, live idle and feed themselves, suffering the rest to starve. Of these the land is overburdened, and complaineth that they are crueller than the most cruel dragons in the wilderness. Now the people again, when they

have a good pastor, they must entertain respect, and have him in singular regard for his ministry, that he may be encouraged to go on. The work of government in the Church I confess to be great, but the work of the labouring minister a great deal more, and more to be respected. The apostle writeth to Timothy, that those elders who rule well are worthy of double honour, chiefly such who labour in the word and doctrine. Governing elders are worthy of much, but labouring elders of a great deal more.

Therefore let us above all things see, whether or not we make much of the glad tidings of peace, whether, above all things, their feet be beautiful which bring peace. A number think that they have done enough, when they abstain and go not to Mass. But if they have not love unto the truth, and come not to hear the word, what is this? Therefore look unto this, where there is no love unto the truth, there the Lord sendeth strange delusions, to believe lies. It is not the hearing, but the love of the truth, which preserveth any; otherwise they are ready to fall into all heresy from the truth. The prophet complaineth that he is full of the wrath of the Lord, and the people and the children are both carried into captivity, because they have no love of truth in them. Now a third point is, they received the word upon the blessing of God, and he giveth thanks unto God as the cause of all, to fit their hearts for hearing. For it is true that Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God who giveth the increase. And our Saviour, he oftentimes after his preaching saith, "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear." So that in hearing it is certain that God must give new ears, before we can hear: all cometh of him. So it is said, that he opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures. Soo it is said, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to attend diligently unto those things which Paul spake. And John the apostle saith, "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind for to know him."

For use hereof, let us learn when we come unto God, not to trust to our wits, or depend upon anything in ourselves, but only upon God, the giver of all; for what is the cause, I pray you, why so many great scholars profit nothing in their learning to themselves or the Church, but because they esteem themselves wise, and therefore do they with their wits and devices prove foolish. But far otherwise holy and wise David prayeth unto God: "Open thou mine eyes that I may see the wonders of thy law," for there is a secret contained in the Word which none shall see but such who have their eyes opened by God that they may see into the depth of this profound mystery. As Moses therefore,r before the giving of the law, by command from God, caused all the people to sanctify, prepare, and wash themselves first, so should we do before we come to the hearing of the Word, and then shall we have our eyes opened to see into these profound mysteries.

A fourth point is then, wherein most are faulty, that we much fail in this, that although we come, yet we come not to the hearing of the Word with that reverence and hunger, as unto that which must save and be the food of our souls, not to have life thereby. The apostle counselleth us, seeing our souls are purified in obeying the truth in the spirit, to love brotherly without feigning, being born anew, not of mortal seed, but of immortal, by the word of God, who liveth and endureth for ever. These men come not to the hearing thereof as to immortal seed, whereby they may live for ever; therefore doth it prove deadly and mortal seed unto them for their condemnation. Another point very necessary for our due preparation to the hearing of the Word is, to weigh duly what the messenger is; for thou comest before the preacher as before God's messenger, to be judged, and to receive by his mouth a beginning of that last judgment and final sentence which shall then be pronounced, either with or against thee for evermore. This is a fearful thing, and yet we consider not the same. If thou be not obedient to the word of God, pronounced by his

ministers, he hath power given unto him to bind and arrest thee over unto the last and fearful judgment of condemnation. The Lord he giveth his ministers this full authority: "Whosesoevert sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained unto them." Therefore let men be well advised how they mock and contemn the ministers of God's word: woe will come unto thee! Thou shalt be bound in hell with devils for ever, if thou wilt not be content to be bound in the due obedience of the voice of God in the ministry in this life.

Many think that we must only preach mercy, and not justice. Nay, some will not give anything to the rebel, who cannot endure but to tread Christ under his feet, but still preach mercy, and throw pearls before these swine. But I tell thee that I am come also to bind thee, and deliver thee over unto Satan; to arrest thee before the great judgment seat, if thou thus continuest a rebel to God.

Aye, but some may object, I care not for this silly frantic fellow; let him prattle what he will, I care not for him. Doest thou not care if he condemn thee upon just trial of thy disobedience, upon thy malicious carriage, contempt, and continuance in hardheartedness. I tell thee, he bindeth thee over in the name of his minister, Christ Jesus, as though Christ himself were there present to arraign and condemn thee; as also to pardon and to open Heaven unto all who are humble and truly penitent for their sins. And therefore the apostle, upon consideration of these things, he demandeth, Who is able? Who is sufficient for these things? Let him receive them, &c. for we have vengeance in readiness to be poured out against all stubborn and disobedient sinners.

Again, we should now see how this matter of faith worketh in a dead soul, by the powerful working of the Word, how it prepares the heart

to receive mercy. For the law of God being laid close unto the conscience, here beginneth a sight of our misery. As the apostle Paul confesseth of himself, "I knew not sin but by the law, for I had not known lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust." Except the Lord put light into us to discern our own misery, we are not able to see the same, or know anything belonging to our great slavery in sin. Much less have we any power of ourselves to see afar off into things invisible, and into that precious redemption and life which is hid with God in Christ, unless the Lord do open our eyes, and enlarge our hearts, by the working of his powerful spirit in the ministry to find Christ Jesus, and the blessed fruition of those infinite joys which the faithful soul (who hath once attained to the knowledge of Jesus) findeth, lifting himself up above all these earthly things, where Christ Jesus sitteth at the right hand of the Father in majesty and power.

I know not how the time hath passed. Let us now commend that which hath been said unto God, that it may profit us both in soul and body, and that for Christ Jesus' sake, our Lord and Saviour, &c. &c. Amen.

SERMON XXXV:

Josiah Took Away all the Abominations - 2 Chronicles 34:33

So Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and compelled all that were found in Israel to serve the Lord their God. So all his day sthey turned not back from the Lord God of their Fathers.

IN this, and the chapter following, are described the acts of as worthy a prince as ever sat on the throne of Judah or Israel: a commendation which the spirit of God giveth unto him: "That like unto him was there no king before him, that turned unto the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according unto all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."

Now the acts of this prince were of such note, that it pleased the Lord, three hundred and thirty years before he was born, to describe him by name; a thing but seldom seen in the world. Yet no sooner came in the idolatry of Jeroboam, but the Lord sent a prophet from Judah, who should, in the presence of the idolatrous king, speak unto the altar: saying, "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places, that burn incense upon thee, and they shall burn men's bones upon thee." And it is specially to be noted that as the Lord there speaketh of a child, so this is spoken unto his singular commendations, that he should begin betimes; he did begin of a child, he put his hand to God's work, and did that which many old men before him were not able to accomplish; whilst he was but a childc, he began to look after the Lord God of his fathers, he applied his heart to seek the Lord. But amongst all other things which are recorded of this prince, there is one especially singled out as a pattern unto all princes. That, in the eighth year of his age, Josiah's heart was stricken within him. In the days of Manasseh the house of the Lord was profaned; the book of

Moses, whiche was to be laid in the side of the Ark of the Covenant, it should seem, was then put in a more secret place.

Now in the building of the temple, in the time of Josiah, Hilkiah the high priest, finding it, gave it to the king. The king reading it, and discerning the plagues threatenedg, that they should be brought unto a nation, whose language they did not understand, of fierce countenance and cruel, where they should endure all miseries, as there is mentioned, and (which is more miserable) that they should serve other gods, even wood and stone, the workmanship of men's hands. Josiah discerning this time to draw near, he caused this book to be read openly; and in reading thereof it is said, he rent his clothes and his heart melted. He therefore struck a covenant betwixt God and the people, and the covenant being made, he put the same in operation. The acts which he did are here briefly set down in this verse. So that here we have the sum and abridgment of those things of reformation which Josiah did in his reign. So that in this two things are to be considered.

1. Josiah's godly attempts.

2. The success God gave him.

Concerning the first, two things also are therein to be considered:

1. That he went about to perform the abolishing of all false worship.

2. That he established the true service of God, and manner of worship.

The first is set down in these words. He took away all the abominations, he brake down all the altars of Baal; he pulled down their groves, and carved images. His first office was to abolish such

things as were hateful unto God, he accounted that his service was not to be admitted according to the pleasure of the state. But he, seeing the abominations thereof, it so stirred up his zeal, that he did utterly abolish them, that they might not remain within his dominions. 2nd. He thought it not sufficient to pull down the idols, but he compelled also, by his authority, all who were found in Israel to serve the Lord their God. So that here two courses are here undertaken. The first was the abolishing of all false worship, as abominable. And the second, an establishing of the true service of God, and a compelling of those under his power to join with him in the service of God. And the success of all is set down in the latter part of this verse 33. In all his days they turned not back from the Lord God of their fathers, they departed not from the ways of the Lord, which is a wonderful thing, that not only Judah and Benjamin should be brought to conformity, but also all Israel, which were a stiff-necked people. In the 2nd of Chron. 30, when king Hezekiah sent unto the children of Israel, that they should come unto the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover there (which they had not done of a long time) it is said that the posts passed from city to city, through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them, the evil was so overspread, that it was to no purpose. But now, there coming a king who passed his father in zeal, who would not suffer God to be dishonoured in his country, behold the success which God giveth unto him. In all his days there was no trouble, they departed not from following the Lord their God. These are the excellent things delivered in this abridgment of the acts of Josiah. We now come unto the several instructions.

The first is the care which this good king had in matters merely ecclesiastical.

No doubt in his politic government he deserved commendations. But the especial thing for which he is here commended, is for his government and care in ecclesiastical matters. Many are content to take upon them as little as may be. They will shift off the government of the Church unto others, and they think they have done well, if they have caused justice to be preserved and peace, when as the apostle, giving us a reason why we should pray for all in authority, he setteth down this, as one effect we shall have by our prayers, that we shall live by them a peaceable and a quiet life in godliness and honesty. This is the fruit of good magistracy, that we live not only peaceably, but also godly, both in the duties of the first, as also of the second table. We find in the book of Judgesk, where many disorders are repeated, that is still brought: "At that time there was no king in Israel, but every man did according to his own heart." This is not spoken only upon occasions of murder, adultery, or the like, that there was no king to keep down these disorders. But the reason is, where the idolatry of Micah is set down, because that idolatry then reigned; therefore, saith the Scripture, there was then no king in Israel; as if he should say, when the king executeth not his authority. So when the whole tribes followed idolatry, then it was said there was no king in Israel. He saith not at that time there was no priest in Israel; form there was then Phinehas, one of the most worthy priests that ever lived; and yet then idolatry lived. The fault was not laid on him. The matter may come to that pass, that all the preaching in the world may not work upon idolatry. And then the king must take care and put to his hand to the business. The Lord trusteth him with all his laws, he appointeth him his deputy, and giveth charge unto him that the people be brought unto obedience to the commandments of the first and second table. And we see in the books of the Chronicles and Kings, that it was the commendation of good kings, that they took away the high places, and contrarily, it was a blemish to a good king, when he suffered idolatry, though he reformed many things.

Whereas if kings had nothing to do in these matters, or if their government should not be bad in these things, why, then, should they be blamed for the neglect hereof.

The use hereof is, first against the enemies of God's truth, and his and our adversaries. This evidently proveth the justice of that oath of allegiance, which is required by authority, to acknowledge the prince to be of supreme government. The meaning is this, that God hath put into the hand of a prince, a temporal and compulsive sword, it is supreme in him. And this civil government is not to be restrained within the things which are in outward and civil government only, but it also must show itself in causes ecclesiastical. What say the enemies of the truth? They wave all this, as though they were distracted, calling it abominable adulation, blasphemy, and untruth. These men would be in the number of those of whom the apostle speaketh, they dare speak evil of those who are in authority, and of those things they understand not. For this is so evident by the word of God, that nothing is more clear. They foully stumble where the way is plain. Is this heresy? Why? Because that which is proper to the priest, is translated to the prince. Now we call heaven and earth to witness that it is a slander. We labour to give Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and the minister that which belongeth to the minister. We say God hath his double government, civil and ecclesiastical, and that these two are so distinct, that they cannot be confounded. Will Josiah execute the office of the priest? Will he burn incense? The priest then may say, it is not fit for thee to offer sacrifice. And therefore Cardinal Bellarmine abuseth the Queen, when he saith, a silly woman playeth the Pope. As if we gave any part of spiritual authority unto princes, men or women. There is a government peculiar for them, and given from God: They that govern well are worthy of double honour. We see there the apostle giveth a certain kind of government unto the elders and governors of the Church.

And the apostleo argueth that he which cannot govern his own family is unfit to govern the Church of God; so that there is a government proper to them, which the king cannot execute, which is not outward, but spiritual, over the soul. The Lord hath raised a pale of partition, he hath a sword not temporal, but spiritual. It must not be so amongst you, saith our Saviour, Peter put up thy sword. The authority, then, the Church hath is merely spiritual, it striketh the soul, it proceedeth no further. It beginneth with admonition; as the apostle speaketh to Titus, "these things speak, admonish, and reprove with authority." That now, I say, albeit the king hath authority supreme, and excellent in his kind, yet is not he exempted from this authority spiritual; but when there is a despatch from the court of Heaven, and an ambassador sent to stand before him, he speaketh with authority in the name of the Lord, charging his soul to be obedient, and he standeth bound to yield to this authority, as well as others. Now, if admonition will not serve the turn, the Lord hath appointed censures of excommunication, a committing of a man to the Lord's gaol, that he may be outlawed for a time, and put (perhaps for ever) from the congregation. These are only spiritual, they reach not to the outward man.

Now, because there are many who have no sense of these things, if excommunication, admonition, outward censures, and (for a need) the curse of anathema will do no good, the Lord then hath commanded an outward sword, yea he hath directed a temporal sword to deal with the outward man. Is then the magistrate bound to strike with this sword in causes civil only? No! the magistrate is bound with his civil authority to punish as well the faults committed against the first table as against the second. He may inflict it upon a false prophet, upon an idolator, and the like transgressors, and he is bound to inflict it upon a thief, a murderer, or such like transgressors of the second table. So that there is no confusion betwixt these

authorities. They are both distinct, you may see in what manner they are so. There is a traitor (here is the case), hath the minister nothing to do with this? Yes, he may use his spiritual sword; he may put him from the blood of Christ, and may again admit him into the Church upon repentance. And yet the civil sword also may punish him still, yea cut him off. So that here are two divers governments, both aiming at one end; for both are bound to command men to subject themselves unto God; but after a different manner. The one striketh upon the soul, the other upon the body of a man. This is the first point to be observed, the power which the magistrate hath in causes ecclesiastical.

We come now to the second branch set down. The first was, that by his authority, the king took away all idolatrous abominations, out of the countries appertaining to the children of Israel; where by abominations is meant idolatrous services. Those plants which God never planted he will root out; these abominations that were hateful unto him he removeth. The second instruction from hence is this: the prince standeth bound in conscience, as he will be a faithful governor of that Israel which God hath given, that he will tolerate nor suffer any thing to be within his dominions which is displeasing unto God; much less such abominations as God hateth. Therefore, this observe, that wheresoever there standeth one and saith thus; these men be quiet, they do no harm, why may they not then be tolerated? Tolerated, will a good prince say, shall I tolerate them who are abominable to the Lord my God? unto him who hath advanced me above my brethren, and hath put the sword into mine hands? Shall I do that which is abominable unto him? Josiah did otherwise, I will not do it. He took away all abominations, and that in all places of his land. And here let us remember, that those who suffer such, may incur in the highest measure the indignation of God, as well as others who are so. There is a charge given to the angel and pastor of the

Church of Pergamus; they are there commended for many good things, but yet I have one quarrel against them (saith the Lord) because thou sufferest them which maintain the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Art thou an idolator? No; but thou sufferest them that are so. And for this the Lord threateneth that he will come against them shortly, and will fight against them with the sword of his mouth: if thou wilt not amend this I will punish thee, and, therefore, every one, the prince upon the throne, the master in the family, and every one in his place and calling, must seek to abolish this abomination; otherwise the Lord will remove our candlestick out of his place, as it is Rev. chap. 2. We have a fearful example of old Eli, a good old man, his sons were wicked, and gave great occasions unto others to blaspheme the name of God, and to cause his sacrifice to be abhorred. This went to the poor man's heart, he gave good admonition unto his sons. "Why do ye such things? I hear an evil report of you, my sons, consider what you do; you cause the Lord's service to become abominable. Consider with whom you have to do. If it were with man, another might allay the matter between you; but being against God, who shall plead and be an umpire betwixt you?" Eli going no further, when as God had made him a judge as well as a priest, therefore God sendeth him this message: "Ir said that thou shouldest stand, and thy Father's house for evermore, but now it shall not be so: but because thou hast honoured thy children above me, therefore I will honour them that honour me, and despise them that despise me. I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house." It is not enough for a man that is in authority to be a good man himself, to hinder and reprove evil, unless he will execute the utmost of his power to suppress the same. I intended (saith the Lord) to establish thine house for ever; but now thou sufferest that which is abominable. I will honour them that honour me. I will judge his house for ever, seeing he saw and knew of the iniquity his sons committed, yet stayed he them not.

Here is the substance of all, as we look for honour, which is the crown of a prince's government, remember that it cometh not from the east, nor from the west, but it is in the hand of the Lord; he may establish or overthrow promotion. Now God accounteth that dishonour when abominations are suffered to rule; and therefore if we would have our thrones established, we must labour that idolatry be suppressed. I am so much the more earnest in this point, because that howsoever God had vouchsafed a mercy to this land, that we behold not these abominations; yet in the miserable country where I was born (and where God hath made me to stand as an unworthy minister of his truth), we see the whole land a deluge, that there is nothing but profaning of God's name, yea, so much, that it is a wonderful thing that the Lord hath not destroyed us. We see the thing that hindereth all is, because such things are not accounted abominations, as they are. Some will perhaps object and say, those indeed were abominations which Josiah took away. But are the idolatries of the Church of Rome abominations? Yes, surely, for I dare truly affirm that Jeroboam's calves and idolatries were not so sinful as their's is. How charitable soever men may be in their judging, the whore is described with a fair outside. The harlot she is tricked up with precious stones, andt arrayed with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones. She giveth her doctrine in a golden cup; but what is there within? If we rip her up, what is within? It is full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications. Seeing how detestable that was, let a prince take this to heart in this manner. Is this so abominable unto God? Jeroboam's calves were abominable. But it was an image of the true God, and therefore there was difference betwixt Ahab and the other kings of Israelx. He sinned more than all the kings before him, worshipping Baal. Now was there ever such fornication heard of amongst the Gentiles that a piece of bread (it is not said only that it should be in the sacrament) but that this should be Christ. This is the mystery of

iniquity, which God abhorreth, that this creature, which in itself is but a mean thing, they should worship it as the true God. As Doctor Sanders saith, in the dedication of a book to the consecrated bread, I dedicate this book to the Lord my God. Thus, as the Psalmist speaks, "Those who make them are like unto them." Can the Lord endure this, that there should be a creature set up in the place of God, and the worship which they give unto that creature is only due unto the true God. So that here is idolatry, even in the highest measure. The Lord abhorreth it. Let them therefore who are in authority see that they have not Jeroboam's devices and tricks of policy. He was politic for the establishing of his idolatry. But, most certain it is, when a man preferreth himself, his own life and honour before the honour of God, it shall, and hath been always, his ruin. For these politic devices, let us consider the case of the high-priest, before our Saviour Christ was put to death. They laid their heads together, saying, you see here is Christ; you see how all follow him, and how they would have made him a king. Well, if we restrain him not, all the world will follow him, and the Romans will come and take away our kingdom. Here was their policy. Now see how the Lord confounded them. When they had killed him, thereby they brought ruin both upon themselves and their whole kingdom. But a day will come when the spirit of God will come upon Zorobabel and the other princes (as it is Haggai, 1), and shall cause the ten horns, which are ten kings, which had prostituted and given their kingdoms unto the beast, to hate the beast, spoil him and his dignity, and lay him in the dust. But, may some object, Aye, but when shall we see Popery go down? I answer, when the Lord putteth his spirit into the hearts of these princes to hate the whore with an unfeigned hatred. David was so far from tolerating of such a matter, that he professetha that he could not endure their bloody sacrifices, neither would he with his lips make mention of their names, as we may see when Joab sent him word of the death of Urias, informing the messenger thus and thus, If the

king be angry at the success of the business, asking why we approached so near the wall? could not former experience teach us wisdom? Who slew Abimelech, who was the son of Jerubbaal? Joab having occasion to speak of Jerubbaal to one who should strive with Baal, this name sounded so ill in David's mouth, that he turneth Jerubbaal (which was a title of honour) into Jerubbesheth, signifying shame; which sheweth us how we should hate such abominations, and admit no toleration, seeing that God detesteth them, and they will draw down the judgments of God upon them that suffer them.

The second point then of the first branch is,—Josiah doth not only suppress idolatry, but compelleth also all that were in Israel to serve the Lord their God. This may seem to be hard. Shall we force a man to the true service of God? Some may object, is this allowable in good sound reason?—service unto God must be voluntary, not forced. True: and will you then force a man against his conscience? I answer, aye, but here is the question,—God commandeth one thing and thy conscience another thing. Now if the pleading of conscience may stay the execution of lawful authority, our estate cannot stand. An Anabaptist denies obedience to the magistrate, and may we not force him to obey to authority? The Lord hath given unto the prince a sword, and how must he direct this? Not by the conscience, but by God's word. But you will say and object that a man may sin in this. Will you make a Papist to come to church against his conscience? I answer, that surely he hath brought this evil upon himself; that whether he stayeth at home, or be forced to go to church, he sinneth. Now, when the magistrate seeth that he is set upon sin, which of both shall he suffer to go unpunished? Surely, the case is plain (as I said before), for let him be left to his own conscience, and he will continue in sin all the days of his life; whereas let him come howsoever to the church, and use the means, and perhaps the next day he will come willingly. But, may some say, you may force me, but you shall never

make me come willingly. I answer, admit it be so in such as thou art, who hast an heart that cannot repent, is it therefore so in all? Hath not God provided this as a remedy for others? Indeed some have the plague in that manner that nothing will cure them; but others again, we see, have been reclaimed: and, which is more, it restraineth their insolency, which otherwise would be intolerable; and others which are ready to fall away are thereby healed. For warrant hereof see Ezra, chap. 7. ver. 26. There was a worthy precedent, though of a man which had not the knowledge of God that we have: "Whatsoever is commanded (saith he) by the God of Heaven, see it done, let it be diligently regarded unto"—meaning that God of Heaven which was dreadful, and to be feared above all others. There is the ground which maketh him to be so diligent. But how was this charge further amplified? "Whosoever will not do the law of God and of the king, let judgment be speedily executed upon him:" as if he should say, God hath given me a sword able to do this. The ecclesiastical sword may not do it: I have authority annexed to it, but this is proper to the king. Let all these things be done. When God's law and the king's law meet together, then lay on load and spare not. Let him have judgment without delay, whether it be unto death, to banishment, confiscation of goods, imprisonment, or whatsoever. It is excellent when these go together. Many have executed laws without God's law, and therefore God hath brought their laws to nought; but when both rule together, God's hand with his hand, it goeth like thunder through the earth. And why is it said, lest the Lord be wrathful to destroy the king's house for not executing his law?

Here we see he that would persuade a prince to tolerate idolatry may as well say, I pray you make way for the Lord to be angry with you, and consume you and your house. We see kings had need to kiss the Son as well as other men, for he can be angry against them as well as against others. And thus a general reformation being made, and

abominations set packing, we, with the people of Israel (depending upon the king's abolishing idolatry and setting up God's true worship and service), will also say, "Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, that hath so put into the heart of our king that he beautifieth the house of the Lord." I should now pass into the second part, viz. the success God gave to him, that he and all the people, all his life-time, were blessed. But I dare not presume upon your princely patience. Let us therefore crave a blessing upon that which hath been said, that by an holy life we may find the peace of God in Christ, possessing our souls with newness of life, for the full assurance of immortality in the life to come, and that for Christ Jesus' sake, Amen.

SERMON XXXV:

Josiah Took Away all the Abominations - 2 Chronicles 34:33

My soul praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy Name.

My soul praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits:

Which forgiveth all thine iniquity and healeth all thine infirmities.

THIS Psalm, by the inscription thereof, sheweth itself to be a Psalm of David, of which the very naming of the author must bring us in

love with the sweet ditty thereof; he being a man so exercised in Christian warfare, and acquainted with all sorts of spiritual combats, even holy David, of whom it is said, "even the man who was set up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel saith these things," he who had experience of many sorrows, who himself hath walked in the valley of tears, having obtained a joyful victory, he it is who now calleth for thy attention, even he, who appeased by his sweet ditties the fury of possessed Saul.

Now for the Psalm itself. It is a Psalm of thanksgiving, containing in the general a recital of God's infinite mercies, both towards himself, in his own experience, and next of his goodness to the rest of the people, for performance whereof (finding the waywardness of his own soul) first, he stirreth up his own soul, and, secondly, he provoketh all creatures to go along with him in the praises of God. "Praise him (saith he) ye his angels, that excel in strength. Praise ye the Lord all ye his hosts, ye his servants who do his pleasure. Praise ye the Lord, all ye his works, in all places of his dominions." It was a small matter for himself, and in his own eyes, only to stir up himself unto thankfulness. But also when he himself is stirred up and awakened, then he striveth to do the same unto others also. Whence our instruction ariseth, worthy of our observation, that whosoever would provoke others to the love and practice of any goodness, must first begin with themselves to practise those duties.

For indeed our exhortations lose their grace, and relish not, when we exhort others unto that which we do not ourselves. Neither indeed can we speak of any thing by discourse with half that feeling and passion, as when we speak by experience, neither can it indeed take that impression in the parties exhorted. Chiefly and above all, ministers must be sure to be an example in the practice of their lives, of that doctrine they preach unto the people. Neither must they (like

unto a number in our days) lay heavy burthens upon the people, when they (as our Saviour speaketh of the Scribes and Pharisees) not so much as touch them with their little finger. The Apostle Paul presseth this point hard. "Thou (saith he) which persuadest thyself that thou art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of them which lack discretion, a teacher of the unlearned." A minister must also, you see, be a pattern of good doctrine, to go before the people in holiness of life. Therefore it followeth, "Thou therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" This he speaketh to convince the Jews to be greater sinners than the Gentiles, in that they, notwithstanding their knowledge, did yet walk in the like, or greater sins. Thus we see the point of doctrine is plain, that it is the grace of all graces, to begin first with our own souls. You see first David would have God to be praised, but he beginneth not first at that, to exhort others, and to awaken them; but finding his own soul dead, and senseless, full of clogs weighing him down, and that the sacrifice he intended must have fire from heaven to kindle the same, he therefore calleth upon his soul again and again, yea thrice together, unto this duty. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, praise the Lord," but also he summoneth his slumbering and dead spirit to awaken, and be diligent in this duty. "And all that is within me, praise his holy name." Now from hence (for our observation) we may learn if holy David, a man after God's own heart, was thus subject to deadness, and dulness of spirit, that before he is able to shake off this laziness, he is fain to call again and again to his soul, and to summon all his inward faculties also for help, it must teach us poor and wretched creatures, not to go (as they say) hand over head, to the performance of good duties, but to strive by all means to try our estates, and with David here finding ourselves lumpish, dull and heavy, to strive, to stir and awaken up our own

souls, and not only so, but also to chide, stir up, and shame the other senses for help to this holy exercise. Here you see in the example of David there is a check again and again given unto the soul being sluggish, here is a spur to prick and stir up the soul, here is a treble alarm to awaken up the dead powers thereof, here is a charge given, a summons drawn out, wherein the soul and other faculties are secretly chidden for their security, and sluggish disposition. What my soul, oh! thou that art of an immortal substance, whose excellency should stir up and draw on all the rest, art thou now become dead? hast thou now so little care of thy infuser's glory? Without thee and thy help I can do nothing. Awake, awake my soul, and all that is within me, to celebrate the praises of my God.

This is questionless a wonderful help for us, in these extremities of dulness and sluggish security, thus to stir up and shame either ourselves, or others with chiding of ourselves in the vilest manner, to shake off security and procure passion. Our Saviour, we know, being to offer up his last sacrifice, before his passion, his disciples, whom he had taken with him, could not watch (as he had commanded them), whilst he was praying, and therefore at his return finding them drowsy, and asleep, he rebuketh Peter, "what, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is weak." Therefore I say let us be sure to watch, chiefly when the flesh is weak, then watch and beware, for then this sluggishness, it is an argument unto thee (for the time) that thou hast a dead soul, when thou art not able to discern any living power thereof. Therefore let us be sure to avoid this sluggishness; for this cause the Prophet David, both in my text, and the rest of the Psalms, still stirreth up himself, with what my soul! O, my soul! rejoice my soul; why art thou so sad my soul? &c., and the Apostle Paul putteth him in remembrance to stir up the grace and gift of God in him: that these clogs may be shaken off by

degrees, which so eclipse us of heavenly things. There is a great deal of flesh in every one of us, which, if it be possible, it will bear down the spirit, and spiritual things, filling us full of discomforts and continual sorrows, and therefore no small necessity urgeth our continual watchfulness, for the flesh and the devil they are in continual readiness to set on and slay the first motions of grace, to quench (if it be possible) the least spark of that sacred fire which appeareth.

Therefore let us endeavour by all means to stir up our dead souls, not suffering this sluggishness to prevail with us. If one thing prevail not, let us try another, and another again until we prevail. "My soul, oh! my soul, praise the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy name." The wise man counselleth us: "Take heed to thy foot when thou enterest into the house of God, and be more near to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools." What doth he mean here, I pray you, but that we must be sure to bring fire with us unto God's sacrifice? All who come unto God in truth must bring with them fire, life, and zeal for acceptation of their sacrifice, otherwise it hath no force to mount; if we come otherwise, it is but to give the sacrifice of fools. Would a man, think you, be content with such a servant, who were not at all times in a readiness to fulfil his pleasure, but would be sluggish and sleepy, and neglect his master's business? How much more, think you, will the great and terrible Lord of hosts, the Maker of Heaven and earth, be thus abused with us, who, in place of our sluggishness, should be still in readiness to fulfil his will; therefore this is (as it were) the putting of our instrument in tune to call upon the soul again and again, to stir it up unto watchfulness.

Now it is not enough for David to call and rouse up 1. his own soul; but 2. he saith: "And all that is within me praise his holy name." He, in the next place, setteth awork all the power and faculties of the soul

within him, the understanding, will, affection, memory, &c. He knew well that all those faculties by nature were estranged from God, wherefore he now laboureth to turn the stream of them to Godward again. Now our instruction from hence is, that in God's service all the powers and faculties of soul and body must join, nothing must be wanting, a part will not suffice. God must have all. Now the ground of this is builded upon the equity of this commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." And, therefore, because it is Satan's policy first to disorder, and overthrow the heat of our affections, we must labour to stand fast and keep our ranks. For like as a mighty warrior striving to break the ranks, and to disorder his enemies' troops, after which all is gone and victory certainly ensueth, so Satan laboureth by all means, when he goes about to overthrow us, first to take away the affections, and edge of goodness, to disorder our troops, for then he knoweth there is a gap opened for our final overthrow. Therefore, I say, let us beware chiefly, how we appear before God in prayer, look when thou prayest that thou pray with understanding, life, and zeal, and that the devil have not stolen away thy affections from God. Now for trial hereof, let us a little look upon divers means and stratagems of Satan to steal away the whole man, the heart and affections from God.

First, the devil he will hinder the whole man from coming unto God, that they shall not come to the church at all to hear, as recusants, and others who will not, and make any trifling occasions enough to stay from church. And secondly, if for all this the body, for formality's sake, will needs come, yet he will procure, that all that time the mind shall be heavy and asleep. Beware when thou comest unto God. It is not, as Ecclesiastes speaketh, thy foot only that thou must beware of, thy outward man, but thereby is meant the whole man, soul and body, with all the powers and faculties thereof. A poor silly man

sitteth all the time of the sermon with wandering affections, and yet when it is done, if he cry amen, he thinks all is well. But oh, fool, thou knowest not that all this while thou woundest thy conscience, when thy heart and affections are not present with thy body. As the Lord complaineth. "This people draweth near unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far off from me." Look, therefore, what he threateneth for this. "Therefore I will again do a marvellous work in this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wisemen shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." Behold the miserable issue, beloved, of lazy and negligent performance of good duties, even a fearful hard-hearted security settled in thee, which will at length be sure to destroy thee. Aye, but here may some simple men object, if matters be thus how shall I judge aright? The Papists, you say, are great doctors and learned men, who notwithstanding judge not aright, how shall I then get understanding?

I answer, the Papists indeed are great doctors, but here are two sins, whereof the Church of Rome is guilty, that maketh them thus blockish. First, their heart is gone, they bring not with them their affections in order. Secondly, they are led by the traditions of men. "In vain do these people worship, teaching for doctrines men's precepts." And thus this plague cometh upon them, these great wise men are blind as beetles, because they come not prepared, to do God's will, according to his will, as the prophet complaineth. Thou art near in their mouth, in their outward man, and far from their reins; they yet give thee not their hearts, they will tear and rend his blessed name, and profane his sabbath. Is this a coming unto God? Neither is this only subject to Popery, but if thou (whatsoever thou art) delightest not to serve God according to his will, he will be sure to set an idiot preacher over thee, and thou shalt live all thy life in blindness, because thou wouldst not serve God aright. So, I say, it is

also in hearing of the word, as the Lord speaketh: "Alsok thou son of man, the children of thy people, that talk of thee by the walks, and in the doors of houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, come I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh from the Lord; for they come unto thee as the people useth to come, and my people sit before thee, and hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouths they make jests, and their heart goeth after their covetousness." You see here what is wanting; they come to hear, but their hearts are not there, they will not do those things they hear, thy mind in the mean time is set upon covetousness, on thy goods abroad, and other wandering thoughts, and lo, saith he, what followeth of this profaneness. "Thou art unto them as a jesting song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can sing well, for they hear thy words but do them not." But all is one, spare not cry unto them, that they may (at least) be so much the more hardened in their sins, against the day of wrath; for when judgment cometh then shall they know that a prophet hath been amongst them. This is Satan's first blow, to keep back the outward man, and disorder the affections.

Again, he proceedeth from hence unto a second blow. He will persuade some men that it is both good and needful to have some of their inward man to perform good duties, permitting also the presence of the outward man. He will be content that they shall have things (men call a good heart,) good affections, a mind to be in the right way, to do no wrong, &c. Oh! but he will darken the understanding, corrupt the judgment, and blunt the memory; those shall present false objects in place of the true, and lead the will astray, like unto the Papists at this day, who are great doctors and honest plain-dealing men, full of charity, alms, &c. They will wrong no man for a world; they think they do well and carry a good mind with them, but their understanding and judgment, in the mean time,

remaineth darkened, that they can neither understand nor judge aright of those things which be good and bad, to put a difference. But, may some say, what need we understanding of these things, can we not come to heaven by believing them? I say, thou must understand what thou believest. David he is not content with a part, but he saith all that is within me praise his holy name. He requireth all the powers and faculties of the same soul to aid him that nothing be wanting. But still, such object, What! may not a good meaning, a good heart be sufficient to God? What though I pray in Latin without understanding, doth not God, think you, understand Latin as well as any other language? But, I answer, thou art ignorant (who sayest so) of the end of prayer, which is to move, assure, and comfort thine own heart, speaking to thy understanding for thine own good, and not to let God understand any thing which he knoweth not, for he knoweth thee and thy wants before thou come to tell him thereof. But thou telling unto God these and these things, and obeying his will, thou speaking unto him from sense, feeling, and understanding, the reflex thereof shineth back upon thee again, with comforts of his love grounded upon his main sweet promises to the so-doers, and thus thy peace is settled. That the understanding must know what it doth, and that prayer in a strange tongue, which one understandeth not, is an abomination. Look where St. Paul saith, "Except I know then the power of the voice, I shall be unto him who speaketh like a barbarian, and he who speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." And it followeth, "wherefore let him who prayeth in a strange tongue pray that he may interpret; for if I pray in a strange tongue my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is without fruit." This is the gross blockishness of the Papists, who will not only pray and sing in Latin, but also, when they have excellent Psalms of instruction from the Book of God, yet will they needs chant notes of their own making. This is Satan's second blow, to suffer the outward obedience, and a part of the inward, but to darken the understanding and corrupt the judgment.

Now his third stratagem is, that if he cannot thus prevail, but that good and true zeal bursteth out for all this, then, thirdly, he setteth upon the affections with might and main force, either gently at first (that he be not too soon perceived), to cool the heat of zeal, or (if he may) to quench the affections altogether. And therefore it is good for us to take unto ourselves that counsel of the apostle, "Be ye also patient therefore and settle your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near. Behold we account them blessed which endure." So, I say, we must gather and settle our hearts and spirits together, and be watchful lest Satan first cool and then quench our affections altogether. Let us, when we come unto prayer, not bring unto God a carcase of prayer only, but zeal, hunger, thirst, desire, and ardent affections: yea, we must Jacob in this case, to wrestle with God, to remember him of his nature, his former mercies. We must challenge his many and gracious promises in Christ Jesus; we must change from one passion, from one matter to another, until our affections be aloft; we must give the Lord no rest; we must lose good manners, and offer violence unto the kingdom; we must resolve, I say, to pass through all impediments until we obtain our desire.

Look, then, whatsoever he is that hath this ardent desire, love, zeal, and affection, that he will not be denied, that he will not neither give unto the Lord nor himself any rest until he have his desire: he who hath this valour, resolution, and constancy I speak of, this is he whom the Lord will bless, from whom the Lord will not withhold any good thing.

Let us, therefore, in this our dulness and deadness, blame ourselves, because we strive not to stir up ourselves; we beg not grace earnestly, as a thing which stood us upon our life. O should profane Esau beg a blessing with tears of an earthly father, and can we find no means to procure tears in begging of our eternal blessing from our heavenly

Father! The cause of this our dulness is, because we bring no fire with us, no true love, zeal, hunger, or feeling of our wants, but we come carnally, in a blockish manner, rather for fashion's sake and custom than any feeling or earnest desire, and then it is no wonder if dulness and hardness of heart do always follow the same. Now when the prophet David hath roused himself up from this deadness and dulness, what doth he? He propoundeth two duties to be done.

I. To praise the Lord.

II. To a thankfulness to remember all God's benefits.

First, he (as it were) striketh up the drum unto a general praising of God, telling first, what God hath done for himself; and next, the benefits the Church had received. Now in that he speaketh of the name of God to be praised: the name of God is nothing else but God himself; for in his glorious name dependeth all things. So Solomon, speaking of his father David, saith, "And now I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God." This was as much as unto God himself. And the apostle, speaking of Christ Jesus, saith: "Whereforeo God hath also exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord." Here the name of Jesus is Jesus himself, unto which the devils and all shall be subject unto his sovereignty. Therefore in that he placeth the name of God for God himself, we must therein behold his mercy, his goodness, his power, his justice, &c. with all other his attributes. So we see when God would be seen, and shew himself (after a manner) unto Moses, it is said, "Then the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." And what was this name? "So the Lord passed before his face, and cried:

The Lord, the Lord, strong, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, reserving mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquities, transgressions, and sin." And so David, in this place, when he inviteth himself and others to praise this holy name, commenteth, or rather augmenteth, that proclamation of God himself in Exodus. Whence the doctrine arising for our instruction is, that we are all bound to observe and take especial notice of the attributes of God, not only for ourselves but also for others. Every soul, I say, is bound to take notice thus of his great and glorious name, engraven in his creatures; and this shall be a most sure and safe way to attain unto the knowledge of God, wherein we are all faulty. So the apostleq affirmeth that the invisible things of God, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation of the world being considered in his works, to the intent that they should be without excuse. And St. Paul, speaking to this purpose, saith, that notwithstanding that former darkness of the Gentiles, "nevertheless, he left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Therefore it followeth, in the former chapter to the Romans, "for as they regarded not to know God, even so God delivered them up unto a reprobate mind." You see then if they, in their time of ignorance, were not excused for not knowing of God, nor taking notice of his mercies, how much less, think you, shall we be? The point then for our observation is, when a man beholdeth God to shower down his blessings, not only upon himself but also upon his other creatures, as the rain, the fruitful seasons, and other of his mercies, and taketh no notice thereof; this is a great fault, and God will be revenged of such. So the Prophet David (to make us inexcusable) telleth us, that "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth the work of his hands; day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where the voice is not heard:" so going on in a

number of other creatures who all point to their Creator and his glorious name. How senseless then are we? How great is our fault, which cannot read when so fair a book is opened unto us. The prophet therefore having thus prepared himself to this thanksgiving, proceedeth next to entreat of the particular benefits, wherefore he is stirred up unto this praising of God: and first, he calleth to mind and stirreth up his own soul unto this praise, as unto the end for which he was created, as though he would thus chide his soul. Thou art negligent, my soul, in performance of that especial duty for which thou wert created. Thy God created thee for his praise, although thou art not worthy to look up unto him; why art thou then so backwards, being of him so highly honoured? This the twenty-four elders confess to be true, "whent they fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for evermore, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy will's sake they are and have been created." And Psalm 100, because of this creation, all the earth is exhorted unto this praise: "Sing ye loud unto the Lord all the earth: serve the Lord with gladness, come before him with joyfulness. Know ye that even the Lord is God; he hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Then, secondly, he praiseth God, because He only is worthy to be praised who hath given all these good things which are to be considered in the nature of God. As "O my God and King, I will extol thee, and will bless thy name for ever and ever. I will praise thee daily, and bless thy name for ever and ever." Great is the Lord, and most worthy to be praised, and therefore he saith that he will bless and praise God daily, who only is to be praised; he will never cease. But yet when he hath done all he can, the exceeding excellency of this name overcometh him; he confesseth it is too high for him; his greatness is incomprehensible; no thought can pierce unto the same.

And, thirdly, he is so much the more invited unto this praise, because the comfort of all redoundeth unto ourselves, as though he would say unto his soul, My soul, so much the rather oughtest thou to praise the fearful and glorious name of thy God, even for thine own good. For when thou hast done all thou canst do, all is nothing unto him: thou canst add nothing to him who is all in all, but the comfort of these praises are for thy good, strengthening the assurance of thy safe estate, and giving unto thee assured testimonies that thou art in the favour of God, and hast a portion in Him, yea, that He is thine. As the prophet David saith, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." I will take (saith he) the good unto myself; the cup of salvation by this means is mine. So Elihu, reasoning with Job, saith thus unto him, "Ify thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? Yea, when thy sins are many, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous what givest thou unto Him, or what receiveth He at thine hand?" He is like unto a good master, or Father, keeping all for thee; all is for thy good. And then he addeth, "thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, but thy righteousness may profit the Son of man." All thy goodness is for thyself. It is an holy name. This name of God is therefore a fearful and a glorious name, let us then praise it continually since the comfort redoundeth unto our own souls, that we may have peace in the day of the Lord Jesus, being able to stand before Him to our everlasting consolation. But the time is spent, now let us pray for this strength with all other his good graces, and that for Christ Jesus' sake, Amen.

SERMON XXXVII:

Praise the Lord, Part 2 - Psalm 103:1-3

My soul praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy name.

My soul praise thou the Lord; and forget not all his benefits:

Which forgiveth all thine iniquity, and healeth all thine infirmities.

THIS psalm (as you may remember) I told you was a psalm of praise, and thanksgiving for God's manifold mercies, wherein the prophet stirreth up his own soul unto this praise for others, as well as for himself, that all may join with him in this action; for he calleth unto the holy angels, who excel in strength, to the hosts of all his servants, the creatures: then first he awaketh himself, tuning his own harp, that nothing on his part be wanting, both without and within, with "Awake, awake, my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name." For before our hearts be true, all our music (how sweet soever it seem to our senses) is but harsh in God's sight. He therefore first prepareth his heart to seek unto God, to show unto us, that nothing is acceptable before God without a good heart. The heart must be good before the sacrifice be able to mount, or procure favour from heaven, no blessing without this can be expected. Therefore the prophet Davidb, when his heart is first prepared, then he saith he will sing praises; when the heart is in tune, when all the other faculties of the soul are ready, then he saith, "Awake my tongue,

awake viol and harp, I will awake right early." The heart being aloft, all the rest follow as ready and willing servants. Then (saith he) I will praise thee being awake. The same is repeated, "O God, mine heart is prepared, so is my tongue, I will sing and give praise. Awake viol and harp, I will awake early and praise thee."

Again we see, he is not only content to summon one part unto the praises of God, but he summoneth all, nothing must be wanting. "And all that is within me praise his holy name." He is not content with the body, but the soul, with all the faculties and powers thereof, must also join. According to the great and main commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind," here must be a consent of all parties, to accomplish this holy action; for then and then only may we expect comfort in these holy duties, when we continue fervent therein; like unto Moses' handse which were continually bent upwards in prayer, whilst the people fought Amalek, you know the text mentioneth when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, but when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. So is it with us, whilst our heart is not tuned, nor our affections kindled, whilst we practise heavenly things carelessly, rather with formal knowledge, than true zeal and feeling of our wants, let us fight, as we will, we can have no comfort, all this while Amalek prevaileth, until, as Moses' heavy hands being supported by Aaron and Hur, to be constant till the sunsetting, so by watchfulness and continual intreaty the strengthener of the weak hands, and supporter and comforter of the feeble knees, lift up our hands, which hang down, and our weak knees, in an holy, fervent constancy to obtain victory. Being awakened then, two duties thereafter are proposed, praise and thanksgiving. And the praise, the main duty which he propoundeth, is to give praise unto his holy name, engraven in the creatures, who all show forth his glory, power, and majesty. I will not repeat what hath been said, but only, before I

proceed, speak one word of the holiness of this name. The name of God, you see, is called an holy name, therefore there must be always an holy respect in naming thereof. As we see St. Paul, speaking of God, draweth sundry and divers words of praises. "Now unto the King everlasting, immortal, invisible, unto God only wise, be all honour, and glory." Therefore there must be a singular respect taken of this holy name, because our God is holiness itself, even the infinite depth of all holiness. Be ye holy (saith he) to the children of Israel, for I the Lord your God am holy.

The use hereof shall be for us to remember, that which is written in the third commandment, that we be wary, since his name is a holy name, that we profane not the same in our wicked mouths. This is a common fault, throughout the whole land, to abuse this blessed name, with profane and horrible oaths. But what saith God unto this? Shall these men escape? No, I will not hold them guiltless that take my name in vain. Though they escape for awhile, yet a day will come, when they shall appear before my bar of justice, and then they shall be found guilty, where they shall be punished with hell fire for evermore. And if this temporal first death be so grievous to a natural man, what will eternal death be, to be separated for ever from the presence of God? The curse of God is threatened upon the swearer and abuser of God's name, that it should be a flying book on this and on that side of them, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off, as well on this as on that, it shall abide and never depart from the house of the swearer. I would the gallants and gentlemen of this age would remember this, who swim in wickedness, delighting who should coin most oaths.

The book, you see, is a long book, twenty cubits in length and ten in breadth, like unto Solomon's porch, just of that measure, even as long and as wide as is the church, for you see, it goethk forth through

the earth, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that falsely sweareth by my name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the stones and timber thereof.

Many think, I am no thief, I shall escape, but I say art thou a swearer, a profaner of this blessed name, thou art then worse; this flying book shall follow thee to thy confusion, the curse shall be in the midst of thine house. Let us then make use of these things, that we never speak of this blessed name, but that our hearts may be lifted up, and rise aloft with an holy reverence to the same.

Secondly, after praise, he now stirreth himself up to a remembrance of all God's benefits. He meaneth, not only of his own benefits, as none of the elect, but of all his benefits as one of the elect, who hath a feeling compassion, to give thanks for God's mercies unto all. First, therefore, he sheweth what should be the ground of this duty. Even a thankful remembrance of all God's benefits past to ourselves and others. The Lord for his part is not wanting in helps, he hath been beneficial unto all; he hath given thee matter of thanksgiving round about. He hath shewed thee matter enough both for himself in his love for thee, and in his mercy towards the whole Church. The point then for our instruction is, the end of God's mercies is, that we should give praise unto him for all his particular benefits, both unto ourselves and the whole Church. The most part of the world are continually receiving of gifts, one from another, and are thankful for the same; but chiefly if we do receive a gift from a king, we will be thankful for the same. Then, look what proportion is betwixt the King of glory and an earthly king! and yet thou wilt be thankful to the one, and not unto the other. Thou wilt be thankful and remember what thou hast received of an earthly prince: this is thy folly, in not weighing duly the founder of the one, and the other. Secondly. By

this we see the Lord will not only have thee to remember his present benefits, whilst he is a giving them, but also he will have thee to remember his mercies past so long as thou livest. As, "I will praise the Lord during my life; as long as I have any being I will sing unto my God." So, Psalm 147 and 148, the Lord is there praised for his marvellous mercies and goodness towards all his creatures, taking particular notice of all his mercies unto them; and not only so, but we must be thankful unto him for all his benefits. Let us remember the year '88 who are thankful for that great deliverance from Popish tyranny. Again, he saith, "O my God and my King, I will extol and bless thy name for ever; I will bless thee daily, and praise thy name for ever and ever." And the apostle saith, "Wen give thanks unto God for you, always in our prayers making mention of you." And "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, that when ye received the word of God ye received it not as the word of man." But was he content only of the present? No: you see it followeth, we give thanks without ceasing. And again, in the same Epistle, "Forp what thanks can we recompense unto God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we rejoice for your sakes before our God, night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face." Thus, you see, he is so earnest in this thanksgiving that he can never be thankful enough unto God. So should we be for all his benefits, for, thirdly, if these benefits were but a small number, it were another matter, and not so much: he speaks of all his benefits as being compassed about with a great number of them. As, "It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, they are renewed every morning. Great is his faithfulness." We still complain of want, and cry yet more, more; and yet if the matter were examined, we are not worthy of that we have, not being thankful, nor duly weighing those mercies we have received. It is a note of hypocrites to value at a high rate those things they have; but the true child of God is always humble in his gifts, because he acknowledgeth all to be of God,

nothing of him; he desireth more, but still he is so humble in those good things he hath, considering his unthankfulness, that he confesseth still himself not to be worthy of those, as Jacob confesseth. "Ir am not worthy, O Lord, of the least of all thy mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed unto me, for with this staff came I over Jordan." If so great a patriarch, walking with God continually, was not worthy of the least of these mercies, how much less are we who exceed in unthankfulness? So David saith unto God, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" And he afterwards addeth, "and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree." And yet what exceeding cause have we to rejoice, who are advanced to an higher degree than he speaketh of? even to the blood-royal of heaven, to be heirs and sons, yea, heirs annexed with Christ, yea, the very poorest of us have great things promised to us, and glorious.

Now in this matter of thanksgiving for all this the prophet is not contented with himself: but in that he saith unto his soul, forget not all his benefits, he therein secretly upbraideth his soul of forgetfulness, not to remember God's mercies, wherein is signified that part of original sin which tainteth the memory, stirring himself up unto sanctification. Because as sin is a thing which spreadeth itself over all, so sanctification is that which meeteth this part of original sin, and rectifieth the memory by a continual practice of holiness; as original sin, it is that which corrupteth the will, the understanding, the memory, and affections, &c.

Now that we may entreat of the memory, you then see it is more prone, a great deal, to forget than to remember chiefly good things. If God would have us to remember anything, that we are sure to forget soonest; and if he would have us to forget anything, that we will be sure to remember. God he commandeth us to keep the Sabbath, with

a memento to show our sluggishness and forgetfulness in this duty. All God's children are in this fault. Our memories are frail, neither do we remember or labour to stir up ourselves to holy cheerfulness on the Lord's day, as we should. Christ biddeth us let not our right hand know what our other doth, and yet we love to take witness of our alms. We are not thankful for good turns, those for the most part we forget; neither can we forget evil turns done unto us, we can remember them all our life-time. At sermons we are heavy and dull, slow of memory; but if we should be at a play, or any other sport, we can then remember all. Is not this a wonderful fault in our memories, to be so dull unto good things and so prone unto all evil? So the children of Israel are taxed for their bad memories. "They kept not the covenant of God, but refused to walk in his law. They forgat his acts, and his wonderful works that he had shewed them." And Moses being absent but forty days with God on the mount, when he received the tables of the law, how soon did they forget the miracles that were wrought by him? Yet their memories are weak, they fall a-calling for a golden calf: "We know not what is become of this Moses." And so are all our memories, frail and dull also, unless it please the Lord mightily to assist them with supernatural grace. It is a wonderful thing that the commandments, which were given from Sinai in so terrible a manner, made no deeper impression in their hearts, being given with thunder and lightning, and all the signs of horror. Yet Moses being absent for a little while, they fall grievously: but, again, more fearful was their sin; for when God's mercies, in the greatest plenty, were bestowed upon them, then were they readiest to forget them. As Moses, in his song, confesseth of them: "Butu he that should have been upright when he waxed fat, spurned with the heel. Thou art fat, thou art gross, thou art laden with fatness, therefore he forsook God that made him, and regarded not the strong God of his salvation." And the Lord thus complaineth of the Israelites, "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no

God but me, for there is no Saviour besides me. I did know thee in the wilderness and in a land of drought. As in their pastures, so were they filled, they were filled, and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me." Thus both in matters ordinary and extraordinary the memory is corrupted. So the apostles of our blessed Saviour, although they had been before fed at the multiplication of the few loaves in the wilderness, yet mistaking Christ's meaning concerning the leaven of the Pharisees, they are thus reproved of our Saviour, "Why, reason ye thus, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your hearts yet hardened? Have ye eyes and see not? Have ye ears and hear not? And do ye not remember when I brake the five loaves amongst five thousand? How many baskets full of broken meat took you up?" Here they are accused of two faults: first, of forgetfulness; secondly, of hardness of heart. You see then none are freed of this fault. What must we do then to attain a good memory? If thou have not a good memory, labour with all thy might to have a greater portion of grace, and grace will bring it. Labour to have thy affections sanctified, and thine heart purged, and the poison of sin being removed, grace shall strengthen thy memory, so that thou shalt be able to retain good things.

First, then, if thou wouldst have a good memory, labour to get a sight of the foulness of the fault, that thou mayest be soundly grieved at thy dulness and forgetfulness, that thou mayest espy and find what heavy wrath hangeth over the heads of such sluggards.

Secondly, confess thy faults before God, and be not ashamed to let the Philistine know thy disease.

Thirdly, seek for an earnest hunger unto those things thou doest here, that thou mayest feed upon them with an earnest appetite.

Fourthly, put an high price upon the preciousness of them. Value them at an high rate, as thou doest thy jewels and best things; thou prizest them highly, having a care to lay them up safe: so do thou in hearing of the Word and other good things, strive to relish grace. Then prize the means highly, and, as it is said of the Virgin Mary, when she had heard the choir of heavenly angels proclaiming the birth of our blessed Saviour, that she laid up all these things in her heart; so have thou an especial care to lay up all those things in thine heart, treasure them up carefully as thou usest thy best ornaments. Again, for a further help to memory, thou must be a good text-man, and acquainted with the book of God, that there thou mayest be acquainted with the frame of the Scriptures; that thou mayest learn there a right knowledge of the nature and attributes of God, such as he hath revealed himself in Trinity of persons, and in the Incarnation of the second person; that in time of hearing thy heart may run along with him, consenting unto the truth, and drinking it in so much the better as thou art acquainted with the Scripture phrase. Again, another special help for thee in all occasions is, that thou ever take all occasions offered (yea, and move occasions, to set forth the power and majesty of God), walking, eating, drinking, and sleeping, at all occasions speaking thereof. So doth the prophet David, "When I behold the heavens, even the works of thine hands the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man (I say) that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man, that thou visitest him?" This was a goodly meditation, and David, no question, was then walking upon the top of his house, and thereby took an occasion thus to meditate of the power of God; so should we be ready to stir up ourselves and others, by all means to meditate all manner of ways of the power and goodness of God. If thus we be fervent and constant in prizing of mercies, if they be precious and dear unto us, the Lord, from time to time, will delight to shower down mercies more and more upon us, and we shall have this memory in good things, with

store of his consolations. But if we will continue forgetful, slow, and thus negligent in remembering God, it will befal us as the Lord threateneth, "Thatb ye will be unto us as a very lion, and as a leopard in the way, or as a bear which is robbed of her whelps, and he will break the caul of our hearts." He that will not prize mercies at an high price, God's heavy hand will be avenged upon him.

Yet is he not content to have spoken of all these benefits in general; but now also he descendeth to the particular benefits, for God loveth not only general praises and thanksgivings, but also that we should enter into a particular reckoning of his mercies from time to time, so many as possibly may be remembered. From the beginning unto the fifth verse he entreateth of God's benefits unto himself, and from the sixth to the nineteenth, of his mercies unto others. And, first, for himself he giveth thanks unto God for deliverance from those evils which did sit close unto himself; for the present, his iniquities pardoned and his infirmities healed. First, then, he is thankful for evils removed, and next for good things bestowed upon him. First, he giveth thanks for that great and wonderful mercy, the forgiveness of sins, which is so great a benefit as no man can imagine the excellency thereof. Now in that he giveth thanks for the remission of sins, it is certain that he had confessed them before, for no man is thus thankful but he that both hath confessed and doth confess himself a sinner, a most miserable creature. In the word iniquities, therefore, he confesseth there is matter of death, enough and enough to kill him. Thus he confesseth himself a sinner before his thanksgiving. Whence our instruction is, that the straight way to heaven is not to mince sin nor hide it, but to come unto God freely, confessing the same freely, laying it in his bosom. Thus did Adam mince his sin unto God after his transgression, first, hiding himself in the garden at the voice of God, and then, when the Lord did begin to question with him, putting off the matter with excuses, laying it upon the

woman. "The woman whom thou gavest me she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He seemeth to part the blame betwixt God and the woman, so loth he is to confess his fault. And, think you, are we not all sick of Adam's sin? Though no creature hear us, yet how hardly are we brought to confess all unto God, to number up all our particular sins, and shame ourselves. I appeal to the experience of the faithful, how hardly this is done. So Job, when he would show his innocency (amongst many other things this is a principal purgation), "If (saith he) I have hid my sin as Adam did, concealing mine iniquities in my bosom, though I could have made afraid a multitude, yet the most contemptible of the families did fear me." God loveth not when we mince our sins: the more vile and ugly we make them, the more excellent comfort and surer seal of forgiveness followeth. So David confesseth, that so long as he held his tongue and minced sin, not being throughly grieved nor confessing the same, his bones were consumed, roaring all the day. But when all that would not help, nor yield any comfort, God's hand being heavy upon him night and day, and his moisture turned into the drought of summer, "Thend (saith he) I confessed my sins unto thee, (it booteth not to hide anything from thee, who art an all-seeing Majesty;) neither did I hide mine iniquity, for I thought I would confess against myself my wickedness unto the Lord; and thou forgavest mine iniquity, even the punishment of my sin." Here then, you see, in confessing of sins unto God, a quite contrary course must be used than is in our justice courts upon earth. To God we must confess freely, and all, shaming ourselves; in courts of justice we will not but upon compulsion, by witnesses, or so much as we must needs. Again, so also we see the prodigal son, he went a-rioting and wasting all his goods, yet without any remorse; then need and hunger pinching him, he was content that so long as he could get any husks to feed with the swine, to have remained in that estate; but this small comfort being denied unto him, when he is altogether comfortless, then (the text saith) when he

came unto himself, when he was in his right wits, he resolveth to come and submit himself unto his father, confessing of his sins in the most humble manner. So that it appeareth when a man is in his right wits he will never rest until he have, in all humility, made confession of all his sins unto Almighty God, who is so ready, upon true repentance, to forgive us. As the apostle speaketh, "If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness:" he will then pardon and put all our iniquities behind his back, &c. The pope he enjoineth confession unto men, as an hard penance, thinking it an easy matter to confess unto God. But, indeed, those who have any true experience of a true confession, know that it is a much harder matter to confess unto God than unto man: that unto man only maketh them ashamed a little; but (as I have said) they are afraid to let God know the same, being sick of Adam's disease, "I heard thy voice in the garden and was afraid." But yet, you see, the prophet David, teaching us to strive for the like victory, hath overcome these impediments, giving thanks for his main benefit, the remission of sins. Now, I pray you, what is sin? A filthy monster. No man is so ugly as he who hath not his sins forgiven: he is worse than Lazarus, most ugly to be looked upon. The very stench which cometh from him is most abominable. Sin it is the image of a little hell. If thou couldst look upon sin in its natural colours, thou wouldst not, for all the world, commit the least sin against God. I appeal unto a man, if he did see a great fire burning, with a number of sparks flying from it, might he not say that there were fire and sparks which would consume anything put to it, or in it. So when we see the image of rebellion and perverseness in this or that man, when we behold the picture of the devil in his perverse mind and evil deeds, like sparks flying from it, is not this the image of a little hell? I say, to see a natural man in his colours. This, then, must needs be an infinite mercy, to have this sin forgiven and not imputed, to be covered with Christ's righteousness. Sin is of that

nature that, like unto the blood of Abel, it crieth still unto heaven for vengeance, it haunteth the sinner continually, it lieth at the door watching us a shrewd turn. St. James saith that the sins of those who keep back the hireling's wages calleth unto heaven for vengeance, and their cry entereth into the ears of the Lord of hosts. So is it of all sins. Sin laboureth as an hireling, and would have hire, it crieth still for death. The same apostle, in another place, so compareth it as if it were with child. "Sin (saith he) when it is conceived (as it is said of the woman in the Revelation) travaileth in pain and crieth, yet at last bringeth forth but death." So a sinner hath a thousand sins which continually cry for death, and that God would send down in his justice plagues and punishments upon the head of the sinner. What an infinite mercy is this, then, to have a blood to outcry this blood? a blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; a blood to cleanse and wash away these sins; a blood which serveth to sprinkle the posts and lintels of our doors from God's devouring justice; a blood of infinite value. There is no end in speaking of it: it is an infinite depth of mercy to be thus purged from our iniquities, that God doth accept us for worthy in the merits of his Son. So therefore, for this cause, the Lord hath given power unto his ministers to bind and to loose upon earth, to pronounce unto the penitent, in the name of God, the absolution and freedom from their sins, to loose them from their sins. Again, that they may bind and bore the ear of the rebellious and hardhearted sinner unto a post, that they may nail him fast to the devil until repentance.

Now, in the next place he cometh to the second benefit, the healing of his infirmities, wherein he craveth sanctification to cover and hide his infirmities. For as justification giveth life by remission of sins, so sanctification giveth a comfortable life by hiding of infirmities, and so mastering of all the corrupt passions and affections, that the seed of grace groweth with so much the more ease to hide all infirmities;

and the shorter thou art of sanctification, thou hast still so much the less comfort. But here some may object, what, do you say when a man is justified is he not then sanctified? How can we then do good works without sanctification? And if works justify not, why should I do good works? I answer, that although good works justify not, yet we must bring forth good works to hide our infirmities, our loathsome leprosy of nature, to be a witness of our faith, and obedience to the will of God. We must practise them to kill the canker of sin, by a continual striving against our corruptions, to assure us of the truth of our justification, salvation, &c. And further, I answer, who would willingly, being stricken with a knife, refuse help, although perhaps he may recover? Then strive and labour thou with all thy might for sanctification, to hide all thine infirmities. The cruel surgeon, sin, hath already wounded us in many places, and we are all deadly hurt by nature: and for thee to refuse to do good works because thou canst not be justified by them, were more folly than being stricken with a deadly knife to refuse the surgeon's help; this were to stab thyself again, and so fall into a deadly relapse. That were most bitter, to add sin unto sin. Then, beloved, let us labour for sanctification, whereby all our infirmities and wounds may be healed, and we presented without spot and blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then he which sanctifieth, and they which are sanctified, being all one, and we being brethren with him of the blood royal, we shall be assured of the immortal fruition of his glorious kingdom, to reign with him for ever and ever, world without end. But the time hath prevented me that I cannot proceed. Now let us pray for a blessing unto those things which hath been spoken, &c. &c. O, Almighty and everlasting God, &c.