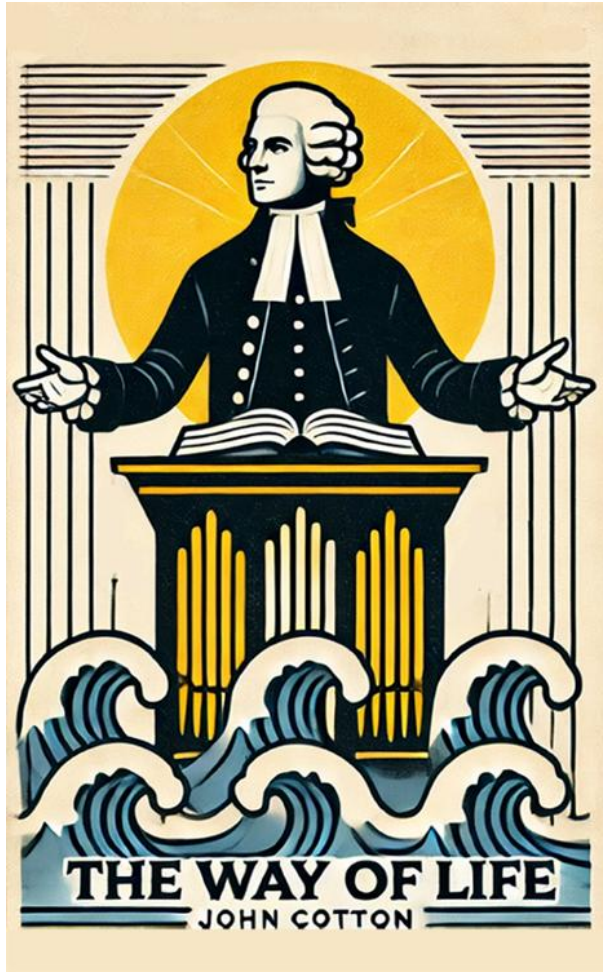


THE WAY OF LIFE

JOHN COTTON



The Way of Life

Or, God's Way and Course, in Bringing the
Soul into, Keeping it in, and Carrying it on,
in the Ways of Life and Peace.

John Cotton

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas,

Further revision and editing done by Monergism.

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Published by by Monergism Books

P.O. Box 491

West Linn Oregon 97068

www.monergism.com

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PREFACE

TO THE READER.

He resolved well that said, Books and friends would I have few and choice; He advised well that wisht, Be courteous to all, familiar with few: Many there are both books and men that meet us in our journey to heaven, whom, a man that knows what he hath to do, would not once deign to salute; others, whom he would grudge anymore then a courteous salutation at most: Amid all that almost infinite variety of Books that offer themselves to our view, (wherein it is both an easy and an ordinary thing for a man, while he travels after knowledge, to wander and lose himself) it is not the least part of a man's wisdom to cull out such, as he may most familiarly converse withal; Next to the Book of books, such most deservedly challenge an interest in our thoughts, as conduce most to that which is the end of man, for which the Book of God itself was writ, that is, to bring man unto a conformity to God, into a Communion with God, which end they are like to attain according as they more or less discover those deep and hidden

things, which are laid up in that sacred Treasury; That is the scope, this the way of this work, that we may live unto God, that we may live with God.

Nothing but sin parts God and us, stands betwixt us and our happiness, puts us at a distance from God, sets us at difference with God; what a deal of heartbreaking! What bitterness of soul doth it cost to get sin removed out of the way! Every sin is a seed of sorrow, brings forth some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred-fold. Of all sins, such as reflect upon Christ, cut the deepest, wound the sorest, such as are committed against the clearest light, the dearest love, the tenderest mercy, the richest grace, the greatest goodness; whatever it cost, that the soul may live, sin must die, yet live it will in the soul, while the soul lives here in the body; live it will, though but as a disarmed, wounded enemy; yet what security to that man that lodges a firebrand, a Traitor in his house, in his bosom! That hath troops of enemies without to besiege him, within to betray him! A Christian never wants work, his work lies mainly within doors; He that knows his heart, knows how hardly it is brought into a good frame, and how soon it is out again; he has that in him that is ever working his ruin, that undoes as fast as he can do, nay that oft undoes that in an hour, that was not done nor can be repaired in a day, in a month, in a year.

We need continually watch that fountain whence we fetch all our water, if enemies watch to poison it; the heart is both the best and the worst piece in a man, there is the greatest good and the greatest evil; if anything of price in a man, it is in the heart, we need keep that, lest we be spoiled of our treasure; if any evil in a man, it is most in the heart, where it does most mischief, as fire in the bed straw, in the bosom; we need watch that, lest the whole course of nature be set on fire.

What small power have we over our own spirits! How little are we able either to turn them, or to keep them so when they are well; but let the heart be brought into never so gracious and sweet a frame, let grace be accompanied with peace, and peace with joy; yet how little can we do with our grace, if God leave us to work in the strength of it! Nay how soon will our graces die, and our comforts wither? Such a smoke ascends out of that bottomless pit within us, the clouds will soon grow so thick and black, as will soon damp our spirits, darken our joy; such assaults from within and without as will soon disturb our peace, such workings and raging's of corruption as will soon eat up our graces; unless faith comes in both to feed and to fence both graces and comforts, to subdue those corruptions, to scatter those clouds, to dispel that smoke, to beat back those oppositions, and so secure the soul from all invasions and incursions of the enemy. What is the reason we are ever and anon at a loss both in our comforts and duties? That our joy is so soon blasted, our peace disturbed, our graces deadened, but because we have not continual recourse by faith to the fountain of life, to our Sun to revive us, to refresh us, to our shield to protect us, to defend us? What is the reason our color comes and goes; our courage, comfort, hearts, hopes rise and fall, live and die so oft in a day? Why we live by sense, by reason; we feed upon, live upon, look upon creatures, creature-comforts, props, arms of flesh, parts, gifts, duties; our eyes, hearts, hopes are fixed, stayed, hang upon vain, empty, mutable, deceitful things, persons, lying; dying vanities; Could we but look beyond all these things, all created beings, and eye Him that is invisible, rest upon the Rock of Ages, keep to the Fountain of living waters, we might live above the world, above all the crosses and comforts under heaven; live like ourselves, above ourselves, live in heaven while we walk on the earth: Let the world run round, turn

upside down, our souls might dwell at ease, we should not see when heat comes, nor be careful in the year of drought, we might live in the mouth of death, go conquering through the world, despising all that it can do, either for us or against us; contemning the good, slighting the evil of it; triumphing over all the powers of darkness: This the Saints have reached even in this life, Rom. 8:31, to the end. Heb. 11.

That we are such strangers to these things is both a dishonor to Christ our head that does so fully and freely offer himself unto us; a disparagement to that glorious grace of faith that can work such wonders, if it be put to it; an unspeakable disadvantage to ourselves, who might if we were not wanting to ourselves, live as much in one day as some of us do in seven: This is the drift of the last of these Treatises, to acquaint us with this heavenly art, this glorious mystery: It is true, others have to good purpose travelled in this point; the more we owe to God that we have contributions from the light and experience of so many, the more shame to us that are so wanting in that, wherein we have so much advantage, though it so much concern God's glory and our own comfort. It were no disparagement to any that hath gone before, if I should say, I never yet met with the point handled more methodically, fully, briefly, clearly, sweetly.

The whole work is such as will commend itself to every judicious head and gracious heart; full of precious, sweet, experimental truths, all bottomed upon the word of truth; the points natural, the proofs pregnant, the method plain and easy, the expressions not such as man's wisdom teacheth, but such as the holy Ghost teacheth. Neither the Author nor the work need my poor testimony or letters of Commendation, to gain authority to the one or respect to the other, where either of them are known, they will bear witness to each other.

Ever since I have had any knowledge of the Reverend judicious Author, I have looked upon him as one entrusted with as great a part of the Churches treasure (let no man be offended if I speak my own thoughts) as any other whatsoever; his Ministry spiritual and powerful, full of majesty, authority; a learned Scribe, a dexterous workman, abundant in labors: What matter of lamentation is it, that the Church of God in this Kingdom should among many others, lose such a burning and shining light!

How grateful it may be to this Reverend Author, that this work of his should come abroad into the public view and censure, I know not, but that it will be very welcome to the Church of God (whose he himself is) I doubt not.

I could have wished (if it might have been) that it had passed under his own censure, and then it needed not fear the censure of any other; but seeing it was designed for the Press, that desire I had of the public good, and that respect I have ever owed the Author, inclined me to lend it best furtherance I could, that others might receive as much benefit, he himself sustain as little prejudice as might be.

The Lord teach us thankfully to accept and enjoy all his mercies, faithfully to employ all our Talents, fruitfully to improve all the means, opportunities, helps and furtherances he is pleased to vouchsafe unto us for our souls advantage.

Thine in the service of the Gospel; WILLIAM MORTON.

**PART I. - THE POURING
OUT OF THE SPIRIT.**

SERMON I. - ZACH. 12:10 – I.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication, &c.

These words contain a notable description of a gracious gift, which God promised to bestow upon his people in the days of the Gospel. This gift is the Spirit of Grace, set forth first by the Donor or Giver of it, I will pour it out, which intimates both God the Father, and God the Son.

Secondly, it is described by the manner of bestowing it: In a large measure, I will pour it out.

Thirdly, the subjects, or persons upon whom, The house of David, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Fourthly, the Gift itself, the Spirit; amplified by an Adjunct, and by an Effect.

An Adjunct, it is the Spirit of Grace.

The Effects are three:

The first work it hath in the heart of him in whom it is bestowed, is Prayer, Supplication, that is, humble prayer.

Secondly, it works a looking upon Christ, who is set forth by his passion, and that by their hands.

Thirdly, it works a mourning for Christ; And this mourning is amplified by the greatness of it; and that greatness amplified by a double comparison: 1. As the mourning of him that mourns for the loss of his first-born: 2. Like the mourning of Haddadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Secondly, amplified by the privacy of it, the secrecy and inwardliness of it, everyone apart; which inwardliness of their mourning first implies the soundness and sincerity of it; They shall mourn not only when they are seen, but everyone apart, concealing it, at least for that time from any.

Thirdly, it expreseth the freeness of it: To mourn one family with another, or the whole congregation together, would provoke and stir us up to mourn with them that mourn: As the weeping eyes of them that sit near us, are many times uncomfortable to us; so the sight of some mourning many times melts the hearts of those that behold them. Now this is such a mourning as shall have no such helps; their own hearts shall put work enough into their hands; their looking upon Christ shall make them mourn.

Now for handling these points in order, I might first speak of the Author and bestower of this gift, as also of the manner of bestowing it; and thirdly of the subjects upon whom it is bestowed; but some other will be more suitable to be first handled. Therefore first to speak of the gracious gift which God hath promised to pour out abundantly in these days, which is The Spirit, described by the Adjunct, A Spirit of Grace, and his effect, A Spirit of Prayer. Whence observe this note,

The Spirit of Grace is a Spirit of Supplication.

A spirit of Prayer; so God describes the spirit he promiseth to give his people: a spirit of Supplication, that is, humble Prayer. Now the spirit of

Grace which God bestows upon his people, is partly a spirit of Adoption, and partly a spirit of Regeneration, both one spirit, only having divers manner of workings; and both these are a spirit of Prayer. Ye have not received the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father, Rom. 8:15. We and all Christians that first receive the spirit of bondage, and after the spirit of adoption, we pray humbly and frequently Our Father, Gal. 4:6. We receive the adoption of sons by our redemption by the Lord Jesus, and then we receive the Spirit of the Son into our hearts, whereby we are not only adopted, but regenerated and made the sons of God, and thereby come to cry Abba, Father. This is the spirit of Grace; Adoption is to make and account us his own children: And by the spirit of Grace he seals to us the assurance of our Adoption, and so makes us of one nature with the Lord Jesus, by communicating to us of the divine nature, 1 Pet. 1:4, and so we become gracious as he is gracious, holy, wise, and patient as he is, every way like the Father, only reserving to God those excellencies which our natures are not capable of. Now this Spirit is in the Text called a Spirit of Grace.

First, because it is freely bestowed on us without any desert of ours, yea: without so much as our desire. Ezek. 36:25-27, together with ver. 32. Meaning, not for any goodness in you, but for mine own holy names sake.

Secondly, it is called a spirit of Grace, because it makes us gracious like to our heavenly Father. So that now by this means we are transformed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus, by this Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3:18, from one glorious grace unto another. The Spirit is also called a spirit of Prayer: you read a charge to this purpose, Eph. 6:18, and Jud. 20, it is the holy Ghost in whom we do pray, and by whose strength and might we do pray. We know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit helps our infirmities, Rom. 8:26.

Reason 1. Taken from the work that this spirit of grace makes in the hearts of all that receive it, which is, Wheresoever God gives the spirit of Grace, that heart grows forthwith sensible of all its former ungraciousness. It is deeply sensible of that as soon as ever the spirit of Grace visits our hearts, we begin to see that we were born children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, it lets us see we are the children of this world, Luk. 16:8, and have been the children of the devil, John 8:44, as Manasseh was: and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, 1 Sam. 15:22. When a man wittingly and willingly commits any known sin, he doth as actually give his soul to the Devil, as a Witch doth her body and soul; we thereby renounce the covenant of God, and Satan takes possession of us. Now by the spirit of Grace we see this; and that by nature we are strangers and enemies to God, Col. 1:21, and have been servants to sin, Rom. 6:7. Thus we begin to be sensible of the ungracious frame of nature we brought with us into the world, in which we have grown up, and been hardened in, to this day: So as now the poor soul begins presently to stand amazed at her former condition, and looks at it as most dangerous and desperate; and now the soul begins to loathe itself, and to abhor itself, and to complain and confess its wickedness before God, Ezek. 36:26,31. Then they remember their evil ways, and loathe themselves, &c. Now they see so much wickedness in both heart and life, that they are amazed to think of it. And hence it comes to pass, that the soul hath now matter enough to say against itself, you need not tell him what he had need to be humbled for, but then, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, Luk. 15:18,19, he had enough to say, and he need not go to any to be taught; so that thus it becomes a spirit of Prayer, because it so fits us with sense of our own estates.

Reason 2. This will appear more especially, if you add this second reason; and it is taken from the estate of the spirit of Grace in those in whom it is received; and what is that? It is a spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8:2, the same spirit of which he speaks ver. 15, yet such a spirit of life, as is an imperfect life, a weak life, as of a child new born, true life, but very weak, being pained and bruised in the birth, it cries out bitterly; so a new born babe in Christ, as soon as it hath received the spirit of Grace, it feels itself in a cold and naked condition, and thereupon feels its own weakness and hunger. An imperfect life strongly desires relief, and if it be afflicted with any sense of death, it will exceedingly struggle, and strive, and wring every way, if it be possible, to preserve the life; so we no sooner receive a spirit of Grace, but we find ourselves compassed about with a body of death, Rom. 7:24. Now all life when it is compassed about with death, it will so strive to preserve itself, that you would think the dying man to be the most lively: So there is no Christian soul that receives a spirit of Grace, but finds itself compassed about with enemies, the flesh lusting against the spirit, so as there is a great strife in him, Gal. 5:17. Faith strives against doubting, his heart being changed; his heat and zeal against coldness; humility and meekness against pride and wrath; and thus he strives earnestly for the preservation of his life. Now then you shall need no more to make a Prayer; for if once a man grow to be sensible of his own weakness, he hath matter enough to complain of to God and himself, he sees what he stands in need of, he wants faith, and a soft heart, an humble spirit, and zeal for God's glory; now he wants everything; so as (that I may so speak) he can tell God stories of his misery, and that with some earnestness, and heartiness, as a man struggling for his life; can now plead for anything that might make him live in God's sight, and the Spirit teacheth us all this, Rom. 8:26.

Use 1. First, it is a sign of trial, whether we have indeed received the spirit of Grace or not; If we have received the spirit of Grace, we have withal received a spirit of Prayer, of Supplication, humble Prayer; If we have not a spirit of Prayer, we have not received a spirit of Grace: For you see the spirit of Grace both gives us matter, and right manner and utterance to pray; right matter in Prayer, that is, whether it be sins to be confessed to God, or grace to be desired from God; it gives us both these sensibly and feelingly, so as we can see plainly by the spirit of Grace, what wicked wretches we are, how rebelliously we have spent our time; it makes us call to mind our wicked thoughts, our loose affections, our idle, vain, and froward speeches; it makes us remember all the wicked courses we have run, the Sabbaths we have profaned, the Parents we have grieved, we can go an end with it point by point for the matter. And for the manner, with such abomination, and loathing, and grief, and shame, and freeness of confession, that we know not how to lift up our eyes to heaven, with the poor Publican, Luk. 18, we are ashamed, and confounded, and blush, as Ezra, to think what lives we have led; This is humble supplication. And for matter of petition and expression of our desires, the spirit of Grace gives us matter in this. We can now pray for a soft heart, for a humble spirit, for a believing heart, for peace of conscience, and for grace to make us new creatures, and to make us fit for our callings, and therein to walk as becomes Christians in our particular places.

And the spirit of Grace also give us fit manner, that now we pray for these with all fervency, and wrestling, and so contending and pleading with God for them, as that he shall not be able to say us nay; and so it leads us on to a spirit of power, so as now those that formerly could never tell how to set one word before another, to any purpose, can now declare their minds very

fully; and in case they do want utterance, yet they have the lively oft speech of all in point of Prayer. Rom. 8:26. It hath sighs, and groans that cannot be uttered. If such a soul cannot speak, it can sigh, and mourn, and weep, what for remembrance of sins past, and longing desire after grace to come, he can mourn exceedingly: So that here is an evident work of the spirit of Grace; If we have received the spirit of Prayer, we have received the spirit of Grace.

To make this a little more plain, there be three things the Spirit helps us to in any duty we take in hand: First, ability for it: Secondly, liberty or freedom of spirit in it: Thirdly, it puts a kind of necessity upon us, that we must needs do it.

First, for ability, it is a spirit of power, 2 Tim. 1:7. It enables us in some measure to do what God calls for.

Secondly, of liberty, so we read, 2 Cor. 3:17.

Thirdly, it puts a necessity upon us, 2 Cor. 5:14, Acts 20:22.

Now then consider, if God hath given us a spirit of Prayer, then hath he in some measure enabled us to pray, whether we say much or little; we have much to say, if we could speak; and if we can speak, we can tell God of our former ways, and present wants; the Spirit of God is a spirit of power. And for liberty, whereas before it was a most unwelcome business to him, he could never tell what to make of this praying, come to a sad and a long prayer, and it is very irksome to him, but now his heart is free, Prayer is not now troublesome to him. And thirdly, not only free, but now he must needs go to Prayer; he that before could never pray, since he was born, he must now needs go aside into some corner or other, he can have no rest till he hath done it; so that here is an easy discerning whether we have received the spirit of grace or no. These ever go together, where there is a spirit of Grace, there is a spirit of Prayer. On the contrary, if you cannot pray, if you

neither know what to pray, nor how to pray, if you go to Prayer unwillingly, not any work so wearisome, or straining to you as Prayer is; if for any business that comes to you, you can be content to avoid Prayer; if any idle company come to your house, all must be set aside to mind them; not but that a man's business may sometimes be such as may hinder him for a time: but if a man be glad of any such occasion, and he comes to Prayer as a Bear to a stake, then be not deceived, you may think you are gracious, but the truth is, unless you find some measure of ability, and liberty, and necessity to pray, you yet want a spirit of Grace. You would scarce think a child were living, if it did not cry as soon as it is born; if still-born, you take it for dead born. If thou beest a still-born Christian, thou art dead born; if thou hast no wants to tell God of, if yet unlisty to pray, and would be glad of any occasion to shut out Prayer, be not deceived, where there wants Prayer, there wants Grace; no Prayer, no Grace; little Prayer, little Grace; frequency of Prayer, argues power of Grace.

Use 2. Of direction to such as want a spirit of Prayer, what course to take to obtain it: There is no better means then this in the Text. Do you think it will serve the turn, if a man read some Prayers? Not that I would discourage any poor soul from Prayer upon a Book, for I think as we may sing Psalms upon a Book, so we may in some cases pray upon a Book; but yet thou wilt neither pray, nor sing well upon a Book, unless God give thee a spirit of Grace: Therefore rest not in thy Book, though I do not forbid them to use Books that want other strength, yet by no means rest in them; for what though thy Prayer-book hath many good forms of Prayer in it, yet unless thou hast the spirit of Prayer, thou knowest not which is fit for thy condition; and though the Book might give thee matter, yet it cannot give thee humility, and fervency; Use Books as young swimmers use Bladders;

the spirit of Grace will help thee beyond what thou wouldst think, and thereby thou wilt more sweetly tell God thy mind, and therefore labor chiefly for a spirit of Grace.

But how shall I get a spirit of Grace?

First, if God be pleased to open thine eyes to see what a dry soul thou hast, and art sensible of the dryness of thine own heart, wanting sap and moisture, and art therefore athirst for want of Grace, then it is very hopeful God will give thee a spirit of Grace. Isaiah 44:3. To whom will God give the spirit of Grace? To those that are dry, and thirsty, that feel themselves athirst for want of Grace. Though thou canst not yet call God Father, nor look at him as thy friend, yet if thou hast but a thirsty soul, and longest for grace, under sense of thine own droughtiness, then God will not deny the holy Ghost to them that ask him, Luk. 11:9,13. And suppose God will not give you a spirit of Grace, for any loves sake you discern in God towards you, and any neighborly and fatherly care he hath over you, yet if God give thee but a heart to feel thine own want, and thirst after it, when you ask such bread for your souls, he will not give you a stone, but he will give you a spirit of Grace.

Secondly, by a diligent hearing the Word of God, Gal. 3:2, implying, that he doth usually breathe the Spirit by the breath of his Word; he breathes indeed where he lists, Job. 3:8. But yet as it is with material Churches, if there be any wind anywhere, it will gather about them; so doth the Spirit of Grace most gather to the congregation of God's people; if there be any breath of the Spirit stirring, usually it is there.

Thirdly, another means is that, Prov. 1:22,23. How long will ye love scorning? Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my spirit upon you: Implying, that if God give a man but so much honesty of heart, as to leave

his folly and scorning, and turn from his evil ways, then God will pour out his Spirit upon him: Implying, that which hinders the Spirit from being poured out upon us, is because we will not part with some or other beastly sin, as pride, hypocrisy, &c. The Spirit of Grace will not come but into a heart in some measure prepared; the Spirit of Grace will not come into a cage of unclean lusts: but if God give a man a heart to lend a patient ear to a reproof, and lay down all scorning, and turn from his loose and unprofitable courses, then the promise is evident, I will pour out my spirit upon you.

Use 3. It may serve to teach those that have received the spirit of Grace, how to maintain and keep alive the spirit of Prayer, for we have daily need of praying, and of making supplication, of earnest prayer, humble and hearty prayer, what for our friends, our enemies, our children, servants, brethren, Churches abroad, Kingdoms we live in, we shall be able to pour out supplication to God in behalf of them all, if he pour upon us a spirit of Grace; and if you would keep an open heart and mouth this way, keep the spirit of Grace in a good frame in your souls; so far forth as the spirit of Grace is lively in you, so far will the spirit of Prayer be lively in you: As you would have Prayer lively, so grieve not the Spirit of God, Eph. 4:30, but grieve the Spirit, and you straiten Prayer.

But how shall we avoid the grieving of it?

Take heed of giving way to any scandalous sin; if you do, you shall not be able to pray. Psal. 51:15, he confesseth he had made his heart unclean before God, and thereby was so damped, that he knew not how to come before God, till the Spirit of God should re-visit him, and then, Open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. As if he should say, the defilement in his heart and hands choked him, and made him unable to

pray: therefore grieve not the Spirit of God by bearing with yourselves in any sinfulness of heart or life.

Secondly, despise not prophesying. 1 Thes. 5:19. Quench not the Spirit, despise not Prophesying, by neglecting the word, or slighting of it, or by not attending to it with fear, and faith, and obedience.

Thirdly, take heed of all murmuring in any afflictions. If God cross our wills, and we fall a murmuring, then we cannot make so much as a quiet prayer, much less an humble and fervent prayer: we vex the holy Spirit of God, when we grumble at any affliction, Isaiah 63:9,10, to show you, that if a man have an unquiet and impatient heart, especially when anything crosses him, he cannot pray, no not in affliction, though then he hath most need to seek unto God, Hos. 5, ult. If we cannot take afflictions in good part, and submit our wills to the will of God, we cannot pray.

Fourthly, take heed of provoking the spirit of your brethren, or of suffering your spirit to be provoked by them; either of both these will hinder us in our prayers; it will hinder us from performing any spiritual duty in a spiritual manner. Gal. 5:25,26. See a lively president of it in Moses, They vexed his spirit, and then he spake unadvisedly with his lips, Psal. 106:33. He that was unfit to speak in God's name to the people, was more unfit to speak to God by Prayer. See therefore that we be not provoked; no Christian can pray wisely and advisedly when his spirit is provoked. Therefore the Spirit of Grace must ever over-rule us, without which we cannot put up a savory prayer unto God upon any occasion.

SERMON II. - ZACH. 12:10 – II.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David, &c.

We come now to a second Effect, which the Spirit of Grace works wheresoever it is bestowed, and that is a looking upon Christ, They shall look upon me, &c.

The Spirit of Grace, and of Prayer, wheresoever it is, it doth open our eyes, and lift them up to look upon Christ, as our sin, and as our Savior.

As if before their eyes were blinded, and they saw him not; or if they saw him, they looked at other matters, rather than at him; but now they begin to have their eyes opened, and settled upon him in some measure of wist beholding of him, as their sin: They shall look upon me whom they have pierced; They shall look upon their piercing and crucifying of him; They shall see me as the greatest sin as ever they committed; Their eyes will more be set upon that, then upon all their other sins, or any object that ever they beheld.

As their Savior: For Christ pierced is, as the sin, so the salvation of all the people of God. The piercing of him made way for the issuing out of that

blood, by which we are justified and sanctified, John. 19:30,32,37, that so the Scripture might be fulfilled.

For opening of this point, First see what it is for men thus to look upon Christ: Secondly, why the spirit of Grace works this in us: And thirdly, make Application.

For the first, this looking upon Christ, which is here said to spring from the spirit of Grace, and of Prayer. The first looking upon him is with an eye of knowledge, as discerning that we are they that have crucified him, to know and consider that it is we that have pierced him, and that in so doing we have sinned, and that grievously. This was fulfilled in the Jews by the ministry of Peter in the first Sermon that he made to the Christian Church, Act. 2:36, when he had convinced them of the truth of what he had said, he concludes his Sermon thus: Let therefore the whole house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom ye have crucified. When they understood this, then were they pricked in their hearts, ver. 37. They discerned plainly by Peters Sermon that it was they that had pierced the Messiah, that was the first work it wrought in them, and therein did they see their sin: For in that it is said their hearts are pricked, it argues they saw their sinfulness in that work.

Secondly, this looking at Christ is to behold him with an eye of faith; not only to look at him as pierced by our sins, but also at this as our salvation, in which our salvation is laid up, if at all we come to be saved. This is an act of faith, to look at Christ with assurance, as our Savior, that this salvation is in him; therefore we must look up to him for salvation: As they that by faith looked upon the brazen Serpent, Num. 21:8,9. Which Scripture being expounded in John 3:14,15, it is expressed, that whosoever looks up unto Christ with an eye of faith for salvation, shall be saved.

Now this kind of faith of looking upon Christ, hath in it sundry acts in sundry Christians, in some more, in some less, as God is pleased to lead them an-end in the way of his Grace.

First, sometimes they look upon Christ by an eye of faith, as one that is highly to be prized (if they could obtain him) above all the blessings of this world, as one in whom such excellent and heavenly salvation is: That might they but find salvation in him, they would think it their happiness; and in the mean time they look at the want thereof as their misery. So the Spouse looks at Christ as white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand, Cant. 5:10. The purity and holiness of Christ is white, his death is ruddy, both which make him glorious and beautiful; and he would be more welcome to her then a thousand other things. In respect of both which, if she could but find him, she would account it her happiness that she might obtain him.

Secondly, this looking at him by faith, enables us to see a possibility of salvation, and redemption by him. There is mercy, or pardon with thee, Psal. 130:4. The soul looks up to Christ for pardon. 1. There is much to be had in Christ, ver. 7. In him is plenteous redemption. They look up to him for it, though they do not as yet find themselves sprinkled therewith. Isaiah 17:7. Then shall a man look unto his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the holy one of Israel.

Thirdly, Faith casts a longing and desiring look after salvation in him. Isaiah 45:22. Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be saved; which is expounded, Phil. 2:9,10, that looking is opposed to the looking to their Idols; instead of looking to them, look unto me, and be ye saved: So that when a man looks not for salvation from Idols, but so looks up to Christ, as that he prays to him, and desires salvation from him, this is to look at him as our Savior.

Fourthly, this faith helps us to look at Christ as indeed made unto us of God, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He hath given his Son for me, in whom he hath loved me, and given me of his Spirit, so as that now I know in whom I have believed, Gal. 2:20, 2 Tim. 1:2. Thus you see the spirit of Grace where ever it is poured forth, doth open our eyes, and lift them up to Christ.

But thirdly, this phrase of looking up to Christ, expresseth an act of hope, as well as either an act of knowledge, or of faith. Isaiah 8:17. I will look unto him that hides his face from the house of Israel, and I will wait for him. Suppose that God gives us a heart to see that we have crucified Christ, and yet to see there is salvation, even in that wicked act, and that there is plenteous redemption in him, if yet God doth delay us, and do not reveal the Lord Jesus to be ours, then the soul looks up to Christ with an eye of hope, and waits till the Lord show mercy. Suppose the Lord hides his face, and I see not my salvation yet dispensed to me, yet I will wait for it, Psal. 123:1,2, Micah 7:7. I will wait upon the Lord, and look up unto the God of my salvation; the time will come when he will hear me: but in the meantime I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, ver.9.

Fourthly, this act of looking doth also express an act of love, Cant. 4:9. Thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes; it expresseth a single looking at Christ, such a cast of the eye, as that it ravisheth the heart of a Christian. I dislike not their judgments that apply it to the state of the Church. Act. 15:11, when some would put upon them certain ceremonies to look at Christ by, they say, We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, &c. As if they should say, We are out of love with ourselves, and our own good parts, &c. and we have singly set our eyes upon Christ to be saved by him. The chain of thy neck. Such parabolical

speeches do fitly express those golden wholesome laws which are made in the Church and Common-wealth, whereby a man is not fettered, and snared, and captivated; but they are as ornaments unto him, such as by which we glorify God, and edify ourselves; and such are the laws they there make, that they should not lay upon the Gentiles the yoke of Moses Ceremonies, only that they be careful to avoid the offending their brethren, &c. And there was a royal law of love amongst them, such precious ornaments there was as did much affect the Church at that time. Such a single look at Christ, was that which Paul expresseth of himself, Phil. 3:6-9, he had many excellent privileges, yet all loss for the knowledge of Christ; here was a single eye, he rests not in covenant of Parents, nor his own good parts, but singly at the grace of Christ.

Reason 1. Taken from the blindness of nature. By nature we are blind, and have not an eye open to look at Christ, much less fastened upon him. It is grace alone by which we see sins against Christ. By nature a man never rises higher then this; You may convince him of some sins against man, and of some sins against God: As the transgression of his Law, either that wrought in our hearts by nature, or given by primitive Institution, as you may convince of swearing, Sabbath breaking, &c. And a man's heart may sometimes be affected, and afflicted with such sins, but to be afflicted for sins against Christ, and the grace of God revealed in Christ, this can we never do till the spirit of grace lift us up to behold Christ: Luke 23:24. Father forgive them, they know not what they do, and yet they had crucified Christ, and had reproached him, they put all despite upon him, but had any of them such good nature, as to think this was a villainous usage of a man? They sought many false witnesses against him, but found none; They could say, he had done all things well, and when he came to Jerusalem to suffer,

they could sing Hosanna; Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord: and now of a sudden fall into such a bitter rage against him, and yet by nature, they could not discern any sin in it, they know not what they do. Take a man by nature, and you may convince him of any sin against man, or against the moral Law of God: but go about to convince him of sins against the grace of Christ, by which God's people would be saved, and he no more understands it, then a blind man sees. I know that through ignorance you did it, Acts 3:17. In such a case, a man is not sensible of any sin he commits against such things wherein Christ is conveyed; if any man come to it, the spirit of grace hath opened his eyes to see it, if any man come to see he hath wronged Christ in his person, or his members, or ordinances, there hath been the holy Ghost, and hath opened the eyes of that man, John 16:2,3. But I say further, opened, and lift up a man's eyes; a man may have a spirit of bondage, and so comes to see his sins, therefore to make the doctrine more plain: It is the work of the spirit of grace, not only to open our eyes, but to lift them up to Christ, and to fasten them upon him. Judas had his eyes opened, and said, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood, Matth. 27:3-5, he saw now his sin against Christ, but it was by a spirit of bondage, and he saw Christ was his sin, but was this a saving sight of Christ springing from a spirit of grace? No, his eyes were not lift up to see Christ his Savior, he did not look at a possibility of salvation in Christ for him, he never fastened his heart upon him, he did not wait on Christ for salvation, he had neither an eye of faith, nor hope, nor love, towards Christ, but goes away and hangs himself; he looks down to the horror of his sin, and to the anguish of his conscience, down to the bottomless pit of despair; and though he mourned, yet it was not a saving mourning, springing from any spirit of grace, but a hopeless and desperate mourning: so that it is only the

spirit of grace, that makes one to look for salvation nowhere, but in, by, and from Christ. Nature can go no higher, then sins against nature; he looks at it as a horrible murder to betray so innocent a master, but he never sees it as a sin against grace, as against him in whom salvation was, at least not looking for salvation by him.

Reason 2. Taken from the power of the life of the spirit of grace: where ever it is, the spirit of grace is a spirit of life, and life loves to preserve it self, and use all the means to save itself, and to nourish itself, especially when it is imperfect, as all our life of grace is; and hence it is, that this spirit of grace being a spirit of life, it looks forthwith at Christ, in whom all our life is; in him is all our life of justification, and sanctification, and redemption: now by the spirit of the Lord, we cease not looking at Christ, till we be changed from grace, to grace, 1. Cor. 3:18, it looks at him, that we may be the more established in him, and grow up in him from one degree of grace to another, and that makes us look to him for more enlargement, and establishment in grace, as the child new born, of the same matter of which it is begotten, of the same it is preserved, and looks in every ordinance of Christ for establishment. 1. Pet. 2:2.

Reason 3. Taken from the sense which any hath, in whom a spirit of prayer dwells, of his own unworthiness, that any of his prayers should be accepted for his own sake. There is none that hath a spirit of prayer, but hath his spirit sometimes straitened, that unless Christ put life into his prayer, it is but lost labor; and if Christ put life into him, yet still he needs that Christ should accept him. Dan. 9:17 He prays that God would forgive him, though he had been large in that prayer, when his heart is most enlarged in prayer, yet O Lord, forgive and show mercy for the Lord Jesus sake; when you speak of two Lord's, one of them is always Christ. It was a

proud distemper in Uzziah, that he himself went into the Temple of the Lord, to burn incense upon the Altar of incense, 2. Chro. 26:16, why? Ought not Kings and Princes to pray as well as Priests? True, but God would have no Christian, not he that is best able to pray, to burn incense himself, but to bring it to the Priest, who stood in the place of Christ: Therefore bring all your prayers to Christ, that in him they might be accepted, and by him presented to the Father. Uzziah for the contrary was struck with Leprosy: when we think God hath heard our prayers, because we were enlarged, is the next means to be struck with some strong temptation; therefore when you are most enlarged, say, Alas, what am I? If God should mark this Prayer, there are so many wants in it, that unless Christ sprinkle them with his blood, they will be turned out of doors: entreat Christ to accept, even when you are most and best enlarged.

Use 1. An evident sign of trial of our own estates, whether yet we have received the spirit of Grace and Prayer, yea or no. If God have poured the spirit of Grace and Prayer into thy heart, then thou beginnest to see that thou hast crucified the Lord Jesus, thou seest thy sins against Christ and his Grace, against his Ordinances, and the motions of his Spirit, these are the sins upon which thine eyes are most set, and these your hearts are most troubled with; and where this is not, there is no spirit of Grace; if it were, thy heart would be more exercised about sins against Grace, then any else. I say more especially, for a man also will be sensible of his ungraciousness to Parents, and any other disorderly courses, and we say true, for want of grace we committed such and such sins against the moral Law. So as though Christ had never been revealed, these were sins of Gentiles as well as of Christians; but a man may know all these to be sin, and yet be far off from grace; and he may have some trouble for these, and yet have no grace.

But if ever God give a man a spirit of grace, these are not the things that he looks most at, but this above all the rest, that he hath sinned against God's grace, against the ordinances of his grace, against Christ that hath been revealed for his salvation, and these draw his eyes to look most upon Christ, these most wound his soul. 1 Sam. 12:19. In this we have sinned above all our other sins: And so saith every soul that hath a spirit of Grace in him. He is more troubled that God should wait so long for him, and he still should reject all those motions which the Word of God hath propounded to him; many a time the Spirit stirred him to pray, and he had no mind to it; the sense of this so wounds his heart, that all other sins seem nothing in comparison thereof. If a man be troubled for other sins, as for stubbornness against Governors, &c. yet this most afflicts him, his heart most ponders upon this. Oh the wretchedness of his heart to neglect and despise the blessed means of grace conveyed to him, what for slighting grace before he received it, and what for waxing wanton with it: This more vexeth a good heart, that he should be still doubting of God's grace and favor to him; to look at all the gracious favors of God towards him, as counterfeit delusions, when he hath so many evident signs of his favor, this vexes him above all his other sins.

And again, take a child of God, when he is in a comfortable estate of grace, and consider how many ways he grows more loose and unprofitable, notwithstanding all the goodness of God towards him, this makes his heart smart more than any other sin he hath committed besides: therefore do but consider what sins you are most troubled for; It is good to be troubled for any sin, but there may be much unsoundness in trouble for sin; But what is it thou most complainest of? If of thy profane conversation, it is well; but this may be done without any jot of the spirit of grace: the spirit of bondage

can help a man to do this: And therefore say not, (when you hear men complaining of these things) they will now reform and grow wiser; I tell you they are yet never a whit the nearer repentance: for without a spirit of Grace a man may do all this. But dost thou see a man complain of this, as his greatest sin, not that he hath committed murder, and adultery, &c. but that he hath stood out against God so long, despised his ordinances, neglected Prayer, refusing the grace of Christ? Such a man as this in all likelihood will do well, nothing here will hurt, unless we draw back our eyes when we have begun to see it. Dost thou then look at Christ for salvation, and thou waitest upon God for it, and now all thine own gifts and parts are no comfort to thee? Then there is a spirit of Grace in thine heart, the injuries thou hast done to him and his children most pierces thy heart, and this sin is ever before thee, Psal. 51:3. This spirit of Grace within thee will never leave till it hath brought thee to an estate of Glory. Judas for want of this fell into utter despair. But if of all thy sins thou lookest least at this, the despising and slighting of God's servants thou accountest but a little sin, we think it but a small sin to come to Church and go home no better than we came; though we never pray, nor meditate after hearing, it troubles us not; it troubles us that we have made such an hard bargain, that we have been drunk, or committed Adultery; but if thou lookest at sins against Grace as a light matter, and thy other as thy chiefest sins, then thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Use 2. To every soul, as he desires to find any comfort in ill hours, so look at sins against Grace, as the greatest evils that ever you committed; for in them you have sinned above all your other sins. Lay this down as a Principle, Though your other sins be bad enough, yet fasten your eyes most upon sins against Grace. What are all the sins that we have committed,

when as one look at Christ washes them all away? And to neglect to look up to Christ is a more horrible sin then all the sins of Sodom, Mat. 11:20, therefore look at sins against Grace as the greatest. If when you come to Church, your hearts ache to think how you have sinned against God, and you cannot rest till you have promised to turn to God, but yet when you are gone home, you forget all these good motions, and this never troubles you, make account if you have been drunk, you but abuse drink; if you have been unclean, you have but abused a creature like yourself; but to abuse Christ, nothing is comparable to this. If you shall sleight Christ when he is offered to you, make account it is your chiefest sin. Consider therefore what sins you have committed against God, how he hath proffered himself to you, and wooed you, and still you have slighted and neglected the blood of Christ, and despised the spirit of grace: Look at these as the greatest evils as ever you committed, and so all your doubting after grace received, and all your unprofitable walking's under grace, set these ever before you, and they will help you much.

Use 3. To reprove the Papists, that say they dare not look immediately at Christ in their prayers, but first at Saints, and Angels: What a poor piece of work is this? I tell you, if God give you not grace to look at Christ, you want grace; all your devotion to Saints, and Angels, is a testimony, that your hearts are not endued with grace. Grace goes directly to Christ, as a child new born goes to the mother's breast, and never leaves crying till it be laid there.

Use 4. To teach such Christians as are given to pray, to be sure you look to Christ in your prayers; look at him, and they are accepted; look not at them, nor the comforts you take in them, for so may you fall short of acceptance; but look at Christ in all, and then you shall not be struck with Leprosy: it is

a spirit of grace that looks at Christ, and by so doing, we shall still draw upon ourselves, more grace in every duty.

Use 5. Of comfort to all those poor souls, as find themselves looking up to Christ; they complain they see little grace in themselves; it may be none at all as they think, yet they see they have often despised grace, and dishonored grace, their lives have been a shame to religion, and now they complain there is no grace in them. Well, you want grace, and you want prayer, and you want Christ, you want all that which others comfortably attain unto, you want power to express yourselves in company: Well, if your eyes be set upon Christ, and upon your failings in grace, and yet in Christ you see there is salvation, and you wait upon him for it, and all your own parts are empty things in comparison of Christ; it is an evident sign God hath given you grace, you could never have looked after Christ, had not he first looked after you, and he having once looked after us, he will nurse us up unto the day of the Lord Jesus.

SERMON III - ZACH. 12:10 – III.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David, &c.

Come we now to the third Effect of the spirit of Grace, where ever it is bestowed.

When the spirit of grace openeth our eyes to behold Christ, whom we have pierced, it pierceth our hearts with godly sorrow.

So saith the Text; They shall look upon him, (meaning, when this spirit of grace, and of prayer, is poured forth upon them) it shall not be a wandering look, or a slight beholding; but such a wist, and serious beholding him whom they have pierced, as shall make them mourn exceedingly, as a man for the loss of his only son; or as the commonwealth of Israel, for the loss of Josiah. They shall mourn for him, or over him: it is not therefore a worldly sorrow, for it is set upon a spiritual object, Christ; nor is it merely such a sorrow, as a spirit of bondage, or despair may work. For a man in hell may mourn for sin; but it is not here said, they shall mourn for themselves, but for him, their mourning shall be chiefly conversant about Christ; so that a gracious looking upon Christ pierced for us, and by us, pierceth our hearts

with godly sorrow, pierced by us; They shall look upon him, whom they have pierced, and not merely by us, but for us, whom they have pierced; not only to the shame, and confusion of their own faces, but pierced also to the shedding of his blood, whereby ourselves are healed; such a look upon Christ, whenever it is wrought by the spirit of grace, there it pierceth the heart with godly sorrow. Acts 2:36,37, where this Scripture is literally accomplished, Peter convinces them, that he whom they had pierced with the sorrows of death, was the Lord Christ. Upon the hearing of this, they were pricked in their hearts, they that had pierced him by their sins against him, now feel their hearts pierced for him. Again, Acts 5:3, there was added to the Church two thousand more, but how were they brought on? By this very argument, I know that through ignorance you have crucified him, you have denied the Holy, and Just one, and killed the Prince of Life, and Glory, Acts 3:14,15. And thus he goes on to convince them, that however, of ignorance they had killed him; yet, he whom they had killed, was the Prince of Life: and how ever the high Priest took it offensively, Chap. 4:3, yet, they that heard the word believed, and still more was added to the Church; So that it comes to this issue, that the two first Sermons, that did show unto the people of God, that by their wicked hands, they had crucified Christ, they prevailed to bring five thousand to godly sorrow.

Now for opening this point, I said, this godly sorrow, by which men are brought on to Christ, springs from beholding of Christ pierced by us, and for us: See these opened.

Pierced by us: This implies two things. First, that we look at all our sins, as piercing Christ; a man that is led by a spirit of grace, to a penitential, and godly sorrow, is brought on to consider thus much: That all his sins he hath committed, have been a piercing, and crucifying of Christ; the sin of his

nature, the vanity of his child-hood, the rebellions of his youth, and sins of riper times, whatever they be, whether against nature, or the moral law of God; this is one work, which the spirit of grace effects, in the hearts of all God's people: It opens their eyes to see, that all their sins in conclusion, have reflected upon Christ, the burden, and smart of them, have fallen upon him, for Rom. 6, ult. The wages of sin is death; either we must die for every one of our sins, or else, the Lord Jesus Christ must die for every one of us; every sin must either pierce us, or him to the death; and therefore when we see that there is life, and hope of life in us, it makes us see, that by his stripes we are healed, Isaiah 53:17. There is not any sin we commit, but brings with it God's wrath and curse upon our souls, Gal. 3:10, so that if there be any work of the Law that we have not continually performed, we are accursed; and either we must bear the curse and wrath of God, or else the Lord Jesus must suffer for us. Look at all our sins, as so many nails that fastened him to the cross, as so many venomous darts in his soul, as so many vials of the fierce wrath of the Lord; had not he born the insupportable burden of the wrath of God for our sins, we had every soul of us perished everlastingly. Now this doth not a little melt and afflict a gracious heart.

Secondly, but yet there is more in the point then that; for by the spirit of Grace a man looks at Christ as pierced not only by our sins, but especially in this respect, that the greatest sins that we have committed, have been sins against Christ himself, and that makes them most grievous, as being committed against Christ; and by this means we come to mourn bitterly. It is no small anguish to see so many of his sins like so many darts in his heart; but that we should personally sin against him that hath done so much for us, this wounds so much the more; that when a man sees any sin against

Christ, whether against his person, or against any ordinance of his, it is so much the more grievous, by how much the more nearly it concerns Christ.

For first, a man considers he hath sinned against the blood of Christ, against the value and the virtue of it. The Apostle mightily prefers the blood of Christ above the blood of bulls and goats, Heb. 10:4, and yet there is not any gracious heart but is sensible that he hath despised the blood of Christ more then he would have done the blood of a bull, or a goat, or a ram. Take this instance in particular. Suppose thou shouldst never swear an oath, or tell a lie, or broken the Sabbath at any time, but it would have cost thee a bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a trespass-offering, and fine flour, and wine, and oil for a meat-offering, wouldst not thou by this time have left all thy oaths, and lies, and profaning of God's Sabbaths? Should every transgression in this kind have cost thee but a bullock, or a ram, or a lamb, thou wouldst ere now have grown very chary of committing these sins; and yet this was the express Law of God in former times, a man might not commit any sin, and look for the pardon of it, but so much must go for a sin-offering, and so much for a trespass-offering, &c. And hence it came to pass, that generally scarce any of these vices were found amongst them, especially when the people of God sought after God in any measure of truth, because they knew no pardon, unless it cost them something.

Now if this prevailed to the working of a universal reformation, but when a man now shall know that it is not the blood of bulls and goats that can free him from such sins, but now he must have his soul sprinkled with the blood of the Lord Jesus, and without that there is no peace nor healing to his conscience. Why then, do but consider whether we do not vilify the blood of Christ, when we that know there is no redemption from sin, but by the blood of Christ, and yet live in open sins, blaspheming God, cursing,

swearing, &c. for the least of which had we been to pay the blood of a bullock, we had left such wickedness many a day ago. And though we know the blood of Christ is far more precious than the blood of all the bullocks in the world, yet we go on to multiply our sins against God, and our brethren; have not we thereby sinned against the value of Christ's blood, as if it were of less value then the blood of a goat, when as we make no more conscience of swearing, and lying, &c. no not so much as we would, if it were to cost us a sheep or a lamb. Yet though you know the blood of Christ must go for every sin, else it cannot be healed, yet we make no conscience of any sin, and so also we sin against the virtue of Christ's blood; For when a man shall consider he hath been sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and his heart yet defiled with hypocrisy, and uncleanness, &c. what is there no virtue in the blood of Christ? Is it spent in vain? The blood of bulls and goats could have left us no worse: If the blood of Christ leave us thus, is not the blood of Christ shed in vain, when it cleanseth neither the inward nor outward man? Now the sight and consideration of this, helps us to some measure of godly sorrow for sin.

Secondly, a sin against Christ, is not only sinning against his blood, but when we sin against the word of his grace; for it is the word sprinkled by the blood of Christ, by which it hath any efficacy in our hearts, Acts 20:32. There is no man that sees Christ by a spirit of Grace, but he begins to see that he hath sinned against the Gospel of Christ, and this is to pierce Christ: and this afflicts him deeply, that the word of his grace which he hath caused to be sent forth for my conversion and salvation, and for me to stand out against that, this much afflicts me. Prov 5:11-13, speaking of a man turning to God, Thou shalt mourn in the end, he shall say, in sense of his sin, How is it that I have hated instruction, and despised reproof? I was almost in all

evil, &c. Thus will a man mourn and lament for his sin, when he comes to see how vain his course is; it will vex his soul, and pierce him to the heart, to consider how many ways God hath spoken to him, how many sweet reproofs and counsels have been tendered to him, what sweet offers have been made him, if he would turn to God, and how have I made a shift to despise them all? Thus will a man's heart bleed within him, to consider that he should thus sin against the word of God's grace.

Thirdly, we sin against Christ, when the spirit of Grace opens our eyes to see that we have sinned against the seals of the covenant of grace, as Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. In Baptism he promised to renounce the devil the world, and the flesh, and there gave up himself unto the family of Christ, to become a servant to him: And in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we receive the Lord Jesus to be not only our Savior, but our Governor; and now comes to consider how vainly we have abused both these Ordinances, it much afflicts him: to have lived a baptized Christian, twenty, forty, or sixty years, and not more washed from sin then a Turk or a Jew, considering he hath been baptized, and received the Sacraments, and his heart as vain, and life profane as ever, this makes his soul to bleed within him.

Fourthly, we sin against Christ, when the spirit of Grace opens our eyes to let us see that we have sinned against himself, Eph. 4:30, and herein we see we have sinned above all our other sins, and it will come to a man's mind not only how many good counsels he hath despised, but how many checks of conscience he hath resisted, the good motions that he hath smothered, then he begins to conceive that he hath sinned against the holy Ghost, thinks he shall never be forgiven. And though it be not that unpardonable sin, yet it works him to much anguish and sorrow.

Fifthly, the spirit of Grace opens a man's eyes to see that he hath sinned against the members of Christ: We pierce Christ in piercing his members, Act. 9:4-6. When he comes to consider that he hath compelled the members of Christ to blaspheme, this vexes and anguishes his heart; for everything of Christ is Christ himself, you cannot pierce any one of his members, but you pierce him.

Sixthly, you will see it to be a sin against Christ, in that you have sinned against the fatherly chastisements of God, sometimes sickness, sometimes loss of goods, many sweet and wholesome afflictions, and yet we are never a whit the better; this pierces a soul to consider that God hath done all this about him, and yet still he as unprofitable as ever, this will make a man mourn exceedingly, Jer. 31:18.

Seventhly, the spirit of Grace helps us to see how much we have despised the gracious blessings God hath multiplied upon us; he hath filled our basket and our store, and hath blessed our goings out and our comings in, in all that we have set our hearts or hands unto. Now when he considers that God hath done all this for me, and that yet after all this I should neither address myself, nor train up mine to fear him, but still live as if all this had sprung out of the earth, and not merely from the bounteous goodness of God himself, this will so pierce an heart with shame and grief, to think that these come not only from God's bounteous hands, but they are given us by virtue of Christ's death; for us to sin against him that hath done so many great things for us, this will pierce the heart of any man. Do you thus requite the Lord, oh ye foolish people and unwise? Deut. 32:6.

But secondly, the spirit of Grace opens our eyes to look at Christ pierced for us, so as now we begin to consider that in Christ there is plenteous redemption, there is in his blood remission for the sins of all that will come

unto him, and hence we come to hope on Christ for salvation. And then to consider that all this the Lord Jesus hath done for me, had there been no more sinners but myself, his blood had been spilled for me; now that Christ should do this for me, this so afflicts a soul, that now he is willing to set himself apart, and go alone, and bewail the wretchedness of his heart before God.

Reason 1. Taken from the hardness of our hearts which is found by nature in every soul, that unless the spirit of Grace set all these awork, we shall never mourn for him. Take a natural man, and tell him that if ever he be saved, it is by Christ's blood; tell him how much he hath sinned against the blood of Christ, and the Spirit of grace, the Sacraments, the chastisements, the mercies of God, this no more sinks into him, then rain into the nether millstone. If he grieve for anything, it is for corn, and wine, and oil, Hos. 7:14. He makes a mock at sin, Prov. 14:9, especially of sins against Christ. Or suppose we be brought to a little shame and grief, it is but because they wound our consciences, not because they have pierced Christ. Judas grief was not for that he had wounded Christ, but his own conscience. Take the best hypocrite that is farthest carried on-end by common grace, and his heart is never so much softened as to lament for piercing Christ. By nature we cannot once cry for any sin, farther then it is burdensome to our consciences.

Reason 2. Taken from the power of the grace of Christ. It opens our eyes to see sins against Grace as our greatest sins; no wickedness like to that. Neh. 9:27. The deliverers of God's people were called Savior's, and therefore now sinned in this above all our other sins. 1 Sam. 12:13,19. The spirit of Grace looks at sins against Savior's, as chiefest and greatest; though they had doubtless committed many other sins, yet none pierced them so

much as this, it was because they grew weary of their Savior. So Chorazin and Bethsaida were greater sinners than they of Sodom and Gomorrah, Mat. 11:20,24, and yet the Sodomites defiled with most loathsome abominations, Isaiah 16:49, yet they had committed greater sins in slighting Christ and his grace, than the Sodomites had done. Better be a whoremonger, or an Adulterer, than an unprofitable hearer of the Word.

Reason 3. Because it opens our hearts to see and discern the wonderful love of Christ in every ordinance of his; by how much the more abundant the mercy of God is to us, so much the more is our hearts confounded within us, that we have sinned against them all. Luke 7:36-47. She was reputed for a notorious sinner, a common harlot, yet comes to Christ and weeps over him, and our Savior renders the reason, she had much kindness showed her in the pardon of many and great sins, and therefore she loved much, much forgiven, and therefore the heart melts much.

Use 1. A sign of trial: Take hence a true discerning, whether we have received a spirit of Grace or no; if we have, it will evidence itself in this, we shall not only look at our sins against Christ as great, but we shall see our sins as so many venomous arrows wounding the heart of Christ, we shall mourn more for wounding Christ, than for anything. The spirit of Grace lets us see our sins as so many daggers pointing at the heart of Christ, it melts our hearts in regard of the kindness of God, that God should forgive us such monstrous and ugly sins. If God therefore have given you to see that you by sin have been injurious to the Lord Jesus, and there is no sin thou hast committed, doth pierce thee more than that thou hast so much slighted the blood of Christ, and this troubles thee most that thou hast stood out so long against the word and motions of God's Spirit, that thou hast grieved God's children, and despised his counsels and chastisements, if these grieve thee

most, it is a good testimony of the saving work of the Spirit of Grace. But on the contrary, if we can only grieve, because the world is hard, or for sin, because it sends to hell, or wounds thy conscience, then thy heart is not yet right in the sight of God.

Use 2. To teach every soul that desires to train up his heart to any measure of brokenness; then call to mind your gross sins, they may afflict you, but not melt you, till they be edged and pointed at the heart blood of Christ. Conscience may afflict a man, and he may weary himself with such restless discouragements, as to have no quiet, and yet his heart far enough off from Christ; but as soon as we see our sins darting against Christ, then will the heart begin to melt, for that we have crucified the Lord of Life and Glory. If therefore thou wouldst bring thy heart to unfeigned godly sorrow, then pile thy sins as a sharp arrow shot at Christ, else they will not kindly wound thee. Consider further how you have slighted Christ, as if it had been a small thing; but know, you had been slockned in your mother's womb, had it not been for the blood of Christ. And consider that you have been a baptized Christian thus long, and yet many natural men are as well carriaged men as you are. Consider how often you have refused good counsel, sinned against the afflictions, chastisements, and mercies of God. This is the course the Spirit of God takes to melt our hearts.

Use 3. A direction to some doubting Christians, how to judge of their humiliations. Some will say, could I be but humbled enough, I should hope of God's favor towards me; but it is so little, as I fear I have no grace at all. Wouldst thou not be deceived? Be it never so little, if it look at Christ, it is a work of the spirit of Grace. To grieve for sin as it is a shame to the world, and a torment to thy conscience, they in hell may do as much: But dost thou

see thy sins setting Christ all on a light flame? If sins of this nature melt thee, it is an evidence of an unfeigned humiliation.

Use 4. It may be some ground of allowance to a course questioned, Whether it be lawful to bring suspected murderers to the person murdered? I think this Text gives some warrant thereunto: For the sight of a man pierced by us, may by a double work discover the murderer, and both from God, and no witchcraft: As first, looking at him whom we have pierced; though we look at it but as a sin against nature, or against the moral Law of God, or against our souls, the sight of him may and often doth work in a man a spirit of bondage, for doing an act so contrary to the Law of God, and of injustice to my brother. So it wrought upon Judas; it is likely he thought his Master would have got away, as at other times, but when he saw that he was condemned, this so pierced him, that he must needs confess that he had sinned.

Secondly, but besides a spirit of bondage, it may please God to set it on by a spirit of Grace, as it is in the Text, and that will open a heart in such a case, to see that he hath not only pierced his brother, but the Lord Jesus Christ, and that will make him to mourn bitterly, and so may the poor soul come to be saved, though condemned to bodily death in this world. Therefore it is not an unwarrantable course, but a serving of a wise and just providence of God; for Gen. 9:6, the words are first a command to Magistrates, Secondly a threatening to the Murderer, Thirdly, a promise that it shall be found out: Though men should fail, yet God will not fail, (as we many times see) to discover Murders that have long time been buried in the dust.

SERMON IV. - ZACH. 12:10 – IV.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David, &c.

We come now to a fourth Note, which is this,

The mourning of a gracious heart for the piercing of Christ, is as bitter and as sad a mourning as any that any man takes up for the greatest and sorest loss that can befall him in his family or kingdom he lives in.

As bitter as any loss: For the most bitter and grievous loss that any man meets with in his family, is the loss of his only son, of his first born; this sets all the family a mourning; and that not only together, when they see one another, but it makes them go aside into corners, both husband and wife condole asunder, and weep bitterly upon such an occasion. The woman of Shunaim, when she had lost her only son, she tells not her husband of her grief, only desires his leave to go to the Prophet; when she comes at him, she could not tell him her mind neither, but falls down at his feet, whereby he perceived her spirit was much anguished, 2 King. 4:27, her grief was too much to be expressed: And when she speaks, she saith not, The child is dead, but Did she desire a child? Was it not his own offer to her? As if it

were the greatest loss she could meet with. In the like manner our Savior going by the way, meets with a young man, the only son of his mother, carried to be buried, and they wept sore, Luk. 7:12,13. So Rachel wept for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not, Mat. 2:18. Though Joseph was not the only son of Jacob, nor Jacob the weakest Christian in his time, but as strong as his grace was, and as many children as he had, yet when he thought Joseph was slain, he wept bitterly, Gen. 37:34,35, and though his sons and daughters came about him to comfort him, he would not be comforted; which shows, that mourning for an only, or an only beloved son, is matter of greatest lamentation in a family. And it is therefore the greatest, because it is the loss of the Parents in most bowels; it is the loss of the chiefest comforts of their greatest hopes.

But you say, The loss of some husband or some wife would be more grievous then the loss of a child: was not Elkanah better to Hanna then ten sons? 1 Sam. 1:11, though Samuel was more worth than them both, yet they then knew not of Samuel: How then stands it with the wisdom of the holy Ghost, (since conjugal affection leaves sons and daughters to cleave one to another) to express the greatest mourning by the loss of an only child?

I answer, You are to conceive (as it is evident in the Text) that he speaks of such a loss to a family, as shall alike afflict both the Parents, bitterly grieve both the Parents, who though they be the nearest, yet their grief shall be severed; and if he had spoken of the loss of either of them, he had wanted a fit resemblance of the privacy of their mourning, and therefore he expresses it by such a loss, as may be common to that pair in the family that is most entire one to another.

But secondly, in this loss, the holy Ghost doth not omit the loss of yoke-fellows, though he do not express it in plain words, but by evident

consequence in the words following, Like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. There was a great mourning of wives for husbands, and husbands for wives, as well as parents for children, and brothers and sisters one for another.

Now therefore for that, that was a mourning which was caused by the greatest loss that could befall any Common-wealth, it was for the death of good Josiah, a better Prince then whom the earth never bore, whose loss therefore was the more grievous, because in his loss the wise hearted discerned the utter ruin of Church and State, and families, private and public persons, all crushed in his death. That mourning is described, 2 Chron. 35:24,25, upon his death, there was a great lamentation, general and public, as the loss itself was. And further also it was an ominous and dreadful loss, foretelling the utter ruin of Church and State. In his death, husbands saw the death of their wives, and wives the loss of their husbands, and both the loss of their children. So great and bitter was this lamentation, that it was written in a book of Lamentations, and all the singing men and women had turned all their songs into mourning, The breath of their nostrils was now stopped, Lam. 4:20. Every man now saw himself undone, family, Church, Commonwealth, all undone in his loss. Lam. 2:13, he compares the loss to the breach of the bank of the great Sea, that breaks out and swallows up all before it; and so accordingly was their mourning exceeding great and bitter, an unmatchable mourning. Come hither and see if ever any sorrow was like unto my sorrow, Lam. 1:12. This day of the Lord's wrath, is it nothing to you? No cause, nor any expression of sorrow like unto this; In this they saw the captivity of Church and Commonwealth. Lam. 2:11, see how they express it, Mine eyes, mine eyes fail through tears, my heart, my heart, my bowels burst forth, &c. They saw their blood poured forth, they

saw the ravishing of their Virgins, the slaughter of the whole City, the depopulation of Church and Temple, the laying wast and throwing down all the ordinances, and therefore they express a great mourning, as for the greatest and most public loss. And also it was a durable and hereditary loss, and so was it a durable and hereditary mourning: For this was not a mourning of a few days and years, as David's was for Amnon, which lasted but three years, 2 Sam. 13:38,39, but this mourning was durable and hereditary, they wrote it in a book, and left it as an ordinance from age to age, 2 Chron. 35:25. Thus you see what kind of mourning it is, from which the holy Ghost fetches his comparison. Now such shall be the mourning of every gracious heart, looking upon Christ pierced by him; such a mourning is expressed, 1 Sam. 7:6, when they mourned for their sin, they drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, as men draw water out of a Well, one Bucket full after another: The people poured out Buckets full of tears in abundance, not drop by drop; but as God pours a spirit of Grace into the heart, so the heart pours out many tears, at least mourning and groans.

Reason 1. Taken from the object of mourning; there can be no sadder or greater occasion of mourning: It is the greatest cause that doth befall the sons of men, to mourn for those sins above all other, wherein they have sinned against Christ. It is much cause of grief to wrong either husband, or wife, or parent, but considering the wrong is done against Christ, nothing is answerable to this cause of mourning. David could not but be sensible that he had wronged Uriah in causing him to be put to death, and Bathsheba, in defiling her, both these could not but deeply afflict him; yet all this was nothing in comparison of the wrong he had done to the Lord, Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, Psal. 51:4. He doubles it, he would have you know there lies his grief; What, against thee

only, and not against Uriah and Bathsheba? Yes, these were very burdensome, and therefore he cries out, Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, ver. 14, but yet that was not the thing that did so much afflict him as this, that it was done against God, he had thereby caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. No sins like to sins against Christ and his grace; The sins of Sodom, though so abominable as not to be named, for which God consumed them with fire from heaven, yet the sins of Chorazin and Bethsaida were worse than theirs, Mat. 11:20-24, because Sodom's sins were at the worst but sins against Angels, creatures like themselves: but when a man sins against the grace of Christ, this is the greatest object against which men can sin; and therefore the mourning needful to be proportionable.

Again, there is this more in the object, God's wrath which is kindled upon this occasion, is the most grievous evil the soul can conflict withal. Psal. 130:3. Now a gracious heart is very sensible of God's wrath, being provoked by it.

And yet it is not the greatest neither, but there is a third thing in the object, and that is the loss a man feels his heart to sustain, when he looks upon Christ whom himself hath pierced; he sees not only that he hath done wrong to a dear Lord and Savior, but the spirit of Grace helping him to see Christ pierced by him and for him, so his heart thereupon begins to feel the loss of Christ by piercing him, such a heart conceives in its first looking towards Christ; and in that such a loss, as wherein he loses not only a son, or a dear parent or friend, but he loses all these together, he loses all the comforts of this life, and all the hopes of a better, so that he looks at his loss as unmatchable; had he lost an husband, or wife, &c. he could have borne it, but to lose a Savior, in that he loses all at once. As it was with Mary, John.

20:11, she sat by the Sepulcher weeping, and this was the matter, they have taken away the Lord: Thus it is with every soul when they find Christ pierced by them, they are taken up with thoughts, that doubtless by piercing of him they have lost him, made him utterly away forever from being comfortable to them, and therefore now they have no hope to find him, and this is such a cause of mourning, as that then which there is no greater.

But then, when they look upon him as pierced for them, and so as in time they shall come to enjoy him, and find some sprinkling of comfort of his bestowing himself upon them, that aggravates their grief; It is as much as if a man should say, That Christ hath died and done all this for love of me, and this afflicts him much. I read of Austin, of a certain unclean woman which made away herself for the love of him, which when he knew, it afflicted him very much; thereupon he goes to God, and saith, Here a wicked woman hath lost her life for me, and see how I can weep; but yet the Lord Jesus hath not been unwilling to lay down his life for very love to me, and yet my heart is not able to mourn for him. As if the soul should consider it thus, That one of such worth as Christ is, the Prince of life and glory, that he should take such a long journey from heaven to earth, and live here such a miserable life, and to do such service to me, to work so many miracles, to be buffeted and scourged, to lose his friends, to be excommunicated out of Church, to be censured by the Judge, to be crucified, and all this for my souls sake, he is content to lose his life, and the favor of God, which is better than life, and all this for the love of my soul, yea, and had he not done thus for my soul I had never been saved; This is such an object of lamentation, as indeed no sorrow like unto this sorrow.

Reason 2. Taken from the subject that doth grieve and mourn. What person is it that grieves? It is the spirit and heart of a man, which is not

ordinarily afflicted, but wounded, and only wounded with this stroke, Prov. 18:14, wounded for sins against God and Christ, and who can bear that? That mourning is an unsupportable mourning: Any other mourning the spirit of a man can sustain him in, as loss of husband, or wife, or child, &c. but when the heart comes to be wounded, who can heal that? None but only the mighty and powerful spirit of God, without which a man would utterly swallowed up of despair, an incurable wound, unless by the same hand that wounded it.

Reason 3. Taken from the principle from whence such a mourning springs; a principle greater than that which is in the world, 1 John. 4. Worldly sorrow cannot reach this; the spirit of Grace in the heart is greater than the world; nothing can work that which the spirit of Grace can do; it teacheth us to cry with sighs and groans unutterable, Rom. 8. 26. A soul cannot tell God how much it grieves in such a case as this, because the principle of it is the spirit of grace; we are shallow, and can soon run our eyes and hearts dry for any grief we take up ourselves; but where the spirit of Grace works, the grief that it puts forth cannot be expressed; as it comes from a deeper fountain, the eternal love of Christ, so it hath a deeper work, it searcheth the deep things of God, it is a profound spirit, and so it works a profound work.

Use 1. For trial of any man's estate, whether his mourning be sincere and sufficient or not. Many a soul will say, I have been humbled, but did I know my humiliation were sufficient, it would be some comfort to me, but alas! I cannot discern that it is enough. Why so? If it come from a spirit of Grace, it is then enough. But how shall I know that? Why, if it be such a mourning as is greater than any mourning, if as great or greater than for the loss of an only child, or of such a Prince, as in whom thou lovest all thy comfort. Hath

a man then lost husband, wife, child, &c. yet if he have but Christ, he hath enough: a sign then that a man hath mourned more for Christ then for these. Again, doth a man that hath parents, wife, children, and everything according to his desire, and yet saith, Yea, but I want Christ, and I cannot be satisfied with these things? Then is thy mourning for him as the mourning for the loss of an only son: for though thou hast all the comforts of this life, yet the Lord Jesus thou art doubtful whether thou hast him or no, and notwithstanding standing all these comforts, thy soul goes drooping for want of him, it is a sign all these comforts do not countervail the want of Christ, and that is deep mourning for Christ. I know godly sorrow runs very shallow in many good hearts, yet this you are sensible of, though you have other comforts at will, yet because you fear you want Christ, you are more uncomfortable for the want of him, then all your other comforts can refresh you: How shall you know that? It appeared Jacob loved Joseph better then all his other children, because when he was gone, though he had all his other children about him, yet could not be comforted by them all, and all because he wanted Joseph. So Joab said to David, I see thou lovest Absalom more than the whole kingdom, 2 Sam. 14:6. How knew he that? Because when Absalom a Traitor was slain, and his Kingdom now at peace, he yet weeps for Absalom, and wishes that himself had died for him: it was a carnal spirit that David did express at that time. A good man may sometimes be more besotted in one darling child, then in a whole Town or Kingdom besides: but Joab told him right, and just so it is in this case. If a man can see, that though he have all the comforts of this life, and yet is not satisfied in them, and all for want of Christ, then thou truly mournest for him. It is true, there may be for a time some reason why a man can express less grief for the one then for the other. Some man will say, Were my wife

or child dead I could weep day and night, but I cannot tell that I ever wept yet so for the loss of Christ, how then doth it appear that I mourn more for Christ then for outward losses? Let me tell you, expressions for outward losses may sometimes be great: First, because all causes concur to make a man's expression of grief for outward things very great. When you see the windows of heaven open, and the fountains of the great deep broken up from beneath, there must needs be a great deluge. Gen. 7:11, here were all causes concurring, no impediment stood in the way to hinder the flood, yet as great as it was, it was not so durable as great, but in a certain number of months it was dried up, and never returned again from that day to this; and when it was come to the height, it went no farther, but decreased: but now in our mourning for Christ, though the windows of heaven be opened, yet many times the fountains of the great deep are not open; we have hard and stony hearts, which much hinder spiritual sorrow: You may have a land-flood run down a channel, or a plain gravel that makes a great noise, and carries all before it, but a deep river runs more slowly, and makes less noise: so worldly sorrow it runs an-end, all causes concurring, heart soft towards children and parents, &c. and grace concurs to mourn for them; windows from above are opened, that is, Grace, and the great deep from beneath is broken up, that is, Nature, and now here must needs be a great expression of sorrow: but now when a man comes to mourn for sin, there is an hard heart in the way, a heart full of weeds, and thorns, and briars, many cares, and lusts, and worldly businesses, and these so choke the current of our godly sorrow, that when it should run and overflow, it is dammed, and the expression much hindered. But yet the greatest worldly sorrow is but a torrent, it makes a great noise, but it wants a spring in the bottom, and will in time decay. David mourns for Absalom, and for Amnon, two or three

years, but in time the sense of their loss grew out, wanting a spring it was not durable, whereas godly sorrow comes from an everlasting spring, John. 4:10,14, though sometimes stopped, yet it will break forth again, and it lasts while life lasts: And which is more, the spirit of Grace helping us to mourn, it will make our grief to grow to be more at the last then at the first: worldly sorrow is ever more at first then at last; it will slack in time, and in the end vanish quite away; but godly sorrow increases, as a man grows in grace, so he grows in grief. Do therefore thus much for yourselves, as to consider whether your mourning for outward things be such, as that the love of Christ cannot moderate it, then thou yet wantest a spirit of Grace; but otherwise if no comfort can satisfy thee, because thou wantest Christ, it is a sure evidence of the spirit of Grace.

Use 2. To teach Christian men to cherish godly sorrow: If you would have godly sorrow, you see it comes from a spirit of Grace: Look therefore at sins against God, as greatest, especially sins committed against the blood of Christ, against the motions of the Spirit, and the word of Grace, and look at these as thy greatest evils. And if God give thee but so much grace as to mourn for Christ, labor to maintain it in thee, pluck up all the weeds that choke the free passage of it; if there be any seeds of pride, or hypocrisy, or of any distemper in any kind in thee, away with them all, they will damme up this sorrow, at least for a while. In every Ordinance observe how thou hast sinned against Christ, and so daily observe what sins in an especial manner have been committed against Christ, and specially such as are against his Gospel and Grace. Consider seriously, what Christ hath done for thee, as that he was content to come and live a poor beggar's life for thee, was content to suffer death, and to suffer loss of his Fathers favor for thee, and this will in time rear thy heart to such godly sorrow, as thou shalt

mourn abundantly for all the evils thou hast done against Christ. And to encourage you to this, consider that by how much the more thou shalt take to heart thy sins against him, thou wilt find this issue of it, the less will any outward loss or cross in the world stick near to thee; though thou shouldst lose thy goods, and be cast into prison, &c. thy heart would be able to bear all, as Job did, The Lord hath given, and he hath taken away, blessed be his name, Job 1:21. What helped Job to this? Why, he feared God, and he eschewed evil, and he knew that his Redeemer lived, and that so quieted his heart, that though he had lost all the world, yet he could tell how to be comforted in all; he loved wife and children well, but when all failed him, his heart failed him not, because he had learned to mourn for Christ. That day in which a man hath not seen Christ, that day if any cross befall him, he will not bear it well, but will be disquieted upon every occasion. Well then, if thou wouldst be Lord of the world, and of all the crosses that befall thee, then observe your daily sins against Christ, and mourn for him.

Use 3. Of the Prothesis, which is the former part of the comparison, Hadadrimmon signifies a place of store of Pomegranates: From hence learn, Hath God been pleased to exercise thee with the loss of a dear husband, or wife, or child? Take example by that grief, and apply it to the Lord Jesus Christ; turn the stream of it into that channel; Did God never afflict thee in that kind? Then be the more thankful; and especially for you that are in authority, as ever you desire to die lamented, and much desired, then be like Josiah, who while he lived, mourned for the sins of his people, 2 Chron. 34:27. So all you Governors, if when you die you would be sadly lamented, that all about you might mourn to think of your loss, then mourn you for the sins of your children, friends, Towns, and Countries; take you to heart the

sins of the times and places where you live, and God will take care that there shall be a great and a lamentable mourning for you when you die.

SERMON V. - ZACH. 12:10 – V.

AND THEY SHALL BE in bitterness for him.

There yet remains one Doctrine more from the Effect, from the word Bitterness.

A gracious heart looking upon Christ pierced by it, shall be in bitterness for him.

A gracious heart, that is, such a heart, as upon whom the spirit of Grace and Prayer is poured, when it looks upon Christ pierced by it, it shall be in bitterness. This is expressed, Luke 22:61. Peter seeing Jesus look back at him, remembering what Christ had said unto him, he went out and wept bitterly.

Now for opening of this Point, see what bitterness it is that the soul finds when it doth look upon Christ as pierced by him, and then the Reasons and Application of it.

There is a fourfold bitterness of soul which a man's heart is taken up with in such a case.

First, there is a bitterness for sin; for sin itself yields bitterness to the conscience. It is bitter itself, but is not felt till a man look upon Christ, and begins to take to heart his sins against him. Notable is that confession of Solomon after his grievous Apostasy, Eccl. 7:27. I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is as snares, &c. An evident argument that Solomon penned that book after his repentance, and there he describes most excellently the whole course of repentance in those few verses. I find such sins more bitter than death, drawing him on to sin, and holding him fast therein. There is indeed a strong bitterness in sin, but yet a man is not sensible of it, till his eyes be open to see Christ. Peter, that had seen and felt the bitterness of his own sin in piercing Christ, he could see the bitterness of the estate of other men: Act. 8:23. I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, (speaking of Simon Magus) where he describes the carnal estate of a natural man; Simon had not as yet showed any bitterness and malice against the ways of Christ, but he perceived by the unsavoriness of his question, that he was yet in a carnal estate, for he had offered him money for the gift of the holy Ghost, whereas he knew the gift of Grace could not be bought and sold for money. How then is that carnal estate a gall of bitterness? Bitterness it was that made him unsavory in himself, so that a godly heart can relish nothing in such a one but that which is as bitter as gall; he gives him gall to drink, when he puts forth such a question, a covetous and carnal question.

2. And so it is the nature of all sin to provoke God to bitter wrath.

3. It is the nature of sin to corrupt others, and therefore it is called a bitter root, Heb. 12:15 So the estate of nature, and the ways of sin, they are bitter as gall, Deut. 32:32,33. All is bitterness that comes from a natural man, his thoughts and life are unsavory, he is bitter to God and to his people. Now

when men's eyes are open to see Christ, they see and feel that in sin which before they felt not; Then we see our sinful course most bitter, the very grapes of gall and wormwood.

Secondly, there is the bitterness of God's wrath which a man sees and feels when he sees Christ pierced by him, Hos. 12:14, and God's wrath being imbibed against us is very bitter, Jer. 8:14, and 9:15. All such afflictions are like wormwood and gall to us: So the Church complains, God hath made me drunk with wormwood, Lam. 3:15,19. And Job 13:26. Thou writest bitter things against me.

Thirdly, there is another bitterness caused by a man looking upon Christ, and that is by reason of the loss of Christ: we never either had attained to him, or else now we have lost him; now we see we have no portion in Christ, and that is bitter to our souls, Jer. 2:19. A man in such a case sees that the fear of God is not in him, that the Lord Jesus he hath forsaken; estrangement from God is bitter to such a soul, Ruth 1:20. That which you read of Esau is very memorable in this case, Gen. 27:34, when he saw he had lost the blessing, that Christ was given away from him, he went out, and lift up his voice, and cried with a very bitter cry. I doubt not but Isaac and Rebecca took pains to catechize their families, and therefore surely in some measure he saw what he had lost; but how much more bitter would it have been unto him, had he had but a sight of Christ?

Fourthly, such a soul is in anguish for the bitterness of soul which the Lord Jesus himself did taste and feel for our sakes; whenever the soul sees Christ with a gracious look, it beholds all the bitterness Christ tasted of for his sake: Men gave him gall, and vinegar to drink, Psal. 69:21, but they fell short of what cup God gave him to drink, he tasted of the bitterness of the

wrath of God, and all for our sakes; and a soul seeing this is deeply imbittered in the sense thereof.

Reason 1. First, God intends thereby to chasten, and check, and punish us for that sweetness and delight that formerly we have taken in sin; that God might make our sins afflictive to us, he will make them bitter to us. Jer. 2:19. Thine own ways and thy doings shall correct thee.

Reason 2. God will have it to be bitter to us, not only to correct us for former wickedness, but likewise to make us cast up our sins in a free confession and a serious reformation; as long as sin is sweet to us, we hide it under our tongues, Job 20:12,13, that is, so long we shall never confess it, nor forsake it; but when it is bitter to us, then we vomit it out in free and hearty confession. Bitterness of sin will bring a man to confession for sin, Psal. 32:3,4. For might a man go on, and feel no burden under his sin, he would never confess it; but when God's hand is smarting upon him, when God afflicts, we purpose an acknowledgement of sin; now sin confessed and forsaken, makes way for pardon and mercy, Prov. 28:13. This bitterness for sin draws us to confession to spit it out, and to keep us from turning to it again, it now forever appears unsavory to us.

Reason 3. That so we might be sensible of the bitterness of the cup of God's wrath, which our Savior drank to the dregs, Mat. 26:39. Implying, that what bitterness Christ relished in sin, and in the wrath of his Father, the same shall every soul do in some measure that hath any part in Christ, Mat. 20:23, and thereby shall we know the wonderful love of Christ towards us, that he would drink such a potion to the dregs for our sakes.

Reason 4. That so we might relish more sweetly the love of God to us, and his grace in pardoning and healing all our sins, Isaiah 38:17. For peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered me from

the pit of corruption. This bitterness that a soul tastes of, makes the love of God sweet and savory to his soul, and it is a special reason that God looks at in all the bitterness which he gives us to taste of in all our sins, that so our pardoning and healing in Christ might seem more precious in our eyes. And hence it was that in old time God commanded the Paschal Lamb should never be eaten but with bitter and sour herbs, Exod. 12:8: Why so? To make the Lord Jesus more savory to us. God never gives us taste of Christ, nor to feed upon him, but in bitterness of soul, that we might relish the more savor in God's love to us.

Reason 5. That so he might strengthen our faith against all the bitterness of the wrath of men, and of death itself, or of hell, which else we might be in bitter fear of all our days. A man that hath sometimes been in hell, is able afterwards to say truly, as Agag said presumptuously, Surely the bitterness of death is past. He that hath been sensible of the torment of hell, he doth ever after, more or less, walk in some comfortable assurance that bitterness and wrath is past. Psal. 116:3. I found trouble and anguish: but ver. 7,8, now return to thy rest, O my soul. Because the sorrows of death have formerly compassed him about, now he knows God will speak ease and rest to his soul: and so the heart is much strengthened against the fears of men, Luke 12:4,5, he having already felt more bitterness then men can put upon him. Moses he endured as one that had seen him that was invisible, he feared nor the bitterness of the Kings wrath, Heb. 11:27. Nothing now can make us impatient under any affliction. The more bitterness we have found in sin, the more savor shall we find in any affliction: No affliction seems bitter to such to whom sin feels bitter: To whom sin is sweet, to them affliction is as bitter as death, Micah 7:9.

Reason 6. That so he might ever after make our spirits more savory and less harsh: There is in us a natural harshness; though some men be better natured then others, yet there is a root of bitterness in everyone by nature: Nor is there any way more effectual to make us more sweet, and amiable, and savory, then to see the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be brought to a sense of bitterness by such a taste and sight. Ephes. 4:31,32, a taste of the bitterness of Christ doth banish from us all thoughts of revenge. Physicians tell us there is no better medicine to purge out the most gloomy and clammy obstructions of the stomach, and to dry up such superfluous humors, then taking some bitter thing, as Aloes, and Centaury, or the like: That is the true nature of this gracious look upon Christ, it will cleanse the soul from whatever keeps us off from fellowship with God, it purges out all clammy and choleric distempers, it preserves the frame of the spirit sweet and savory, bitterness is not the wisdom which is from above, Jam. 3:12-14, when once it hath wrought the heart to this heavenly wisdom, then it makes a man gentle and meek without partiality, &c.

Use 1. For a sign of trial of our own estates, whether ever we looked upon Jessus Christ with a gracious look, yea or no: If we never knew what bitterness of soul was for sin, nor the wrath of God, nor the want of Christ then we never yet beheld Christ with any gracious look. They to whom sin hath been bitter, they who know no bitterness for want of Christ, nor any pangs they have suffered for him, such souls have not yet received a spirit of Grace. Had we received a spirit of Grace, long ere now we should have felt the bitterness of God's wrath, the loss of Christ, the pain he suffered, in some measure: a point of much clearness and evidence for the discerning any man's estate. While sin is sweet, and we find relish in it, though it be unlawful profit or pleasure, if any of these seem sweet, and ever have done

so, we have then never yet seen nor known the Lord Jesus; and yet this is for the most part the frame of the spirits of the sons and daughters of men. What a lamentable thing is it, when all of us by nature are a Simon Magus, that any man may say of us, Thou art in the gall of bitterness, that we are of an unsavory and bitter frame of spirit, ready to corrupt ourselves and others, and yet we know it not, we neither see, nor feel this? But if sin was never bitter to us, then have we neither part nor portion in Christ. It is true, a man may be in bitterness for sin, when God's wrath lieth heaviest upon him, as it was with Judas, which made him not to hide it under his tongue, but to confess it, Mat. 27:3,4. But was he then in bitterness for Christ? No verily, it was for sin against him, but yet only so far as the bitterness thereof did reflect upon himself; but it was not for any loss of Christ he felt, or for what Christ by that means was to undergo, but he was in bitterness in himself: For Esau cried out with a great and a bitter cry, but not for Christ, but for himself, because he had now lost that which now he could never recover.

You say, How can I tell but that my best bitterness is no better then so? How shall I know it is for Christ? I may be in bitterness for sin, and for God's wrath upon me for sin, and for want of the pardon of my sins, that I might be rid of the burden of it. But how may I know it is for Christ, and for my loss of Christ, whom I desire above all things to enjoy?

Answ. I know not better how to put a difference, then by taking a survey of the fruits of your bitterness; If a man be in bitterness only for himself, it will end in one of these two; either in bitterness of despair, as it did in Judas, and therefore he hanged himself, a sign he was not in bitterness for Christ, but for bitter anguish of heart, which was greater than he was willing to endure; Or else, secondly, if not so, it will end in bitterness of malice against them that have their part in Christ: So Esau cried out bitterly for the

loss of his blessing, and birth-right; but Gen. 27:41, it is said, He hated his brother Jacob: So that if a man be in such bitterness for the loss of Christ, that he hates those that enjoy Christ, his bitterness is not for Christ; but if a man can find this to be the frame of his heart, that sin therefore seems and tastes bitter to him, because by it he hath pierced Christ, and thereby the wrath of God is kindled against Christ; and the more that I do meditate upon the death of Christ for me, the more it imbitters me, that I should crucify him that hath not refused to do so much for me; This is an undoubted argument of the spirit of grace poured forth into such a soul.

Use 2. May teach us to take heed of resting in the estate of nature, or in a course of sin, for make account this will be bitter in the end, it will either be bitter in thy repentance, when God calls thee home to himself, or bitter in the nethermost hell, when God's wrath breaks forth against thee to the utmost: We may make a sport of sin, but in the end it will be bitter. 2 Sam. 2:14. That which was but a play in the morning, proved bitter in the evening. So though a man in the morning of his age, look at sin but as a trifle, yet the time will come when thou shalt say, it is bitterness, Isaiah 24:9, and Prov. 23:32. It will in the end bite like a Serpent: Though at the first the lips of an whorish woman seem sweet, yet in the end they will fill you with gall and wormwood, Prov. 7:4,5. So you will find this to be the issue of all sin; Though a play and a pastime in the beginning, yet in the end it will be bitter. But if you come to a sight of Christ, there is no bitterness like to that; yet no man can expect any better fruit of sin: Therefore let no man content himself in a carnal estate, nor a course of sin, for bitterness will be the end of it.

Use 3. May serve to teach all the people of God, that are at any time imbittered in their souls for sin, to walk in the sense of that bitterness all

their days. For God calls you ever and anon to look at Christ, and therefore it behooves us in our whole conversation, to carry about us not a spirit of bitterness and harshness, but such a frame as hath sprung from sense of Christ pierced by us, and that will make us savory, both to God and to his people: though it be like Aloes in the taste, Psal. 45:8, yet (as Aloes be) it keeps the whole man from putrefaction, and the Churches garments smell of this, that it all the graces of the Spirit of God, wherewith the soul of the Church is clothed, as with a garment, without which she is naked, they all relish of Christ crucified, and of the gracious love of God in Christ, being pierced for them, it makes them all savor sweetly, they are not defiled nor corrupted with sinful distempers; and therefore as a man in all his ways and duties would be sweet and savory, so let him ever and anon renew his look at Christ, and see what he hath done and suffered for us, and that will make all our graces always savor of a spirit of humility, and will effectually cleanse us from all wrath and vain-glory, and every other distemper. And if at any time thou find thyself imbittered with affliction and extremity for the loss of anything, go thou in this case and look at Christ, consider what he hath done and suffered for thee, and then thy bitterest afflictions will soon be sweet to thee, look at the bitterest of thy sins that pierced him, and that will sweeten thy greatest losses. Dost thou at any time find thy spirit harsh, and unsavory, uncomfortable, and unquiet? Thy garments do not now smell of myrrh, this kind of bitterness must be put away; but it is for us so to feed upon the death of Christ, as that the sweetness of God's love in pardoning sin in Christ, may make us quietly and meekly express ourselves in our carriage towards our brethren; this would set an amiable luster upon all our graces, and upon our whole conversation; and if thou seest any of thy brethren imbittered, harsh or unsavory husbands, wives, neighbors, bitter

one to another, though otherwise they be never so gracious, yet thou mayest say, they have not seen Christ that day, it may be not for many days together; and look how long it is since we saw Christ crucified, so much will a spirit of harshness creep in upon us: but by how much the latelier any man hath seen Christ, and tasted of the bitterness of his death; and therein also of the sweetness of his love to us, so much the more savory and gracious will our carriage be, both before God and man; and therefore if at any time thou find thy spirit harsh and unsavory, take this medicine, Let the sense of the bitterness of thy sins purge it out, and so it will, though thou beest exercised with the loss of an only child, or an only Prince, yet looking at Christ would put us into a savory frame, and make us relish well before God and our brethren.

Use 4. For a word of comfort to such souls as are in bitterness for Christ: Bitterness against Christ is a most fearful estate, and of all conditions the most miserable. For you see it is the condition of God's children to be in bitterness for Christ: But there is a generation that is full of bitterness against Christ, and his children, and the ways of his grace; a most fearful condition. If such as have received a spirit of grace, be in bitterness for Christ, then such as are in bitterness against Christ, have received the spirit of the Devil; If thou beest in an estate of nature, and knowest not what thou dost, thy estate is less dangerous, but yet very dangerous it is; but if a man be in bitterness for Christ, it is a most comfortable estate. A Christian is never more gracious, never more Christ-like, then when he is in bitterness for him; such bitterness will end in everlasting consolation. If therefore thou beest in bitterness for him, and for the wrath of God, as it hath pierced Christ, and for the loss of Christ, whom thou hast grieved by walking so, unsavorly, in the profession of his name, in bitterness for all the evil Christ

hath borne for thee, in bitterness for performing duties so unsavorly, do not think it a dangerous and desperate condition, for this is the sweetest temper of a Christian soul.

It is true, a Christian, a true Christian man is called to rejoice in the Lord always, Phil. 4:4. And you say, how should always he be in bitterness?

Why, by how much thou canst find thy soul in bitterness for Christ, so much the more cause hast thou to rejoice in Christ, and to rejoice always; it is the truest cause of joy, that can befall thee; for the Text saith, Such an one hath received a spirit of grace; and so much as any soul walks heavily, and droopingly, as many times many a Christian doth, in such bitterness, as wherein it finds no joy, that which makes thy heart so uncomfortable, is, because thy bitterness is not for Christ; for if it were, it would be so sweet to thee, as that thou wouldest say, thou never hadst more cause to rejoice, then when thy soul was in greatest bitterness for Christ: If thou beest in bitterness for Christ, it will make thee both comfortable to thyself, and to all that thou shalt converse withal, everything will be sweet to thee when thou mournest for Christ.

SERMON VI. - ZACH. 12:12 – VI.

And the Land shall mourn.

Now we are to speak of the mourning and repentance of a gracious heart, here amplified by a double argument: First, by an adjunct of greatness, ver. 11, amplified by the greatest, both domestical and public, mourning; as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, for the death of Josiah.

Now of the second, in which you have this mourning set forth by a distribution of the subjects mourning described formerly by the privacy of it, but that is not all; but also by declaring the divers persons which do mourn. First, it is said the Land shall mourn, ver. 12. Secondly, the Land

more particularly distributed, Families, families, as it is in the Original. It is translated every Family; and words so doubled, are sometimes put indefinitely, sometimes signifying every Family, and sometimes divers Families apart from others: so that here is described in these words, Families, families, the mourning of divers Families, the mourning of sundry Families together apart from other Families that mourn together, and also included some mourning of every Family apart by themselves, sometimes the Land mourning, sometimes Families, families; sometimes every Family mourns apart by itself, and sometimes in those Families, husband and wife do mourn retiredly one from another, so that here is four sorts of mourning persons.

[The Land shall mourn.] When was it ever known in the days of the New Testament, that the whole Land of Israel mourned? I take therefore Calvin's answer to the question, and the note is:

The mourning of God's people in a Land, is the mourning of the whole Land.

God never poured out the spirit of grace upon the whole Land of Israel, no not then when this Prophecy was in a special manner accomplished, Acts 2:41. It was poured out upon thousands, Chap. 4 & 6. There was a great multitude believed: And Chap. 21:20. Thou seest brother Saul, many thousands of the Jews believe; so as they are called the Churches of the Jews, Gal. 1:22, that, is many congregations of the Jews. But yet thus much remember, (as Calvin well notes) the body of the Nation was an untoward generation, Acts 7:51. The bulk and mass of the people was untoward still. They loved to be contrary to the people of God, and yet because there are Families, and they mourn, and sundry Families, they mourn, therefore that

which is the act of these divers Families, is accounted the act of the whole Land.

And indeed so far was this mourning the mourning of the whole Land, as that Zach. 13, three first verses. There is as well public blessings poured out upon the whole Land, as upon those that did mourn. The Idols were cut off, and the word of God so mightily prevailed, as that those Sects which were wont to delude the people, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, were blasted in the eyes of all the people, and generally the Gospel had free passage granted to it, by the mighty hand of God upon the people, from one end of the Country to another, yet the whole Land mourns not. It was not a universal mourning of all the Jews in all the Provinces of King Ahasuerus, but of Shushan the Palace, and yet they prevailed with God for the safety of the whole Land, Est. 4:16,17 by which was cut asunder all the snares of the Jews, so as before they in the Country knew their danger, they knew their deliverance, or at least the means thereof was prepared; and so Daniel being to be cut off, hearing of his danger, he goes to his three companions, and prays them to put up their prayers to God, and they did so, Dan. 2:17,18, and presently after he bids them to bless God, for their desires were accomplished; by which means, not only themselves escaped, but under their shadow the whole Church of God found refreshment. And when Daniel prayed for deliverance out of Captivity, Chap. 9:20-23, his prayer was heard, and an Angel sent to take order for the deliverance of the people: to show you, That when there are some, be they more or fewer, that unfeignedly set themselves, to humble themselves before God, for the public evils that lie upon themselves, to the danger of the whole Church, God is then wont to look at it, as an universal mourning, as if the whole Land had mourned.

Reason 1. Taken from the place, and standing which the people of God have, in the Countries in which they do inhabit; they stand there as the first Fruits of a Nation, Jam. 1:18. Rev. 14:4. Now in the sanctification of the first Fruits, stood the sanctification of the whole Lump, Rom. 11:16, according to that in the Law, Lev. 23:10. When the first Fruits were offered to God, then all the rest was clean; so in this case, the multitude of a whole land before God, is but as so many several stalks of the Field, and the several Families, are but as so many several sheaves. Now when God's people draw near to him, he looks at it, as if all the Sheaves of the Field had come and bowed before him; so to that their work, is the work of the whole Field.

Reason 2. Taken from the cause both of this Reason, and the Doctrine itself, that is, from the valuation that God hath of his people, where ever they be, his valuation of them in his eternal Counsel. Now in God's eternal Counsel, thus he conceives his people; All are not Israel, that are of Israel, but only they who are the Children of the promise, Rom. 9:6,7. Look what God promises to Israel, it is chiefly fulfilled to them that are Israelites indeed; And if they go about to offer up any acceptable sacrifice to God, in God's accompt, it is as if all Israel had done it.

Reason 3. Whence it comes to pass, that God made that ancient Covenant with Abraham, and it is the main tenor of the Covenant, I will give thee for a blessing, &c. Gen. 12:2,3. Which doth express another passage of the like nature, Isaiah 65:8. One saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; As if, though there were many branches of the Vine dead, yet if but a cluster of Grapes, the Vine shall not be cut up, till that be gathered: When God shall see his faithful servants bring forth Clusters of sweet fruits unto him, they shall be a blessing to others; implying, that where ever God's servants are,

because of his Covenant with them, where ever they crave a blessing, and mourn for the want of it, God will provide it shall be stretched forth upon the whole Country they live in.

Reason 4. From all which comes a fourth Reason, which is taken from an ancient promise which God made to his people, 2 Chron. 7:13,14. My people that are called by my Name: Who are those? Expounded, Isaiah 43:7. Thou art called by my name, I have created thee for my glory, &c. ver. 3. These are they whom he hath manifested, and magnified his rich mercy on. In usual speech you know, none is called by the name of another, but either Children by the name of their Father, either natural, or adopted, or Wives by the name of their Husbands; now therefore, if God's espoused and adopted Children shall seek his face, and humble themselves before him, for whatever distress lies upon the place in which they live, he will hear them.

For further clearing this Point, let me answer this doubt. You say, if the mourning of God's people in a Land, be the mourning of a whole Land, how is it then, that they prevail not with God sometime to save the Land, for which they do mourn, but sometimes the Land perishes, and only themselves preserved? As Ezek. 9:4. Set a mark on them that mourn, but utterly slay all the rest; which was accomplished. Jer. 24:5. The basket of good Figs was preserved, but the other was for a prey to Captivity, and the Sword, and Pestilence, and to utter extirpation from the earth; Hence is that you read, Ezek. 14:14. They shall deliver neither son nor daughter, but themselves only. And Jer. 15:1. So that, though sometimes the mourning of God's people, is accepted for the mourning of the whole Land; yet sometimes, though Clusters of good Families should meet in God's House, and humble their souls together, for their own, and their Countries sins; and

though there were such among them, as Noah, Daniel, and Job, men eminent in their generations, for turning away God's wrath; yea though Moses and Samuel joined with them, men of renown; yet though these five Men, and their five Families, and the rest of the good Figs with them, were joined together to seek God's face, yet you see sometimes the case is such, as that God himself swears, they should save neither Child nor Chicken, but only themselves.

Quest. How then should one conceive this to be true which is here gathered?

Answ. In God's ordinary estimation of things, the practice of his people, is the Act of the whole State in w ch they live; if they be innocent, so is the whole Nation before him; if they be humble, reformed, and upright, such is the whole Nation in his sight; They are the first Fruits of his Creatures, in them the whole lump is sanctified; they are precious in his sight, them he hath made for a blessing; where ever they live, if they seek him, he will hear in Heaven, and all the Country shall fare the better for their sakes. But yet two Cases there be, wherein the mourning of God's people is not counted the mourning of the whole Land.

First, in case that God's people themselves be wrapped up in the contagions of the sins of the times and places they live in; if they be wrapped up in the common stream of the sins of the times, they will be wrapped up in the fellowship of the calamities of the times, and they will not then be able to stand in the gap; and though God know how to save their souls from eternal destruction, yet they may be swallowed up in the common deluge. God would no longer save the old World, when his own Sons became fleshly, that is, the Children of the Church, with whom God had entered into Covenant, Gen. 6:2. If once they become carnal, as the rest

of the World was, then saith God, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, then All flesh had corrupted their way; who though they perished, according to men in the flesh, yet doubtless many of them were saved, 2 Pet. 2:5, and 3:6,17. When God's people became carnal, then they are not in case to stand in the gap, but look as you see, then the bottoms of the great deeps were broken up, and so overwhelmed the whole World; so when the children of Heaven are let loose to all uncleanness, and the wicked children of the earth are broken loose to all licentiousness; in such a case, the Flood may soon overwhelm the face of the earth. And now, no wonder if only Noah, and eight persons more for his sake, be preserved. Jer. 5:30,31. Had there been many horrible things committed, and God's people but mourned and been ashamed of them, God would never have looked at it, as such a wonderful and horrible matter; but when such wickedness is committed, and my people love to have it so; then what will you do in the end thereof? What do you think will be the end, when there is none to stand, or lift up his heart or hand to God? Nothing will be the end but horrible confusion and destruction.

Secondly, But suppose they should keep themselves entire and spotless, as those five Noah, Daniel, &c. And suppose they should save themselves from a froward generation, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, which is the best hope that may be, that they should so do; yet notwithstanding it may fall out, this mourning will not be accepted for the whole State, and that is, in case they may not be suffered to mourn for the people, nor themselves neither. But when they thrust themselves into the gap, Families apart, or Congregations apart; when they set themselves against the wrath of God, rather run themselves into hazard with God and the World, then to have a judgment befall them, and may not be suffered

there to rest; then you must not wonder, if these do no good, they are thrown out of the gap, which they would have made up, if they might have been allowed to it; in such a case, though they should mourn abundantly, they should save neither son nor daughter; this you shall find expressed, Isaiah 59:15,16. He that sets himself to work righteousness, makes himself a prey, and the Lord wondered that there was no Intercessor. Why was there no righteous men there? Yes, But their righteousness was their ruin; they were not suffered in their righteousness, nor tolerated to be righteous. Now in such a case, there is no Intercessor; this you shall find in the very case of the Text. Time was, when these Families that mourn now apart, went from house to house, and sought God together, and in so doing, they had favor with all the people, Acts 2:47, and Acts 5:13. Though many people durst not join themselves with them, yet they magnified them; and which is more to be observed, when any stir did arise, all the Governors, and people hearkened to Gamaliel, and let them alone: so that in such a time, when some give good counsel, and the people of God in these duties had favor with all the people, then their mourning is the mourning of the whole Land; but now when the case was thus far altered, when many of them had believed, and fell a persecuting their brethren, that were not of the same mind with them, Acts 20:21,23. And when persecution began to arise against Stephen, and others, Acts 8:1, then God began to cut scant with the Land, and then he made a division; he will not make a division so long as they do comply with them; but if either God's people fall out with their brethren, or neither higher nor lower persons suffer them, nor favor them, then see what a division God's makes, Zach. 13:7, it is the prosecution of the Story; Then God begins to sunder them one from another, Two parts shall be destroyed, and a third cast into fire, and they shall learn to call upon

the name of the Lord. So that, so long as God's people keep themselves free from the pollutions of the time, and mourn for the sins of the times, and find favor in so doing, all that while, all that which is the act of Families, is the act of Countries, Kingdoms, and Nations.

Use 1. Direction and Instruction, to all the people of God, in any times of the Churches dangers and distresses, what you are to do: for, if the mourning of God's people be the mourning of the whole Land they live in; then, as the people of God shall behave themselves in times of public dangers, so will the state of things stand. Therefore it is for the servants of God in such times to take these few Rules of practice.

First, be well acquainted, not only with your own sins, but be not strangers to the sins of the Town and Country you live in.

Secondly, Keep yourselves unspotted from these evils, save yourselves from the fellowship of them.

Thirdly, Mourn you before the Lord, in regard of them.

Fourthly, And as much as may be, give no occasion of provocation unto other men to disturb you.

These four duties performed will prevent whatever danger our sins justly threaten against us; for when public sins are committed, should God stay to show mercy till the generality of the people come before him, there would never be safety in that place; for never was it found, or very rarely, that men in such a case did universally turn to God, when they had provoked him, but therefore God, that looks at his people's spirits, as the life, pith, and marrow of the Land they live in, he looks at them, and indeed he hath no respect to any Nation under heaven, but for his servants sake that have reference to it; If they be holy, the rest are so in his sight, if they stand in the gap, there is enough to turn away his wrath, if they humble their souls

before God, it is an universal reformation, I mean so accepted: Therefore let every Christian family, and every person therein, be well acquainted with the sins of the places they live in, and then save yourselves from them; God complains much that his servants should be so blind, as not to see the sins of their times, Isaiah 42:19. Let not God's servants be disloyal, nor irreverent to uncover the nakedness of others; but if they see evident transgression of God's laws, they must not be blind, lest that bring a mischief upon the place they live in. But when you see them, save yourselves from them, Acts 2:40, have nothing to do with them, be not entangled in the fellowship of their sins; and then be careful to humble yourselves unfeignedly before God, and confess your iniquities, and the iniquities of your Fathers, and whatever lies in your own hands to reform, be sure that be done, 2 Chron. 7:14, and that will be accepted as if the whole Nation did universally turn unto God. If God's people shall do thus, the Lord may yet prevent such judgments as lies heavy upon other Countries; and this God's people may do, and neither hurt themselves nor others: so much the more do we walk humbly before God, by how much the more we see others do it not; if we would speak and talk less, and pray more, we might comfortably expect yet God had some further blessing in store, and that not for ourselves only, but for others also. Complain not therefore of any declension of times, or decays of things that are good, or breaking in of things that are naught; weary not yourselves with sad thoughts in this kind, (though they ought unfeignedly to exercise us) but follow close to a wise and faithful preservation of ourselves from fellowship in these evils, and as much as in us lies, reform what is amiss in ourselves and ours; and let it be a strong motive to us to fall faithfully to

this work, because if we shall so do, such a mourning of a few will be counted the mourning of a whole Land.

How would you know that the Land mourns? Why, when Families, Families mourn, some together, and some apart, then the Land mourns. And I know it is of great consequence when Magistrates themselves are given to mourn; A man of authority is of mighty sway before God, Jer. 5:1. Ten common righteous men might have saved Sodom, but one godly Magistrate would do as much good, as ten private Christians; but if all join together, there is so much the more good to be hoped for. Many a man will say, what can such a poor creature as I do, or such a poor family as mine is, what canst thou do? Why, do but what lies in thee to do, and one coal will kindle another; and then God will set open a fountain for sin and uncleanness, for such duties sake; and it therefore as ever you would stand as stakes in the hedge, and would make up breaches in Families, Towns, and Countries, live as those that often see the Lord Jesus, and him crucified; mourn you for your own sins, and that will set Families a work, and a few Families will set others a work, and God may work mightily by this means.

Use 2. To teach men that have no great will to mourn themselves, yet to be of a loving heart towards those that love not to be better than others, but to mourn for their own and others wants; if you would not be public incendiaries to a State, then be of a loving affection to those that are mourners in Zion; let them have, if not your fellowship, yet your favor; and so far as you can counsel others to refrain from these men, as Gamaliel's counsel was, Let them alone in their way; and had they so done, Jerusalem had stood to this day. Let the Scribes and Pharisees have taught and wrought as wickedly, and as hypocritically as before, yet had they refrained themselves from hurting the Christians, they had prevented the mighty

power of the Roman Armies: As ever therefore men would be friendly to the State they live in; learn to be praying Christians: you say you cannot do that, but cannot you favor them that are willing to do so? Those that pray and mourn, do not you thrust them out of the gap, let them lie there, their mourning need not make you sad, take you the comfort, and let them have the mourning, and so shall you do much good service to the place you live in, and to the whole body of Christendom; for it never fares ill with any place where God's people dwell, if they keep themselves unspotted, and are but suffered to mourn; and therefore do but the servants of God this favor, Draw them not unto evil, for if you corrupt them, the judgment of God will fall upon you together: whatever you do yourselves, defile not them, for if they should be polluted, there is none to stand in the gap for you; and it is but a small request, they ask no great matters at your hands, give them but leave to mourn when they see occasion; and then God hath said, I will bless them that bless thee, though a man cannot bless himself, yet he may hold off his hands from touching them that would bless you.

Use 3. Of strong consolation to God's people, as they find themselves to grow up unto a spirit of mourning; if though today thou canst rejoice and be glad, yet if occasion serve, thou canst mourn tomorrow, then bless God, be not without a spirit of mourning upon any occasion, that you may be fit to stand in the gap, so shall you be instruments of public good in the place where you live.

SERMON VI. - ZACH. 12:13,14 – I.

THE FAMILY OF THE house of Levi apart, &c.

We have spoken of the subject, that is here said to mourn. The Land shall mourn, that is, not the whole Land, but many godly Families in a Land. Now we come to another note from the true sense of the words.

The spirit of grace and prayer doth lead the people of God unto mourning, not only in sundry Families together apart from others, but also every Family apart by itself, and in those Families, husbands and wives apart one from another.

This is the sum of the distribution of the subjects mourning. The words hold out (that I may so speak) all the forms of humiliation, which at any time God's Spirit led the hearts of Christians unto, in the first days of the Gospel.

1. Every Family apart. In the Original, it is Families, Families, that is, sundry Families together, apart from some others.
2. Every Family apart by itself.

3. In these Families husbands and wives apart by themselves, and sometimes in the same Family, many men meet together, when their wives are not with them, and sometimes the women without the men. Families, Families. These kind of ingeminations do not always signify every Family, but sometimes sundry and many Families, sometimes universality, and sometimes multitude, as Hebrew Grammarians say; as to show you some instances, Gen. 14:10. The valley was full of slime pits, in the original it is pits, pits, that is sundry or many pits; so Families, families, is many Families; not all pits, for then there had been no room to fight; but many pits. So 2 Chron. 31:6. They laid up their provision for the Temple, heaps, heaps, as it is in the Original, sundry heaps, or here and there an heap. So Mark 6:39,40. They sat down ranks, ranks, that is, sundry ranks; so Families, Families, that this is, sundry Families; and that is the meaning of the holy Ghost in the text, it is evident from the accomplishment thereof. Acts 2:41,46, there were three thousand converted at one time, and it is said, they did eat their meat together from house to house, not that three thousand of them met together at one man's house, for whose house could hold then? Especially considering that most of them were poor men, therefore impossible it was, that three thousand of them should meet at one man's house, but some in this, and some in that; and so divided themselves, that in several Families they did all meet: read the same accomplishment of this Prophecy, Acts 12:12. When Peter was miraculously delivered out of prison, he came to the house of the Mother of John, where many were gathered together praying, many Families were there met, and they had the happiness to know first of his deliverance; for the whole Church puts forth instant prayer in his behalf; and there was above five thousand more added to the Church by that time, for they multiplied exceedingly, but the whole

Church was then assembled one where or other; and that James was not amongst them at Mary her house, it is evident, from ver. 17. Got, show these things unto James, as a sign he was not there; thus they met in sundry Families.

But this is not at all, but besides this, it is said, They met every Family apart, verse last; so that they did not only meet when many Families could get together, but every Family had a mourning by itself, sometimes no Family joining with them, only themselves, their wives, and children, and of such as so joined with them, came that saying, The Church in their house, Rom. 16:15, Col. 4:15, and Phil. 2. They and their Families met solemnly together, as Joshua said, I and my house will serve the Lord. John. 24:15. And I know that Abraham will teach his Family, Gen. 18:19, to show you that all the children of Abraham will do as Abraham did. It is true, the words in the Epistles, Such a man, and the Church in his house, may have a double meaning; for it may be taken the whole Congregation met in such a man's house, in such an eminent Christians house; as in the Church of Colossae, there was Nymphies house. But in this case I like well of the judgment of the present Bishop of Salisbury, as taking it for granted, that both this sense and the former are herein included: Sometimes (saith he) it may be the whole Church was met together in some eminent man's Family, but yet withal it includes that the Family itself was a Church of God.

Now for their wives apart, and sometimes husbands by themselves: that hath been an ancient custom of old. Hannah mourned bitterly by herself alone, when her husband knew not what she did, 1 Sam. 1:10,11,13. But besides that, David's example and Bathsheba's, 2 Sam. 12:16-24. They had both together committed folly and wickedness in God's sight, and though therefore they had the more just cause to be humbled together, yet David

goes and lays himself upon the ground seven days together, and though Bathsheba was in the house, yet he took her not with him, as Chap. 11:27. And for her it is said, that when the child was dead, he rose up from mourning and weeping, and went in and comforted Bathsheba; a sign that she was mourning alone. And so sometimes men by themselves, and women by themselves, as it was a custom; in thanksgiving, the women went out with Miriam, Exod. 15:20, and so I conceive the like reason of days of humiliation, men or women did give thanks alone, or were humbled alone, and yet sometimes give one another a meeting: When Hester took her maids to mourn with her, she met with many women together, Est. 4:16. So we read of sundry women, called fellow-helpers, Phil. 4:3, showing there was some women that labored to help forward the Apostles work; where he scattered any seeds of grace, they would labor to ripen it. This they did, partly, by instruction, and partly by communicating their experiences to them, and prayer with them: for every ordinance is sanctified by the word and prayer; what he did in public, they helped forward in private, Rom. 16:12.

Thus you see four sorts of mourning subjects stirred up to this duty of mourning.

Reason 1. Why many Families together, and not all the Church; It may be taken from the great number and store of Christians, that were found in a great City or Town, impossible for so many to get together in one place. Acts. 2:41,42. They met Families, Families, sundry in one Family, and sundry in another.

Reason 2. Taken from the inability of some Families, and insufficiency to perform some kind of solemn duties of humiliation, without the help of their neighbors. Acts. 12:12. In the Original it is many thronged together to

pray; that is, there was then a sufficient number found, implying, that John, Mark and his Mother alone, had not been a sufficient number to have besought God upon such an occasion; but there was a sufficient number, multitudes thronging together about it. Consider that to a solemn duty of humiliation, there were sundry gifts required, which were very rare to meet withal in one Family: for you have some Christians, that have excellent gifts, for the acknowledging of their own sins; and bewailing their wants, who yet are not so large-hearted to mourn for the times and places they live in; and some are fitly able to mourn for the State and Church, and not so able to mourn for themselves.

And herein to propound to your Consideration, the example of Heman and Ethan, two Men of excellent note for Wisdom, and see the frame of their spirits, the 88th, and 89th Psalms; Heman, in Psalm 88, breathing out bitter mourning for spiritual desertions, not any man's case so deeply bewailed, as he bewails his own, and he sets it forth at large, yet expresseth nothing of the state of the Church of God. Now Ethan his brother, as wise a man as he, not so much taken up with spiritual desertions, but most severely expresses the state of the Church, and the misery it was exposed unto, Psal. 89. Now both these would have done well together, in a time of solemn humiliation; the one mourning for his own corruptions, and the other, for the sins of the Town and Country he lives in; and this makes a fit combination in such a duty. Then consider, you may have Men that may be excellent in both these, and yet want faith to press God to heal; These here would fit well such a spirit, as Moses to stand in the gap, and to press God to remember his Covenant, and his Nature, &c. and this mightily prevails with God, Exod. 32:10.

Again, but yet sometimes a spirit of consolation is requisite, such as was found in Barnabas, Acts 14:36. He had a sweet frame of spirit, a very comfortable man, and therefore such a man would do well in the end of day; but scarcely shall you find all these meet together in one family, and therefore there must needs be a sufficient number for all these to be performed.

Reason 3. Taken from the fellowship in the like occasion of mourning that may befall many Families at once: Peters enlargement and imprisonment concerned them all, they all stood in need to be sensible of that blow, Acts 12:12, and therefore many were met together upon that occasion.

Reason 4. Taken from the fellowship which some Families had with some, which they had not with others; as first, means of acquaintance: One occasion of fellowship or acquaintance, is nearness of dwelling, or next neighbors, Exod. 12:4. Close in such duties with next neighbors, rather than with those that are further off. Another occasion of fellowship, was nearness of kindred, and that is evident in the Text: The Family of the house of David met by themselves, and so the house of Nathan; some take him to be one of David's sons, Luke 3. When Solomon's line did cease, his line came in his room, of whom the Virgin Mary descended; But I rather with Junius take him to be Nathan the Prophet, because there is a distinction made of his kindred. So the house of Levi, and the house of Shimei; some take him to be Simeon, one of the twelve Tribes, others think it was the posterity of Shimei that cursed David; but it is not likely his posterity should be so blessed: But others think this Shimei, is mentioned 1 Kings 1:8, a sign there was a Family of Shimei in David's Court, a man of great note in the State, an eminent man in his time: And he may well sustain the person of all men,

that are neither Kings, nor Priests, but private men, each Family and kindred by themselves.

Thirdly, nearness of acquaintance. Job 2:11:13, Job his friends, that were of his acquaintance, came with one consent to mourn with him.

Now, secondly, why every Family apart.

Reason 1. Taken from the great Covenant God hath made with every Christian man and his household, to be a God to him, and to his seed after him forever, Gen. 17:7 and by virtue of that Covenant, every male in Abraham's house was to be circumcised; ver. 13. Now then, if this be the tenor of the Covenant, observe it diligently. If God make a Covenant, to be a God to thee and thine, then it is thy part to see it, that thy children and servants be God's people; for God becomes a God to thee and thy seed, that is his part of the Covenant; but look you to the second part, that you be God's child, Gen. 18:9. You will discovenant all your children and servants from having fellowship with God and his Covenant, in case you train them not up to be sons and daughters to God; In this case Esau and Ishmael were discovenanted, they neither of them took care for their Families; and though a man find his Family backward enough, yet if he endeavor it, he doth not discovenant them.

And further, Baptism is the seal of the Covenant, we are baptized into the name of the Trinity, into the house of God; now if the name of the Trinity be put upon us, then we must do service to the Trinity, and the Trinity yields us, protection, and provision; A man then discovenants his Family, that takes no care to bring them on to God.

Reason 2. Taken from the dedication of our houses to God, Deut. 20:5. Psal. 30. What is it for us to dedicate our houses to God? Is it not to devote ourselves, and all ours, to keep house with and for God? Unless we dedicate

our houses to God, they are but Tabernacles for Devils. And is it not then to mock God, when we do not pray with our Families?

Reason 3. Consider the duties that are required for every householder; He should see that none belonging to him should break the Sabbath, Exod. 20:10,11. And we should whet the word upon our Families, Deut. 6:6,7. And how should any Ordinance be sanctified without prayer?

Reason 4. God doth give Families fellowship in sundry occasions, both of prayer and praise; it is he that keeps house for us, and preserves us night and day, Psal. 127:1,2. All the Family reaps this blessing together in common, all lie down and rise in peace, Psal. 118:15. The Devil himself could say, God had made a hedge about Job; and it vexed Satan to the heart, it was a hedge of thorns to him, that he could not tell where to get into Job's house, estate, or Family, everyone was in a good frame, wife and children in good order, and every business prospered well, the Devil could no way get in to do him mischief. But now sometimes this hedge is broken down, and Satan is let in, and then much vexation is wrought in the Family, and in such a case Families have just occasion to be humbled together.

Reason 5. Taken from the blessed reward that God gives to Families that are willing to take this course, and that is double.

First, God will reveal his secret counsels to such, and make them of his counsel, Gen. 18:18-20.

Secondly, he will bring upon Abraham all the good he hath promised him: It is the ready way to bring about the accomplishment of all God's promises to us; otherwise God will heap upon thee much more evil then thou art aware of, Jer. 10, last. 1 Sam. 25:21,22.

Thirdly, why alone by themselves?

Reason 1. Because sometimes the untowardness of yoke-fellows is such, as that they are not fit to join together; Hester must do it alone, Esther 4:16 and Micah 7:5-7.

Reason 2. Suppose they may trust one another, yet sometimes it is meet to pray apart, because of the bitterness that may lie upon the one, that is not fit to be communicated to another, Prov. 14:10. They may have some private corruption, which is not fit for them to reveal, if they may be helped by their own private endeavors.

Reason 3. Taken sometimes from the strong work of God in them, so as they are not able to express their estates in company, full of sighs and groans unutterable, Rom. 8:26, Psal. 77:3,4, and Psal. 141:4, Psal. 102:67.

Reason 4. Taken from the nearness, and close fellowship which every man's heart ought to have with Christ, above his dearest and nearest friends, Christ should be nearer to us, than either husband or wife, Psal. 73:25 and Psal. 30:8,9.

Use 1. To teach us a lawful warrant of some duties, which some are doubtful of; To pray in their own Families, that they think is necessary, yet some are so curious that they begin to question, whether it be not rather a free-will offering, than a duty enjoined.

Use 2. For a sign of trial. Would any man or woman know whether they have received a spirit of grace and prayer, or no? Why, ask thine own heart, dost thou pray with thy Family? If not, thou wantest grace and prayer, for more or less, they ever go together; if once there be grace, there will be a care of Family duties; see here the fearful danger of the neglect of these duties, you discovenant yourselves and yours: Labor therefore to be sensible of it, and neglect it not. And so I say further, You say you have been at prayer in the Family, but hast thou been so by thyself? If not, I say

not that thou wantest grace, but I fear thou wantest a spirit of prayer; if once the spirit of grace be received, then both husband and wife learns to mourn apart; if you have received a spirit of grace, you can mourn in your closets as well as before others; it is a suspicion of hypocrisy, if a man's gifts be only Family gifts.

Use 3. Of exhortation to all the people of God; As ever you desire to quicken the spirit of grace and prayer in your souls, so be conscionably careful of all these duties, and by no means neglect your Closet duties: you have much to say, that none must know but God only; be sure you fail not to keep Covenant with God, and bring up your Families in the fear and nurture of the Lord; and as much as is possible, be careful to help all your kindred, and your neighbors that are willing to be helped by you, and those of your acquaintance, you see how by this means, many blessings are multiplied upon the Church of God, and because thou performest such duties many times, and thy heart is not melted, then take this course to help it that is in the Text; before you come to such duties, have a sense and taste of Christ, and consider the evils thou hast committed against him, and be sensible of your unworthiness of the least mercy from him, and then your hearts will melt before him; a sight of Christ will banish out of your humiliations, all sinister suspicion one of another.

Use 4. Of comfort to mournful Christians, that can put a spirit of mourning upon any occasion, that whatever duty thou art called to in public and in private, thou art fitted for it; rejoice in the Lord, and bless his name, that hath not sprinkled, but poured out his grace upon you.

SERMON VII. - ZACH. 12:10 – VI.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David, &c.

There yet remains to be handled from these words, the three first Arguments propounded in the beginning, namely, the Author of this spirit of grace, the plentiful measure of it, and the persons on whom it is poured out. Of the first of these, the Giver of it, you have heard it opened, from 2 Tim. 2:15, whence you heard, that God is the Author and Giver of grace. And therefore come we to the other two, and from thence observe this Doctrine.

In the days of the Gospel, the Lord dispenseth a plentiful measure of grace, not only upon Ministers, but upon all sorts of Christians.

For so saith the Text, in that day the Lord will not only sprinkle the spirit drop by drop, but will pour it out in a plentiful measure; and pouring out implies not only extension upon many people, but intension also in a great measure upon those many persons.

And who are these persons? Not the house of Levi alone, but also upon the house of David, the blood royal, and the Kings Courtiers, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Citizens and Trades-men therein; yea, and in

Jerusalem dwelt all sorts of people, of every Nation under heaven, Acts 2:4,5. Read this accomplished, Acts 2:17,18. I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and in which place the Lord tells you, that he will not sprinkle, but pour out his spirit, and not on a few select persons, but upon all flesh, Jews and Gentiles. So John 7:37-39, he that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters: This he speaks of the Spirit, so that in the days of the New Testament, Running streams of the Spirit shall ever be flowing from a believing soul; he shall have a spring of grace in his soul, that shall ever be like a running river cleansing his heart and way, and making him fruitful in all places, cooling and refreshing his own and others souls with the experience of God's favor to him in Christ.

Why now, rather than in former times?

Reason 1. Taken from the different estate of the worship of God now, and that of the Old Testament. Then the worship of God was dispensed, under veils and shadows, so as when the Law was delivered, Moses put a veil upon his face, 2 Cor. 3:13-15, so as the people could not clearly see the Lord Jesus, nor the life nor power of him in any Ordinance then dispensed; he means the veil of Ceremonies and shadows, but now the veil is taken away, and we all behold the glory of the Lord with open face, ver. 17,18. Showing that by how much the more simply and plainly the Ordinances be dispensed, so much the more plainly do the people of God see Christ revealed in them; and ever where there is the less shadow, there is the more substance.

Reason 2. Taken from the different estate of the children of God now, and of then in the Old Testament. They were then the children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom with us. But yet the heir while he is under age, is under Tutors and Governors; and Gal. 4:1-7, he speaks of God as a wise Father, he

will not reveal himself freely and familiarly to his children, while they are under age, but when grown to age, he will freely communicate with them. Now thus the Apostle applies it, The Israel of God were under age, till the fullness of time came, and when Christ came, then was the fullness of the age of that Church, and then God sends forth the Spirit of Son into the hearts of his people: This is the spirit of adoption, whereby God acquaints you with his counsels, and betrusts you with a great part of his inheritance. Under the Law they had but a dark draught of the Image of Christ found in them; but now the fullness of time being come, God seeing his children fit to be betrusts with a larger measure of grace, he sends forth a spirit of grace into their hearts, and therefore they then called upon God, as God and Lord, and but seldom as Father. The Evangelical Prophet Isaiah, indeed he sometimes saith, Doubtless thou art our Father, Isaiah 63:16. But scarcely shall you find it throughout all the Psalms; Father in the Old Testament is a rare expression; but now scarce any of the poorest believers, but the name of Father is as ready with them, as if all were taught to say, Our Father, and Abba Father: Now the Father looks at us, as come to fullness of age. Moses was the School-master to bring the Jews to Christ, and then God walked towards them with a reserved countenance, but now he dispenseth himself more freely.

Reason 3. Taken from the different dispensation of Christ in the Old Testament and in the new; he is called the Sun of righteousness, Mal. 4:1,2. And in the days of the Old Testament, Christ was not then risen, and though they had the Moon and the Stars, yet it was dark, because the Sun was not yet risen. So the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 1:19, but when Christ was born, then the day spring from on high visited the people, Luke 1:78. Now as the day dawning brings in our light, more than all the glistening stars: so the Lord

Jesus when he came into the world, the Church discerned more by him, then by all the Prophets that were before him; and yet after Christ's ascension into heaven, when he was ascended to his full height, then the least of the Ministers of the Gospel, and professors of Christ, saw more of Christ, then any while he lived on the earth: And hence the Apostle fetches the abundant Revelation of Christ from his ascension, Acts. 2:33, he brings it as a reason to prove that the Disciples were not full of new wine; for it is said, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and Christ being now exalted to the right hand of his Father, he hath shed forth his spirit, which you now see and hear. So then it is from the exaltation of Christ, that we come to have the spirit of grace poured upon us, and Christ himself expounds that place, John 7:38,39, after this sort, The holy Ghost was not yet given, because the Son was not yet glorified; when God had exalted Christ to the height, then he shed forth light and heat, as the Sun at noon day. The holy Ghost was not yet given: Why, was not all the Prophets inspired by the holy Ghost? 2 Pet. 1, last. Yes, but though they had the holy Ghost, yet in comparison of that measure which is now given, it was but crumbs; in comparison of that measure, the poorest believers ordinarily have in these days: God dispenseth not the spirit to rare and singular men, Priests and Prophets, and eminent Christians only; but now I will pour out my spirit upon Maids, and Young-men, upon all sorts of Christians.

Use 1. It is a matter of just reproof to any that now live in the days of the Gospel, that are at this day destitute of all the drops and sparks of the spirit of grace. These are days in which God hath said he will pour out his spirit upon Courtiers, upon busy Trades-men, &c. Now then consider what times we live in; shall rivers of grace flow from many poor Christians, and shall not one drop be sprinkled on our souls; A wicked man in the Land of

uprightness, will not learn righteousness, Isaiah 26:10. It is the chiefest happiness for men in these days to live under means of grace, yet a wicked man when all about him relish of uprightness, yet he will there do wickedly, and all this is, because he will not behold the Majesty of the Lord, he thinks not that Christ is there; consider therefore any soul that cannot say, God hath sprinkled you at least with the first fruits of the spirit, there is a heavy curse lies upon you. Ezek. 47:11. The impure places thereof shall not be healed: the waters that flow from the Sanctuary are healing waters; the spirit of grace flowing from Christ, is healing water to heal his people; but such creatures as still live in sin, foaming out mire and dirt to their shame, that content themselves only with the blessings of this life, they are exposed to an everlasting barrenness; so Isaiah 32:11,13, as if he should say, Every soul upon whom the spirit of grace is not poured forth, there grows upon them nothing but briars and thorns. There is a double meaning of it, do but observe the best fruits of a natural carnal man, his best fruits are but as briars and thorns. And again, the best comforts he hath in this Land, their trades, yoke-fellows, &c. they are all but briars and thorns, they choke good things in us; therefore let no soul content itself in slighting the Spirit of God. What an uncomfortable thing it is, that so many trees of righteousness should grow on every side of us and we only barren and unfruitful? Let this therefore be to us all an occasion of searching diligently, whether we have received the spirit of grace or no. Three sorts of things are said to be poured forth; water, Isaiah 44:3, oil and fire, Isaiah 42:25. Observe then, if you have received the spirit, you have received it as water, as oil, as fire; As water, cleansing you from all your filthiness, Ezek. 36:25, and making of you fruitful, Psal. 1:3. If thou hast received the spirit of grace like water, then thou hast received some such grace as cleanseth thy unclean heart, and

thou beginnest to be fruitful in the ways of grace; Or if sometimes thou hast been scorched in thy conscience with the fiery wrath of God, and hast afterward found thy heart cooled with experience of God's favor, this is like water: Or if like oil, the spirit is poured out to heal and bind up thy wounds, and to make thy heart cheerful, Psal. 104:15. Luke 10:35. Grace makes the countenance shine, Eccles.8:1. God hath acquainted thee with his secret counsels, Acts 2:18. If God hath warmed thee with experience of his favors, and enlightened thee with the knowledge of his will, thou mayest have comfort in thy condition; but if now thy heart be as unclean as ever, if no more fit to offer up to God spiritual sacrifices than ever, thou art not so much as sprinkled with the spirit of grace.

What shall I then (say you) now set myself about?

First, give diligent heed, and have a tender care to attend to the word of life; Come not to hear the voice of a pleasant singer, Ezek. 33:31, but come to the glorious Gospel of Christ, as the ministration of the spirit, you receive the spirit by the hearing of faith preached, Gal. 3:2,5, Romans 10:17.

2. Whatever known sins you have heretofore lived in, abandon them, and then God will pour out the riches of his mercy upon you, Isaiah 55:6,7, and Prov. 1:22. When you hear a sin reprov'd, turn from it, and then he will pour out his spirit upon you.

3. Pray to the Father, and he will give you the holy Ghost, Luke 11:13. Now what a fearful case is it, that a man should live in a Congregation where the spirit of grace is poured forth upon many, and yet we never to beg such a blessing? But continue knocking, and you shall receive.

Use 2. To exhort all the children of God to take heed of resting in the first fruits of the spirit, or of standing at a stay: for you live now in an age wherein God not only sprinkles his grace, but pours it out; Forget what is

behind, and endeavor after that which is before, Phil. 3:13,14. He labored more than all the rest, and yet I count not that I have attained. How should we now be ready to think, had we but the grace of such a choice one as Paul was, could we but be content in every state, could we but do God's will with joyfulness, and labor more than our brethren, might not we sit down and kiss our hands, and bless ourselves, and have cause forever to bless God for this large portion of grace? But Paul knew where he lived, and so should we. We are to be thankful for the least measure of grace, but not to rest satisfied with that estate we are come unto: Yea, what if a man could pray like a Saint, preach like an Angel, exceed all the Apostles of Christ; yet still he might set Christ before him for a pattern: we live now in an age, that the least Christian, after Christ his ascension, hath reason to see and know more than John the Baptist did.

For further encouragement hereunto, consider that place, Ezek. 47:3-5. It shows you the marvelous efficacy of the spirit of Grace in the days of the Gospel: First a Christian wades in the rivers of God his grace up to the ankles, with some good frame of spirit; yet but weakly, for a man hath strength in his ankle bones, Acts 3, and yet may have but feeble knees, Heb. 12:12. So far as you walk in the waters, so far are you healed; why then in the next place, he must wade till he come to the knees, go a thousand Cubits, a mile further, and get more strength to pray, and to walk on in your callings with more power and strength.

Secondly, but yet a man that wades but to the knees, his loins are not drenched, for nothing is healed but what is in the water. Now the affections of a man are placed in his loins, God tries the reins; a man may have many unruly affections, though he be paddling in the ways of grace; he may walk on in some evenness, and yet have many distempered passions, and may

have just cause to complain of the rottenness of his heart in the sight of God: why then, thou hast waded but to the knees, and it is a mercy that thou art come so far; but yet the loins want healing, why, wade a mile further then; the grace of God yet comes too shallow in us, our passions are yet unmortified, so as we know not how to grieve in measure, our wrath is vehement and immoderate, you must therefore wade until the loins be girt with a golden girdle; wade an-end, and think all is not well until you be so deep, and by this you may take a scantling, what measure of grace is poured out upon you. And if thou hast gone so far, that God hath in some measure healed thy affections, that thou canst be angry and sin not, &c. it is well, and this we must attain to. But suppose the loins should be in a good measure healed, yet there is more goes to it then all this; and yet when a man is come thus far, he may laugh at all temptations, and bless God in all changes: But yet go another thousand Cubits, and then you shall swim; there is such a measure of grace in which a man may swim as fish in the water, with all readiness and dexterity, gliding an-end, as if he had water enough to swim in; such a Christian doth not creep or walk, but he runs the ways of God's Commandments; whatever he is to do or to suffer he is ready for all, so every way drenched in grace, as let God turn him any way, he is never drawn dry.

Thus we see now what in these days God calls us to; we are now planted by the waters; in which some Christians wade to the ankles, (and be we thankful for that) some can but creep as it were in the way of grace, and some it may be can walk on with some strength; some have yet gone deeper, till they be wholly drenched in grace, and this should we all labor after. But how may we attain to this large measure of grace?

1. First, consider the times you live in; we all behold the glory of God with open face, and are changed from glory to glory. First therefore look upon the Lord Jesus Christ with open face in his Ordinances as in a glass; you would think it an excellent glass, that a man could never look in it, but it showed him a deformity, and would heal it; Now we may behold Christ in his Ordinances; which that we may do, we must come to them with a trembling spirit. Observe, and you shall find it true, you shall never hear the word with a trembling heart, but you will go home with a humble heart, you go a thousand paces that Sabbath, Isaiah 66:2. If we tremble, fearing we should hear unprofitably, or not sanctify God in our hearts, such a look at Christ will heal a thousand distempers in such a heart. A bold impudent heart that comes into God's presence will be dirty and unclean still: but God gives grace to the humble, 1 Pet. 5:5. Come in sense of your insufficiency to profit, and come in sense of the Majesty of the Lord Jesus, and you shall get a blessing.

2. Look at God in his Ordinances with a believing eye; When a man sees Christ in his Ordinances, it will help him to mourn for all the defects and blemishes which the Gospel discovers to him, so it is in the Text. Looking at Christ with an eye of faith doth heal mightily, it so melts the heart with the sense of its own feebleness, that it begins to change the hard and stony heart into mournful tears: as they were healed by looking at the brazen Serpent, Numb. 21:8,9, so we by mourning for Christ.

Thirdly, Look at Christ, as the Lord that teacheth us to profit, Isaiah 48:17,18. Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto me, then should thy peace have been like a flowing River; had we looked at Christ as our Redeemer, he would have undertaken to have taught us to profit, and then would the peace of our consciences and estates have been abundant, and our

sanctification had been like the waves of the sea, and every wave greater than other, till there had been neither bank nor bottom; such a looking at Christ would have changed us from one grace to another.

2. And yet for a second means, When you are thus taught of God, then go on in your uprightness and cleanness of heart in your whole conversation, so shall you wade deep in the streams of grace, John. 17:9. If therefore thou seest any uncleanness in thy heart, abandon it, and resolve with full purpose of heart against it, hold on your way, and you will increase your strength, Prov. 10:29, so 2 Chron. 2:10. The Lord will show himself strong to all that are upright before him. God's eyes run to and fro in the Congregation, and he minds a very upright creature, and where he espies such a soul, he shows himself strong with him, so Isaiah 40:31,32.

3. Fruitfulness in growth, bring forth fruit in Christ, it may be a branch of the former; uprightness will draw you on to fruitfulness, John. 15:2. In special wise look to these.

First, have a special care to delight in God's Sabbaths; if you count the Sabbaths precious, God will give you a delight in his house, Isaiah. 58:13,14. Isaiah 26:4-7.

Secondly, have special respect to family duties; be helpful to children and servants, for that is a means to multiply Talents, Mat. 25:28,29. This course Abraham took, Gen. 18:17,18.

Thirdly, Be fruitful in conversing with your brethren, counsel them, and stir them up to good ways, and you shall find this will much increase strength in yourselves. Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost; How doth that appear? He exhorted them with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, Acts 11:23,24.

Fourthly, Be willing amongst other graces to grow in patience, and be not put out of your patience; whatever discouragement you meet with, you will find it a mighty help for growth in grace, Col. 1:10,11. It will make you perfect and entire, lacking nothing, Jam. 1:4. Let not patience, by anything be disturbed; any one act of patience when it is put to it, will set you a thousand paces forward. You therefore that would wade on in the paths of grace till you would swim therein, be sure to maintain these graces lively in you.

SERMON VIII. - ZACH. 12:10 – VII.

AND I WILL POUR upon the house of David, &c.

There is yet one note more from these subjects upon whom the Spirit of grace is poured forth, who were these, The house of David, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem; Were they not those that pierced Christ, that killed the Prophets, and stoned them, the same men that lived in that Age, of whom our Savior said, That all the innocent blood of the Prophets that hath been shed, shall be required of that Generation, Mat. 23:35. A generation of whom S. Paul said, that the Wrath of God was come upon them to the utmost, 1 Thes. 2:16. A People whom S. Peter calls, A froward Generation, Acts 2:40. Whose frowardness Paul doth fitly express, 1 Thes. 2:15. They have both pierced and killed the Lord of life, and persecuted us, God they pleased not, and are contrary is all men: Now these are the men, and we stand and wonder at it, of whom the Text saith, I will pour upon them a spirit of prayer and of supplication; Hence observe:

That God doth sometimes pour out the Spirit of grace, upon the most bloody, and most heinous, and most desperate, and most profane, and most

abominable sinners.

Such as have pierced Christ, and killed the Lord of life, that had excommunicated him, and all that call upon him and profess his name; they at whose hands the blood of all the Prophets was to be required, &c. Men that expressly curse themselves to the nethermost hell, those that were mad against Christ; Upon these very men will God pour out a Spirit of grace and supplication; and lest you should think this to be peculiar to the Jewish Nation only, read 1 Cor. 6:9-11. Such were some of you, such as all these, but ye are washed, and sanctified, &c. by the Spirit of our God, that is, by this Spirit of grace poured out upon them, some of all these sorts, and some that had them all together, the worst that you could name under the Sun, and such were some of you; But are you so still? No, But ye are now washed. So you see, the Spirit of grace may be poured out upon such as have been Idolaters, Adulterers, &c. Notable is that speech of Paul to Titus, concerning Cretans his Countrymen, Titus 1:12,13. The words are very elegant in the Original: They were always liars, given to beastly courses, sluggish in anything that was good; Now think you that ever these base spirited people should come on to be good Christians? Yet, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; a sign the Apostle was not hopeless of their estate: So Isaiah 1:10. Hear this ye Princes of Sodom, and ye people of Gomorrah, &c. To what purpose do you come before me, and your hands are full of blood; yet notwithstanding ver. 16,17. Wash you, make you clean, and then come and let us reason together; so wonderful is the grace of God: let him speak to men that know him not so much as the Ass his owner, such as rebelled more and more when he chastened them, such whose hands were full of blood; yet let but such as these come and wash themselves, Cease to do evil, and learn to do well, and then all these scarlet

crimson sins shall be as snow. But of all the presidents in this kind, Manasseh seems to me to exceed them all, A man 2 Chron. 33:2, that gave himself to Witchcraft, to shed innocent blood, and yet notwithstanding, ver. 12. In his distress he sought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly, and the Lord was entreated of him, which you would wonder at. Therefore sometimes God pours forth his grace upon such as are abominable and bloody sinners; what hope think ye were there of a man's salvation, when he rejects the God of his salvation, there is no name under Heaven to be saved by, but the name of Christ, Acts 4:12, and if we put out his name, where shall we have salvation? Yet these men did so, and so Paul saith of himself, 1 Tim. 1:13. I was a blasphemer, an injurious person, a man that did another hurt with scathe and scorn; such a one was Paul, yet see how wonderful God brings matters about, Acts. 9:12. Behold! Now he prays; Well might God put an *Ecce* unto it, a Behold; He that was before a blasphemer, a persecutor; behold! He is now fallen a praying, and he will never give over praying, till he hear some word of mercy in the pardon of his sins: so that God doth sometimes pour out Rivers of grace, not only upon those whose frame of spirit hath been more civil, but upon those who have despised the holy One of Israel; they that before knew not what prayer meant, shall now pray and mourn bitterly.

Reason 1. It is double, First, to magnify the name of God, Where sin hath abounded, there grace hath abounded much more, Rom. 5:20. God will ever give this honor to his grace, he will never have it said but that there is more grace in him to forgive, then gracelessness in us to destroy ourselves; never can a man be so empty of grace, but God is able to fill him: and this reason is mentioned, 1 Tim. 1:13,14,16. The grace of God was exceeding abundant towards me; It had been too little to have said, the grace of God was enough

for me, but the grace of God was abundant above my wickedness; and if that were too strait a word, it was exceeding abundant towards me; and this hath God done unto me, To show upon me an example of long sufferance, to all that hereafter shall believe on his name: not a singular example, such as never should be the like, but that all might see, there is an exceeding abundance of grace in God. It is a strange expression that of Balaam, Numb. 23:23. There is no Enchantment or sorcery against Jacob; It shall be said of Israel what God hath wrought. Balaam and the Devil cannot prevail against them, because it may be said, What God hath wrought.

And so for a second branch of this first Reason; God hath not only a purpose to magnify his own grace, but to magnify the value and virtue of Christ's blood, if it had been sufficient only to have saved honest orderly men, it had not come near the value and virtue that is in it, but when it is sprinkled upon desperate sinners, the blood of Christ is able to wash them away, 1 John 1:7. No sin, setting aside the sin against the holy Ghost, but it will cleanse us from it, and that scorns to be sprinkled with it, Heb. 10:29. Sins of ignorance and of infirmity, of presumption and blasphemy, yet even those sins the blood of Christ will search to the bottom; it was by the virtue of this blood, that David was cleansed, Psal. 51:7. Purge me with hyssop; there is an emphasis in his own person, that speaks it, purge me, me, whose hands are full of blood, I that am stained with such beastly, gross, and filthy lewdness, I that have given scandal to Religion, even me, Lord purge me, and I shall be clean. Thus there is a value and virtue in Christ's blood, to wash away even roaring desperate sins, and to make such white as snow.

And for a third branch of this reason. God intended to magnify the mighty power of the holy Ghost, the spirit of grace here shed abroad into the hearts of these men. The Spirit breathes where it listeth, John 3:8. If he take

pleasure to breathe in a man, there is nothing can hinder him, it will blow upon the most noisome dunghill in any place, and be never a whit the more defiled; and he is not only free, but mighty and powerful through God to cast down every high thought, 2 Cor. 10:4,5. The preaching of the Gospel by the help of the spirit is able to break the hard and stony heart, to cleanse the most profane spirit.

There are yet some other reasons that move God hereunto as he hath respect to the enlargement of the hearts of his people: as, first, that he might enlarge the hearts of his people to an abundant measure of the love of God, and of the brethren, that he might ever keep alive a vein of brotherly love, and a childlike enlarged love to himself, he will have some of all sorts in every age, that shall still be coming in unto his grace, of the most notorious sinners under the Sun. Mary Magdalene a notorious harlot, yet she comes and expresses much love to our Savior, and this testimony our Savior gives of her, She loves much, because much is forgiven her, Luke 7:47. God means to have much love from some of his servants, others may strait it with him, but God will have some, that out of much sense of the much mischief they have wrought in the days of their vanity, shall love him abundantly; (for pardoning them) when it comes to the trial, they who have but a little forgiven them, will love but a little, but they who have much forgiven them will love much. And so also God delights much in the savor of an abundant spirit of love amongst Christians one towards another; he would have some not to be put out of their love, notwithstanding all the distempers of their brethren, and it is meet it should be so for the honor of his own Grace. Paul though he is called a mover of sedition, a pestilent fellow, yet he is not distempered, The love of Christ constrains him, 2 Cor. 5:11,14. He had known the terror of the Lord in his own spirit, and he could

not hold off his hands from persuading men to avoid it: so as if any should say, What need he be so forward to expose himself to such disestimation? Why, the love of Christ constrained him, he knew Christ had forgiven him, that had been a desperate sinner, and being filled with the love of God himself, he could not hold where ever he came, but as much as in him lay endeavored the salvation of all, he knew that they did not know the terror of the Lord: So David, if God would restore to him the joy of his salvation, then would he teach the wicked his ways, and sinners should be converted to him, Ps. 51:13,14. The love he received of God should reflect upon all wicked men, Show all meekness to all men, for ourselves in time past served divers lusts, and of his mercy he hath saved us; Let us therefore in all meekness instruct those that are contrary minded, 2 Tim. 2:25. John it is likely had not much forgiven him, when he would have fire come down from heaven upon the Samaritans, Luke 9:53,54. He came very young to Christ, some conceive he was not above seventeen years old, and he lived till a hundred years after Christ, and he was not yet defiled with lusts and the world, and therefore see how little love he expresses when he is crossed, but he being reprov'd, I doubt not but he repented, and afterward none breathed out a spirit of love more than John did; In all his Epistles you read little else, but either directions or motives to brotherly love. So Paul to the Galatians, Chap. 4:12,16. Ye have not injured me at all; he was full of the spirit of love, 1 Thess. 2:7. We are gentle among you, as a Nurse over her children; she hath many weary times with them, yet she is gentle towards them, and so ought we to be one towards another.

Reason 2. That so God might thereby enlarge the hearts of his own people to humility in doing his will, and to patience in suffering it, that they might never open their mouths to any arrogancy of spirit in doing any homely

service, Ezek. 16:48,51,60-63, that if ever after they did any good duty, they should never be proud of it, and if put to any mean service, not think themselves too good for it: had not God intended you great mercy, you had never known what mercy had meant, and therefore now you must forever walk humbly and carry the shame of it in your faces, and never murmur with God anymore; and that you may so do, God will show you an abundant mercy. Least of all the Apostles, 1 Cor. 15:9. Least of all Saints, Eph. 3:8. Chief of sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15, he remembers his former wicked life, and therefore thinks himself less than any. God bids Ananias talk no more of what he had been, for he shall suffer many great things for my Names sake. God will sometimes show great mercy to great sinners, because they must suffer great evils for his Names sake. They have great things to suffer, and therefore they had need of great humility and patience. 1 Cor. 4:12,15,16, he suffers much, and takes all in good part, because God hath done so much for him; so the Prodigal. Now no more worthy to be called thy son, Luke 15:18. The other brother, if the Father cross him, he so displeasures, that he will neither eat nor drink with them; he that had but little forgiven him, he is apt to take offense for every occasion, but the Prodigal would now be content to be an hired drudge.

Further, they are enlarged to much fruitfulness in their course: there is no more ready way to make you a fruitful Christian, then to have run a lewd course of life, and in the end to have our wills subdued, and brought to the knowledge of Christ: such a soul as hath been fruitful in sin, is afterwards as fruitful in the ways of righteousness. So Paul, 1 Cor. 15:9,10, as if the grace of God had been bestowed in vain upon Paul, if he had not done more service then the rest of the Apostles; and I think the words will bear it, he compares his labors, to the labors of all other the Apostles, put all their

labors in one balance, and Paul's in another, and yet, not more than any one of them; which was much for a man that had been a Pharisee, an hypocrite, a malicious enemy of the Church: for him to have learned so much Religion, as any one of them in so short a time; it had been a large growth, but yet his labors was more than the labors of them all; as if Paul who had done more wickedly then they all, should not now be more in grace and godliness then they all, the grace of God had been bestowed upon him in vain. A thing is then in vain, when it is disappointed of its end; God bestows great grace on great sinners, he intends they should bring in more service to his will, and comfort to his people; then a dozen of other men, if he exceed not a dozen others in fruitfulness, his grace is but in vain.

Use 1. To reprove that desperate discouragement, sometimes found in the hearts of some sinful men, that looking back at their former oaths and drunkenness, &c. and what their present corruptions are, they begin to conceive they shall never over-master such distempers, it is impossible God should ever show mercy upon such wretches as they are; and thereupon they begin to lay all care aside; now they are hardened in sin, they have gotten such a scarlet die, as it is impossible their sins should ever be washed away; and therefore take up Cain's desperate conclusion, go from the presence of God; and say; My sins are greater than can be forgiven, Gen. 4:13,16. But dost thou think that thy heart is more ungracious, then the God of heaven is gracious? Hath thy sins deserved a greater punishment then the blood of Christ is of value to make atonement for thee? Is thy heart so high, that God cannot lay it low be not so desperate as to stand so aloof off from the grace of Christ, make not such desperate conclusions as these be; you find such inclinations to the world, but is not he that made the world, greater than the world? Indeed if you still go on in that course, because you

think it is desperate, and go not about to amend it, you will live to see the day, that others, that have run as desperate a course as you, and have had as proud hearts as yours be, and God hath humbled them, you shall see it, but shall not taste of it, 2 King. 7:19. Lay down therefore all such thoughts as ever you desire to honor the grace of Christ.

Use 2. To every ungodly soul, to stir up himself for the obtaining of the spirit of grace; for it shall be poured out upon such as have pierced Christ, a bloody scornful generation: remember therefore, that disease that hath been cured, or is curable in one, is not incurable in another, that which hath been done, may be done again, as long as the same Physician lives. If thou hast been an Idolater, an Adulterer, &c. what if any, yea, what if all these? Why, such were some of you: but ye are washed, and why may not we? What if you have been given to Witch-craft? What if thou hast been a Blasphemer? Manasseh and Paul were such, and yet the grace of God was exceeding abundant towards them; so that unless you can make your estates worse than ever any's was, delay the time no longer, but wrestle with God for grace.

But that none may be hardened in his presumption, let me say: First, if you have been greater sinners then others, make account you will stand in need of greater mercy then others; and therefore entreat God for tender mercy, Psal. 51:1,2.

Secondly, that thou wilt stand in need of greater humiliation then other men; so Manasseh humbled himself greatly, 2 Chron. 33:12. Great sins must have great humiliations; Paul fell down trembling, Acts 9:6. The Jailor comes in trembling, Acts 16:29. But yet this I say, I had rather ninety nine hypocrites should go to hell with presumption, then one poor sinner fall

short of heaven for want of consolation: Yet there must ever be so much humiliation as makes sin most bitter, and Christ most sweet, Jer. 2:19.

You say, How shall I hate sin, as sin?

First, thou hatest all sin, as well gainful and pleasurable sins, as any thou hast least benefit by, Acts 19:19. When thou hatest sin, as it is a dishonor to God, and a piercing of Christ, and a crucifying him, Psal. 51:5.

2. Thou, hatest sin as sin; If thou beest grieved for sin, not as it is grievous to thy conscience, and an amazement to thy spirit, but as it is loathsome and filthy in the sight of God; when thou canst abhor thyself for sin, Job 42:6. A man takes up a coal and feels it hot, and throws it down again, not because it is black, and so might defile him, but because it is hot, and so might burn him; so many a man begins to lay down his sin, because it is too hot; God begins to speak wrath to his conscience; so it was with Judas: But he that truly leaves sin, not because it brings him horror and anguish, but because it is filthy in the sight of God, Ezra. 9:8.

3. Thou must be content to take great pains with thy soul, in the use of all good means: It is not small pains will serve the turn, but you must use great diligence. If a cloth be foully stained, it is not a little rinsing in cold water that will get it out, but it will take much rubbing, batting, and scouring; it is not a few tears, but washing thoroughly that you must look for, Psal. 51:2,10.

4. You will stand in need of no small patience to wait long; you must be content to wait long upon God, who hath been so patient to wait long upon you; and though it be all your days, and though you should never see peace in this world, yet say it is enough, if you may but see grace and favor towards you, before you depart hence and be no more seen, though it be but at the last gasp, if but then you may find mercy, think that you are

graciously dealt withal, John. 14:14. I will wait and look for the God of my salvation, Micah 7:7.9. You must bear all things patiently, yea the discouragements that shall befall you; and you that have friends and kindred in this condition, be you the more humbled for them, by how much the less they are humbled in themselves.

Use 3. Of exhortation to every soul that hath found itself in a woeful case; if thou hast found thyself in a desperate case, by reason of thy sin, and the grace of God afterwards hath abundantly been poured forth upon thee; then learn to see what God requires of you. First, you should forever glorify the rich grace of God, and forever magnify the value and virtue of Christ's blood. Time was, when David's bones were broken, Psal. 51:8, and all the comfort of his soul shattered to pieces, and doth God now show David mercy? Then all my bones shall say, Lord who is like unto thee? Psal. 35:10.

2. You whom God hath forgiven much, he looks for much love from you. How love I the Lord? What shall I render to him for all his benefits? Psal. 116:1,2. How ought we to love the Lord Jesus, to grow in humility, and never think much to be exposed to any life courtesy for his name's sake? Take pains with your brethren, by how much the Lord hath taken pains with you; if God hath forgiven your great sins, remember and consider it, that God hath done all this in vain for you, if now, if now you do not more service to God than a dozen other Christians, that never knew what such sins were, as you have committed; if you be not more humble, more fruitful, more patient, and more forward in every good duty than others be, you walk unworthy of the mercy you have received, and therefore it behooves you, as you would not receive the grace of God in vain, so to be much more abundant in the work of the Lord, you must be filled with all the

fruits of righteousness to the glory and praise of God, and the good of your brethren.

**PART II. - SINS DEADLY
WOUND.**

SERMON IX. – ACTS 2:37 – I.

NOW WHEN THEY HEARD this, they were pricked in their hearts.

Having spoken of the Prophecy of the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the Gospel, we come now to speak of the accomplishment thereof, which though it finally intend the Calling of the Jews, yet it is accomplished in the Conversion of those by Peters Sermon, expressed in the Text.

The whole Book of the Acts is a Story or a Register of the Acts of the Apostles, that is, of their Sermons, their doings, their works, whether their Institutions and Ordinances in establishing the Church, or their Miracles wrought to confirm them, or their Journeys, or their sufferings. Therefore if you would read with profit this Book of the Acts, you are to consider in every Chapter of them therein, what is recorded, such journeys; and such Sermons, such Miracles, and such sufferings. These are of singular use of direction for the Church of God.

In this Chapter, there are two Acts described. First their prophesying with new and strange Tongues, from ver. 2 to the end of the 13th, amplified by many arguments, as also by a double effect it wrought in those that heard

them. First, amazement in some, ver. 12. Secondly, others mocked and said, These men are full of new Wine.

The second Act was a Sermon of Peters, upon that occasion, to repel and refute that calumination of drunkenness, which they put upon the Apostles, described from ver. 14-36. In which Sermon the Apostle doth prove, that they did not this by the spirit of the Buttery, or Wine Cellar, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, by a new Spirit of God come upon them, according to what was prophesied in the Old Testament. Now this spirit thus poured out, the Apostle further amplifies and sets forth the giver of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, as delivered into their hands by the determinate Counsel of God, and by them wickedly crucified and slain, who yet notwithstanding sets forth the same Christ as rising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven, and having received the Spirit from the Father, he sheds it abroad to the edification of the Church; from whence (ver. 36.) he concludes. Let the whole house of Israel know assuredly, that this Jesus whom you have crucified, is the Lord Christ, that this is the Messiah, whom they have thus crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. And see then, this Sermon of Peters is amplified by a threefold effect. First, the humiliation of the hearers, They were pricked in their hearts, ver. 37-40. Secondly, the Baptizing of 3000, souls, that were converted upon this occasion, ver. 41. Thirdly, the Religious, charitable, comfortable fellowship of those Converts together, ver. 42-47.

We are now to speak of the first of these effects. And that is the humiliation of the hearers. They were pricked in their hearts; which words contain four parts.

1. The kind of spiritual affliction wherewith they were exercised; pricked at the heart.

2. The effect of this pricking wrought in them, a resignation of themselves to the Apostles counsel and direction, and an humble and reverend request of them to direct them what to do; Men and Brethren, a word they had not wont to express.

3. This humiliation is expressed by the cause of it; They hearing their particular sins charged upon their souls, hearing it was Christ they had crucified, then they were pricked in their hearts.

4. This humiliation is amplified by the subject persons; those that before were amazed, and mocked, are now pricked in their hearts.

Now of the first; The kind of spiritual affliction these hearers were exercised with; pricked in their hearts.

The very first work of living and saving grace, gives a deadly stroke to the life of sinful nature.

A Note which I never handled heretofore, but you shall find it evident in the Text, and agreeable to the Principles of Christian Religion. In the Text, these men that were thus pricked in their hearts, had they received any saving grace before? No; Some of them were amazed: Now, amazed hearers, are ignorant hearers, for all amazement springs from ignorance; had they been the sheep of Christ, they would have known his voice, John. 10:27. They were also scornful proud hearers; scorning is a fruit of pride; but this was the time that God intended to show them mercy. Now then, what is the first grace that is wrought in them? After by hearing they understood, They were pricked in their hearts; not in their eyes only, to weep for their sins, nor in tongue only to cry out, but in their hearts; that is a mortal wound to Nature, the least prick of the heart, is the death of nature, be the piercing of it never so little, the sting of a Be, or the prick of a Needle, the very life of nature runs out, and it cannot possibly be healed:

you may prick a man in the tongue, in the eye, and save his life; but once prick the heart, and you give a deadly wound to nature; the vitals waste presently, much ado to sustain life for a moment. See then, this is the first work of saving and living grace, An heart once pricked can never be healed; and therefore you never read that God heals man's corrupt nature, He heals not a stony heart, but takes it away, and gives a man a new heart, Ezek. 36:26. Prick the heart, and it will never leave trickling and bleeding, till the whole life of nature be consumed. I will further open this point. First, let me show you what is meant by the heart. Secondly, what by pricking of the heart. Thirdly, the Reason, and then the Application.

1. By the heart you must not understand, that fleshly part of the body which is the seat of life, called *Primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*. Godly sorrow doth not kill man's bodily life, it works not death, 2 Cor. 7:10. But it is meant the will of a man, which lies in the heart, for as the understanding lies in the head or brain, so the will is seated in the heart: so as a good frame in the heart, and wisdom in the brain, makes a complete man.

Now this heart or will of a man, is that whereby we choose or refuse a thing, so the heart is taken, Ezek. 36:26. A heart of stone, is a stubborn and obstinate heart or will; a heart of flesh, is a heart that is tractable, and soon pierced; now then this was the piercing of the will of these hearers.

2. What is it to be pricked in the heart. First, the heart is said to be pricked, when it is afflicted with these two principal affections that are said to wound the heart, the one is sorrow and grief, and the other is care, 1 Tim. 6:10. Then is the heart pricked, when God afflicts it with sorrow and grief for sin; grief for sin, and care for reformation of it. They were pierced with many sorrows for piercing of Christ, and care to be delivered from that sin: there are other affections that usually follow these, as sometimes fear and

trembling, Ezra 9:10. Sometimes shame, Jer. 31:19. Sometimes Indignation, 2 Cor. 7:11. But sorrow and care, these most pierce; but these affections never pierce the heart, till first hatred and loathing of sin be wrought in a man, Rom. 7:15, and this springs from a change wrought in the will, which makes us loath ourselves for our sins, Job 40:3,4, and 42:6. And when God gives his people new hearts, they shall loath themselves, Ezek. 36:26,32. Here is first loathing of sin, and ourselves for sin; from whence springs hatred of sin, from thence, sorrow, grief, care, shame and indignation for sin.

Secondly, But piercing also implies something more, as to express it from what Surgeons are wont to say; They say, all piercing of a member, is piercing of the body that is compact together; *Dissolutio membri vitalis*, is *ersecutes compositi*, It is a dissolution of the whole frame of nature: If a vital member be wounded, it is not possible to heal it; it is *Dissolutio compositi*. They say true, that the heart and brain are the vessels of life, and as soon as one of these vessels are broken, the life of man runs out like water spilled upon the ground, the liveliest spirits soon evaporated, and the life and blood issues, and cannot possibly continue. And to this estate of a man doth the holy Ghost here allude; They were wounded in that part that was most vital, and by this means all that sinful life, that before was laid up in the stubborn will, begins to trickle down when the heart is pricked, sin is dropping and running out. But which is more, not only sinful lusts, but all affections to all outward comforts, they begin now to have no mind to any of them, till God gather up their spirits again; but for the present the world is crucified to him, Gal. 6:14. Wonder it is to see what little respect a pricked heart hath to the things of this life, as these Converts, ver. 42,44, they laid themselves level with their brethren, and now they are forever at a

loss for the world; and all covetous inclinations to the world, they forever trickle down, that leak is never stopped anymore.

3. Look as you see in pricking this bodily heart, a man is presently surprised with anguish and pain, and knows not what to do, so a man pricked in the will or heart knows not in the world which way to turn him; Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Acts 16:11, he saw now that there was but a step between him and the nethermost hell, and therefore now, Sirs, what must I do?

Reason 1. Taken from that fellowship that we are to have with Christ in his death, before we can have fellowship with him in his Resurrection, Rom. 6:3-11. The old man must be crucified, that henceforth we may not serve sin, but be free to righteousness; we must die to sin, and then to the world, Gal. 6:14.

Reason 2. Taken from the good pleasure of God in our first conversion, to espouse and marry us unto his Son, which cannot be till our first husband be dead, Rom. 7:3,4. Now because God intends a marriage Covenant betwixt Christ and our souls, in first conversion, he will therefore have sin first mortified in us, our first husband mustly a bleeding his last blood before we can be married to Christ.

Reason 3. Taken from the sharp opposites which we in our first conversion have to deal withal. As first we have to deal with the Word of God, and that is sharper than a two-edged sword, Heb. 4:11. It is called goods and nails, Eccles. 12:11. Sharp and keen arrows, Psal. 45:5. Again, we have to deal with our sins, and that is a sting, 1 Cor. 15:56. And these inflame like venom. Another sharp opposite is the wrath of God, against which it is hard for a man to kick and spurn, Acts 9:5, this is a piercing

sorrow, Lam. 3:65. Having thus to deal with these sharp opposites, we must needs be pricked and wounded.

Use 1. For trial of our estates, whether God hath wrought in us any first works of saving and living grace: Dost thou find thy will and inclination to die and decay in thee, so as that thou hast no desire or delight in sin? The liveliest spirit thou hast to this or that sin, is now evaporated and wasted, and thy heart is furnished with graces opposite to those sins; then I say, thy heart is pierced and wounded; thou now refusest, loathest, and hatest that sin upon which thy heart was most set, thou grieveest for it, and takest care how to be shut of it, abstainest from it, and art ashamed of it: If it be thus with thee, then surely God hath pierced thy heart, and thou art in an estate of salvation; otherwise let me say thus unto thee, A man may be pricked in the eye to weep for sin, in the tongue to cry out for sin, in the foot begin to amend his way, and yet not have his heart pricked, nor have any living or saving grace; a man may be fearful of sin, grow more careful of good duties, be more fruitful in good ways, and be not pricked in heart, but only in conscience or understanding; he may cry out of his sin as Judas did, Mat. 27:4, he thought but to have made a jest of betraying Christ, but when he saw it was the hour and power of darkness that Christ was taken and condemned, then was he pricked in conscience and cried out bitterly, and now would have no reward for his treason; he was pricked in his hands, feet, tongue, and eyes, and conscience; But was this any good evidence that he was pricked in his heart? No, for he goes on still to choose sin: had his will been pricked, he would never have hanged himself; in such a case a man may find a sin too sharp for him, and yet all be but anguishes of conscience, the heart still ready to choose another sin, but that is an ill sign; a man may sometimes be pricked in his shoulder, as Herod was, Mar. 6:20,

reform many things, yet still cleave to an Harlot; John shall rather die, then the vital spirits of his sin shall perish. If this be thy case, then flatter not thyself, thou art yet in the gall of bitterness; Thou sayest thou art heart-whole, thou thankest God, but the more is the pity; if thou beest heart-whole after so much sickness, and crosses, and afflictions, and sins, This is a miserable wholeness. For had saving grace seized upon thy will, thy heart would have been pierced and broken; but if a man's heart come to look at all sin, as bitter, he doth not bawke any sin, his heart chooseth sin no more; if he see it is a sin, his heart recoils back again, and closeth not with it; if there be no sin, but thy heart runs from it, and thy affections are dying and decaying towards them all, then though it may be thou canst not weep so much as some men can do for the very prick of conscience, nor art so forward in some duties as some are, who are but very hypocrites, and cannot cry out so much as some can, yet if thy heart be dead to all sin, thou takest no pleasure in any, but they are as bitter to thee as gall and wormwood; Then God hath shed abroad the first work of saving grace in thy heart, and it will continue last, and this is no small matter of consolation.

Use 2. A direction and advertisement to such as yet find their hearts whole and unbroken; Take heed how you content yourselves in such a condition. Consider what our Savior said to Saul, It is hard to kick against the pricks, to dash the naked soul against the curse, and wrath of God is an hard business, and so it is for these men, to persecute the Lord of life to the death; but many a man that goes on in sin, saith, he feels no such hard work in sin; but thou wilt feel at the last, that it hath been but dashing against pricks, and if not in this world, then with more horror in another; you little

know what anguish of soul for sin means; Can you provoke God to anger, and not yourselves to confusion?

Use 3. Of exhortation to every soul that is in any measure pierced in heart with sense of sin; Think not thyself undone, judge righteous judgment, or if it be the case of any of thy friends, say not they are undone, he hath now no mind to the world; but not so, if with pricking of conscience, the heart be pricked too, then fear him not, God will gather up his spirit to his calling again: If therefore your hearts be broken, bless God on that behalf, it is the best news that ever came to you; When God comes to redeem a sinner from sin, and the punishment of it, he will not content himself with the conscience, or mouth, or eyes, but the chiefest part of the soul must lie at stake for it, before him, he will have sin bleed to the death. When God had threatened Nineveh with destruction, it would not have prevailed with God to prevent the punishment, if all the Harlots of the Country had come and humbled themselves before him, but the King must humble himself to the dust: The heart of a man is the principal faculty of the soul, it rules all, it sets hand and tongue, all within, and all without a work. Now because the will is principal in the soul, then if God mean we shall be saved, he will have the principal part of the soul to lie in the dust, the liveliest corruption must trickle down upon the ground; therefore be content to stoop to it, and be glad you may.

Use 4. To teach Ministers not to be afraid sometimes of driving nails to the head, not to the consciences, but to the hearts of sinners. There are a generation of Preachers that would now have no Law preached, but now only to draw men on to Christ, by the love of Christ. It is true, this we should labor to do, but how must we do it? Do you think God will marry us to Christ, before our first husband be dead? Unless the sinful hearts of men

be pricked, unless the proud, wanton, and stubborn heart be pierced and wounded to the death? Therefore there is no hope of salvation unless it be thus with you. Why, you say, But he did but here preach, and they hear the Gospel. It is true, I grant a man may preach the Gospel, and wound men's souls as much as by the Law; but yet know this, he preached the Gospel legally, not the promises of the Gospel, but the duties of the Gospel, and their sins against the Gospel, convincing them that they had sinned against the Lord of Life, and Glory. This is preaching of the Gospel legally, and a special means to pierce the hearts of men.

Use 5. Of consolation to all those souls that have found their hearts pricked: Many a soul is troubled because it cannot weep for sin, but if you can but find your hearts broken and departing from sin, if your hearts sit loose from sin, and refuse all sin, one sin as well as another, if God give thee a heart to avoid sin, and to do that which is good in his sight, if the life of thy sin decays, then blessed art thou of the Lord, Christ hath set his stamp upon thee, and will challenge thee for his own.

Use 6. This may serve for an use of exhortation to every soul of us whose souls have been pierced and pricked, that you freely let them run and bleed still; never daub the wound, let it forever be bleeding; pray not so much to God for the healing of your hearts, as entreat him to create a new heart in you, Ezek. 36:26. By no means restrain the issue of sin, but if your heart be once pierced, let it then forever bleed. So far as terrors may hinder the peace of your consciences, labor to heal that; But you that love the Lord hate evil, Psal. 97:10. Be sure you forever keep the heart open to any charitable employment, for the refreshment of your poor brethren, as these pierced hearts in the Text did, they distributed what they had according as every man had need, and they were then full of the holy Ghost, and did eat

their bread, not with the churlishness, but with gladness and singleness of heart. What would it profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his own soul? Consider it therefore, so much as God hath pricked thy heart, so much as it sits loose from the world; a heart once pierced would think it a base part to talk of charges when it comes to lay out its estate for his brethren's necessities; Therefore let your hearts forever run freely to all good offices in the behalf of your brethren.

SERMON X. – ACTS 2:37 – II.

NOW WHEN THEY HEARD this, &c.

We come now to a second point here expressed from the effect of this pricking of the heart, it wrought in the hearers: They said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? From whence observe this note:

That it is a good evidence of an heart pricked and sprinkled with a saving and kindly sense of sin, when we be given to love and respect those Christians, whom we have despised, yea even such as have wounded us, and are willing to inquire of them the way of salvation, and to resign up our hearts to be directed by them.

I put all these together, because they are all included in the effect which this pricking of the heart wrought in these hearers. You see that whereas before they derided them, v. 12,13, now they have laid aside their scorning, and now come to them with respect and reverence, Men and Brethren: See what a sudden change is wrought in them, now they think the Apostles know the way better how to be saved then themselves, and let the Apostles

say but what they would have them to do, and they are willing to be directed by them; they bid them repent and be baptized, and they did so, and there was added to the Church three thousand souls. See what a work a pricked heart will reach to; In such a case, a man will lay down all his scorning, and fall to reverencing them, whom they had scorned before; now they resigned themselves wholly into the hands of these men, to set them a course to be saved.

Take a man whose heart is pricked, and he presently finds such anguish in his principal vital parts, that he forthwith cries out for help; See, my life lies a bleeding, what might I do, if it were possible to save life? These men at first, did not a little wonder to hear the Apostles speak with strange Tongues, ver. 12, and me thinks it is as great a wonder to see this sudden change (by a word speaking) See in them, what a new tongue, a pricked heart will work. The same men that even now said, the Apostles were full of the spirit of Wine; now they speak the language of Canaan: before debauched Ruffians; now, Men and Brethren; A word, they had not been wonted to: they that before mocked at new Tongues, had now themselves gotten new Tongues; and it was a greater Miracle to have such words in their mouths, then to hear the Apostles speak all the principal Languages in the world. A man may have all gifts of Tongues, and yet his heart as corrupt as ever; but if the heart be pricked, he knows now how to say, Men and Brethren, what shall I do to be saved? Here is a work that men may wonder at. The like you see in Paul, when convinced, Acts 9:6. Who art thou Lord? He could then acknowledge him for a Lord; And now Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? And though our Savior tell him not what to do, he sent one to him; yet before Ananias came to him, (for he came not till three days after) Paul had learned what to do: he that had been a blasphemous wretch,

behold now he prays, and so hath done three days and three nights together. What a blasphemer got a tongue and a heart to pray? See what a pricked heart can do; now therefore stand and wonder at it; Lord, saith Ananias, I have heard of much evil that man hath done; It is true, but talk no more of that, Now he prays, and I will show him, what great things he shall suffer for my Names sake: here are the compact vitals of nature dissolved, and grace springs afresh. So the Jailor, Acts 16. He scourged Paul and Silas, made them full of wounds, put them in the dungeon, set their feet in the stocks, but ver. 29,30, when he thought they had been escaped, and had like to have killed himself, Paul cried out unto him, and that word so pierced his heart, that he comes in trembling; and now, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? And he believed immediately, and was Baptized; and such a wonderful change doth a pricked heart make; of those very men, whom before he scourged and put in the dungeon, now they are Lord's; any reverence now little enough to show them, such work makes a pricked heart where ever it is.

Reason 1. Taken from the glorious presence of God, a pierced heart finds in those that have been the Instruments of their wounding, which binds a man hand and foot, and so dazzles him that he knows not whither to go from them, nor can he seek for other help, 1 Cor. 14:3,24,25. Being convinced by you, he will fall down and say, God is in you of a truth. See what a presence of God, a soul discerns to be in them, who have convinced, it of sin, hath laid open the secret closet of his soul, they see there is the gate of Heaven. These men, though at first they little thought it, yet they now see, God is there of a truth; had not God directed them, they would not have hit our heart so right; Thou hast the word of eternal life, and whither should we go? John. 6:68. The Woman of Samaria, though at first she

scoffed, yet when she perceived Christ was a Prophet, John. 4:17,20, then she fell to question him, about the main point of Religion, and leaves him not, until she be settled in God's peace, because she saw God's presence with him.

Reason 2. Taken from the attractive drawing power that is found in the word of truth, and goodness of the Gospel of Christ, whatever it takes hold on, it draws it after it, and therefore is compared to a draw Net, Mat. 13, Luke 10. And it is said of our Savior, the people heard him attentively, Luke 19:48. In the Original it is, They hung upon his lips; What he spake, was as so many drags to draw them to hearken to him; and especially the Gospel of Christ crucified, John. 12:32. These words have a mighty drawing power, it is the nature of the Word, to draw men nearer to Christ.

Reason 3. Taken from the secret hope which God doth instill into the hearts of all such as are pierced, that there is a way for their healing, though they know it not; they have an opinion, that those that wound them can heal them, and most likely to supply them with help. Hosea 2:14,15. He will speak to her heart piercing and sinking words, and will give her the Valley of Achor for a door of hope. That was the Valley where Achan was stoned to death, Joshua 7:24,27. It signifies trouble; so that even the Valley of trouble, when God speaks trouble unto his children, he gives them hope of deliverance from their very troubles; so that when a man's heart is cast down, and God casts threatening's at us, as stones about our ears, yet this Valley of trouble, God gives us as a door of hope. See by the Ninevites, Who knows but God may save us? Jonah 3:9. They conceived a possibility that God might be content to pardon.

Use 1. To show there is a difference between a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience. Generally Christians confound these two, and shuffle

them up together, as if they were both one, but indeed they much differ; and without a discerning whereof, many a poor soul may be swallowed up, either by despair on the one hand, or presumption on the other; it is one of the hardest points in the practice of Christianity. Now therefore observe the passage of God's grace in the hearts of his people. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

They differ in their,

1. Effects.
2. Causes.
3. Objects, about which they are conversant.
4. Remedies.

First, See their difference in the effects betwixt a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience.

There are four effects in which they differ.

First, The pricking of the heart doth soften and sweeten the heart, to a wise amiableness, and loving respect unto those that have pierced them, and to all such as they be, and draws them to an earnest desire of fellowship with them. These men in the Text, they were pricked in their hearts, and to whom did they go for remedy? Not to the great Rabbins of their times; should not the Priests lips preserve knowledge? Mal. 2:7. Were they not better studied men, and better read in Moses and the Prophets, then these new Disciples were? No. But they rightly discerned these were not the men that could any way help them, these men had set them awork to crucify Christ; the Priests had persuaded them to ask Barabbas, and to crucify Jesus. Now they seeing their hearts pierced, for doing what the Priests bad them do, it was not likely they should heal that wound, but should rather daube with them, and tell them, Christ was but a deluder, and that they had

done well to hang him up out of the way; therefore now, they will not come at them: and there is not indeed a more evident sign that a man dallies with his soul, then when he goes away from those Ministers that have wounded him, and advise with others that will deal more favorably with him, and take counsel of them who are guilty of the same sin themselves; but these poor men wisely discerned, that the Scribes and Pharisees are not for their purpose, but these men that wounded them, were the most likely to heal them; they look not at them as their enemies, nor do they contest with them; what meant they to be personal in their application; but these look not at it, as the wound of an enemy, but as a brother, Men and Brethren. But now in case the conscience alone had been pricked, why then a man, by his good will, would come no more to such men as have wounded him, and it will be a burden to him, if by his calling he be forced to live under such a Ministry: Elijah his Ministry wrought upon Ahab, to cause him to humble himself, 1 King. 21:29, but did he now love Elijah the better, or any such as Elijah was? No; he never met him, but with some base salutation; Art thou he that troubles Israel? 1 King. 18:17, and chap 22:8. Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And when he had a weighty business in hand, did he send for Elijah to counsel him? No; when he calls a solemn Synod of four hundred Prophets, Elijah is none of them I warrant you: and if but one Michaia, he hates him; and why so? Because he never prophesies good of him. So that when Ahab is only pricked in conscience, he will not send to Elijah for counsel, but if any man wound him, he shall be the man of his hatred, he looks at such as wound him, as if he stabbed daggers at his heart, and four hundred men shall be sent for, before one of them. Saul was often pricked in his conscience, and therefore when an evil spirit of bondage came upon him, and vexed his conscience, and David came into play before him, to

mitigate the sense of anguish, he thought with a Javelin to have nailed him to the wall; a prick of conscience is fierce and furious, full of folly and desperate madness. Felix is content to hear Paul Preach, and trembles to hear him press such arguments, Acts 24:25. A wound there was in his conscience, but what came of it? Why; Go thy way, saith he to Paul, and when I have convenient time, I will send for thee; but he never heard him more: This is the manner of conscience struck with fear, and grief; A rotten heart, and a pierced conscience ever go together.

2. A second difference in the effect is this. Take you an heart that is pricked, and it is wrought to a weaned affection, from not only inordinate affections, to the profits and pleasures of this world; but in truth sometimes, from the lawful use of lawful things; it will take off the largeness of a man's heart from any outward comfort, Psal. 102:4. His heart was so smitten, that he forgot to eat bread; so as if his Wife and Children should not come and pray him to eat, he would neglect to eat; his heart is smitten, he knows not what to do: as these men here in the Text, no mind to any worldly thing, now sell all they have, and be helpful to their poor brethren, weaned from all the comforts of this life. But take a man with a pricked conscience only, and he is so far from being weaned from this thing, as that he will plunge himself deeper into them; he thinks that if he fill himself with business, or merry company, it will drive away heart qualms; as Cain to marrying, and then to building of Cities, Gen. 4:17. Saul to Musique, 1 Sam. 16:17. A pricked conscience for the most part, leaves a man more eager after the world, which a pierced heart dare not meddle with; he finds he hath sinned bitterly against God, and now God hath forsaken him, and therefore unless he can see God's favor vouchsafed to him, he can find no relish in anything under Heaven, he goes about any business like a man without an heart. And

as a pricked heart is thus weaned from outward comforts, so especially from sin, which a pierced conscience will never wean a man from: A pierced heart lets out the heart blood of sin; Hos. 14:3. What have I to do anymore with Idols? Yea a pierced heart so far falls out with his sin, that he hates the very occasion that may bring sin into his mind, it is loathsome to him; as a man that hath drunk a cup of poison that almost killed him, he ever hates, not only the poison, but the very cup in which it was brought to him: so is it with a man that hath been pierced in heart for sin, he not only throws away the Idols, but the costly coverings, Isaiah 30:22. How pleasant soever such things were to him before, yet now he loathes and hates them all. But now take a man that is but pricked in conscience only, it makes him more desperately sinful. Jer. 2:25. They have loved strangers, and after them they will go; as men sometimes wounded in conscience, he finds plainly, such whoredom and drunkenness is the way to damnation; but well, if I must be damned, let me be damned for something; if I must be damned for hating God and his Ordinances, I will hate them yet more. Saul was sometimes wounded with David's kindness, 1 Sam. 14:16. He melts (as sometimes a pricked conscience will do at a Sermon) and wept, so as you would have thought his heart had melted, but it was only his conscience that was pricked; David durst not trust him for all that: And shortly after that, Saul went out with three thousand chosen men to take him; David again had him in his hand, 1 Sam. 26:1,2, then his bowels melted again, and he was wounded, and tells David he would not hurt him, but it was no trusting of him notwithstanding; This David feared, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul, chap. 27:1 So that a man may be pricked in conscience, and daube it over again, and be never a whit the more weaned from sin by it; whereas now these men that are pricked in heart, will they ever crucify

Christ again, or join with hypocrites against the people of God more? No; They will rather sell all they have, and give to the poor members of Christ, seeing they have pierced their head and Master, now let all go, We must take another course: But a pricked conscience will close with sin again upon the next occasion. It may be he will vomit all out, confess it all, but when once conscience is quieted upon this confession, he will take up the same wickedness again.

A Third Difference in the effect is this; the pricking of the heart humbles a man's spirit, so as now he is content to stoop to his underlings, though contemptible to him before, yet now willing to be taught by them; These men in the Text inquire of the Apostles the way to salvation. Apollos doubtless was a man pricked in heart, when he stoops to learn of a poor Tent-maker and his wife, Acts 18:26. But take you a man pricked in conscience, he is like the Scribes and Pharisees, when the blind man answered them with a mighty power of a gracious spirit, and set them to the wall, that they knew not what to say, they said, Thou art altogether born in sin, and wilt thou teach us? And thereupon they excommunicate him, John. 9:34. When a poor Christian is able to teach great Scholars their own experiences, they will not endure to be taught by them; A pricked conscience is proud and stubborn, and will not stoop to deny it self so much, or stoop so low, as to be taught by such Leather-coats and saucy Trades-men; These are proud conceited men; only a pricked heart can tell how to come to poor men, with a Men and Brethren; You are acquainted with sorrow for sin, and have known the terrors of the Lord; What shall such a one as I do, that I might be saved?

4. Another difference in the effect is this: These men being pricked in heart, it did open and enlarge their hearts, to be willing to do or suffer

anything, that these Apostles shall direct them to. They knew them not to be Apostles, they knew they were Fishermen, poor mean men; yet to these men they come, and that with an enlarged heart, Men and Brethren, what shall we do? Set us but a course, and we will follow your direction; Say but what we shall do, and we are for you; So it was with Paul, he was a man that had great privileges, a Pharisee, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, a man unrebukable, touching the righteousness which is of the Law; but when once his heart is pricked, I count them all but loss and dung; he was not at a loss to part with anything for Christ, Phil. 3:8, and Acts 20:21,22. I pass not at all, though I know bonds and afflictions abide me everywhere; They shall neither hinder his course, nor his joy in his course: See the frame of a pierced heart, there is nothing to be done, nothing to be suffered; he passes not if he do anything, if it shall be to labor and suffer more abundantly than they all, 1 Cor. 15:10.

This is the case of a pierced heart; but will a pricked conscience do as much? A conscience only pricked? For so you must understand, conscience lies in the judgment, as the will doth in the heart; if the heart be pricked, then the judgment and conscience is pricked also; but the judgment and conscience may be wounded, and yet not the heart; you may lead a wounded conscience a good way, but not far enough. There comes a rich young-man to our Savior, and he would know what he might do to inherit eternal life, Matth. 19:17-22. The Commandments he had kept from his youth, a sign he had made conscience of his ways. But now Go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; and our Savior calls not every rich man to this, but he was pleased to try him, had he offered it, as a man whose heart had been pricked, he would have let all go, had it been thousands for his hundreds, but his conscience being only pierced, he was sorely put to it, and

went away sorrowful; had his heart been pricked, he would have neglected his daily bread, his estate, wife, children, and all he had: Matthew, the Publican, he suddenly leaves all, and follows Christ, Luke 5:28. Zacchaeus gives away half his goods, Luke 19:28. But this young-man having but only his conscience pricked, see how strait he is, see how closely he girts to himself the comforts of this life. So Ananias and Sapphira, doubtless they were pricked in conscience, for otherwise they would not have given up their names amongst the Disciples, but because their hearts were not pierced, they kept back part of their estate, they could not tell how to live upon the Alms-basket wholly: Consider therefore of this thing, they are points you do not usually read or hear of, and yet of due and serious consideration, and such as unless you wisely distinguish in the particulars of them, you will be much deceived in the estate of your own hearts; take heed you rest not in bare conscience work, without all heart work; here are new foundations and principles to be laid; you have heard many precious differences between worldly and godly sorrow, but this is somewhat a distinct sorrow from worldly, for this is spiritual sorrow: though you have spiritual sorrow, and spiritual pain, yet this is not it you must satisfy yourselves in, for by reason of the piercing of your conscience, your spirits may be put to much exercise, and yet the heart not so much touched, and leave thy condition very dangerous.

SERMON XI. – ACTS 2:37 – III.

AND WHEN THEY HEARD this, &c.

Now we come to speak of the difference betwixt a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience, as they differ in their causes. The pricking of the heart is the immediate work of God himself; He keeps that in his own hands to temper the hearts of the sons of men, especially in this kind when it comes to piercing and wounding. Hosea 13:8. You would think it were the stroke of an enemy; I will meet thee as a Bear robbed of her whelps, and I will rend the caul of thy heart; and lest you should think God did this in wrath without out mercy, read ver. 9. Oh Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help. God goes about a work of salvation, even then when he tears and rends the heart: so that look whatever lies most close and nearest a man's heart, when God comes to save, he will make a man sit loose from that which before he could not be reclaimed from; he will not suffer anything to harbor there, that shall lift up itself against him, Ezek. 36:26, and Pro. 21:1. He turneth the heart which way soever it pleaseth him; Men may change our minds, by giving us better reasons for things then we

discerned before, and may alter our judgments and opinions by strength of Reason, or affection to the contrary, but no man is able to change the heart but only God: He hath his chair in Heaven, that speaks to men's hearts; but for pricking the conscience, the Devil can reach that, and so can his Instruments. Notable is that place, Revel. 9:1-6. It is a lively description of the Friars and Priests of the Church of Rome, being let out of the bottomless pit of ignorance and darkness, in which their Religion was hatched; they had a mighty power, by pressing the terrors of the Law, to work terror upon the consciences of their hearers, who thereby were so stung with fear of hell, that they longed for death rather than life, and willingly gave away all that ever they had, under pretense of saving their souls by the merit of their good works; this was nothing but a work of Satan, setting on their Ministry upon the consciences of the people: it was Satan, I doubt not, that vexed the conscience of Job, Job 13:14,26. Job applies it to God, as if he had spoken bitter things against him; but the truth is, had God done it, it had been by a spirit of bondage; now the children of God receive not the spirit of bondage to fear again, after they once know God to be their Father, Rom. 8:15. If therefore Job, or any other true Christian, as David, or Hezekiah, complain of their estates, it is not from God, but from Satan; It Is usual with Job to ascribe that to God's hand, Ih Indeed was Satan's, at least immediately, as the loss of his children and cattle; and so it is in this case: It is true, Satan's work was directed by God; but otherwise it is possible for Satan so to buffet our minds, by representing to us the number and burden of our sins, and so to hide the face of God from us, and the promises and former experiences, as that we can see nothing but wrath and enmity in the presence of the Lord, though even then God's favor was towards Job as much as ever; He is one and the same and changeth not, only he suffers Satan to cast a mist between

the face of God, and the conscience of Job. Conscience may be stung when the heart is not, but be still as it was before, and neither better nor worse for this work of Satan.

Thirdly, As they differ in the effects and causes, so also in the object about which they are conversant. When the conscience is only pricked, you shall hear him express himself on this wise; O will the conscience say, What, honorable here, and miserable forever hereafter? Rich here, and forever rejected hereafter? Beautiful here, and burning forever hereafter? Pleasant and cheerful here, and forever in torment hereafter? Such burdens the conscience lays upon the soul of such a one; All the complaint of conscience will never look farther then the wrath of God, present anguish, and fear of future wrath in another world. Did you ever know any sorrow like my sorrow? Lam. 1:12. This is the complaint of a pierced conscience; Never saw you creature in such anguish as I am. But take a pierced heart, he rests not in these complaints, (though these he have) but it will turn the course of these complaints quite another way: He complains after this sort; Did you ever know (will he say) a soul followed with so many mercies, so much honor, and wealth, and peace, that ever was so unthankful as I am? Whom God hath followed with so many crosses and sicknesses as I, and yet continue to this day so stubborn as I have done? Did you ever know any that ever had such experience, and made a profession so long, and yet no more assured of salvation then I am? Did you ever know any that was redeemed by the blood of Christ, that yet to this day lives a slave and servant to so many strong and noisome lusts; such pride and profaneness, and senselessness of heart? Did you ever know any that hath been called to grace, so carried captive to the things of this life, as I am? Did you ever know any fall again and again into the same sins, as I have done? Did you

ever know a poor creature that to this day can pray no more feelingly, nor receive no more believingly, then I do? So as there is a broad difference in the object of their grief, a pierced conscience grieves for sense of anguish, but a pierced heart, chiefly for fullness of sin, and weakness, and want of grace. If complaints be only in regard of the terrors of God, it is to be doubted there is nothing but a pierced conscience; a pierced heart issues out more sensible expostulations to God, and confessions to their brethren.

Again there is this difference in their complaint for their sin, as well as for their grief. If a pierced conscience complain of sin, it only complains of such sins as puts him to present anguish, as it was with Judas, Mat. 27:4,5, had it been anymore, he would have complained of murder, and despair of mercy &c. but he rushes upon self-murder, and despair. Now had a pierced heart complained, it would not only have complained of treason, but of the pride of its heart, that would not suffer him to be patient under God's hand; a pierced heart complains of one sin as well as another, and eschews one sin as well as another, Psal. 119:128. I hate every false way; He counts all the words of God to be most pure, and whatever crosses the word of God, that he hates.

Finally, they differ in their cures and remedies, a pierced conscience may be cured sundry ways, by which a pierced heart cannot.

First, a pierced conscience may be cured by store of worldly business and cares, and sensual lust, the Thorny foil went beyond the stony: the thorny soil was pierced, Jer. 4:3. A man may be humbled in conscience, so as you would think he made conscience of all his ways, but in the end the world chokes him, Luke 8:14. But all the blessings of this world cannot choke an honest and a good heart, Cant. 8:7. Though he be compassed about with

abundance of honors and pleasures, he can find no comfort in them, till God have healed his heart.

2. Sometimes pricks of conscience will be healed by tract of time. Ahab for three years durst not undertake any war, because of the threatening of the Prophet, 1 King. 21:29, and in the first war he made, he died, 1 King. 22:1. His conscience was now daubed and smothered; tract of time will sometimes heal such anguishes. So Saul, 1 Sam. 24:17,18, and chap. 26:2, but it is not so with a pierced heart, it never leaves braying after the Lord, Psal. 42:1,2, and 84:3, and 34:5,6. My soul is athirst for God, He will wait, till his day come, Job 14:14.

3. Again, conscience may be healed by the performance of some duties; sometimes conscience checks a man for such and such sins, and for the neglect of such duties; now it will not let him rest till such sins be laid aside, and such duties performed. Herod revered John, and heard him gladly; but yet the pierced heart is not satisfied in any duties, though sometimes of humiliation, seek him in every Ordinance, in season and out of season; yet the good soul will still seek Christ, and never leave till she find him, Cant. 3:1-3. An heart wounded will never be healed, but by the same hand that wounded it; not so a pricked conscience. But when I say a pricked conscience will be healed, I speak not properly, its true; sometimes a man is said to heal a man that kills him out-right, he feels no more pain; so a man while conscience is dead, lies wounded with the sting of sin, in sense of the displeasure of the most High. Conscience may fall into the hands of such worldly business, &c. as may kill a man out-right, and conscience stirs no more; only a pierced heart is sensible, into whose hand soever it falls; it is not healed by anything, but by the blood of the blessed

Redeemer, and the life of the Spirit of grace, enabling him in some measure to walk before God in the land of the living.

Use 1. Of exhortation, to every Christian that knows what it is to be pierced in the heart, to pity the estate of such poor souls, as know not in the world what to do; if you see the bodily heart wounded, and the man swooning and dying, how ready will everyone be to run any way to help him? When we see his countenance changed, his spirit sinking, and the whole man falling flat down, everyone would gladly take any course to help him: Truly there is not any poor Christian, but when he comes home to God, is in this very case; heart dejected, spirit cast down, much ado to cry for mercy, ready to complain to any; How should this stir us up in such a case, to be helpful to them to our best endeavors? If we saw our enemies Ass falling under his burden, we ought to help him, Deut. 22:4, and shall we see our brethren and sisters fall under the burden, not only of an accusing conscience, but of a wounded heart? The Lord speaks terror and wrath, and lays the burden of a man's sin upon his back; then Have pity upon me oh my friends, for the hand of God is upon me; In such a case, the complaint of the soul may be more than ordinary, for his pain is more than ordinary, for he considers the hand of the God of all grace against him. Now alas, where shall I find grace, if the blessing of God be turned against me? Where should a poor soul look for blessedness? So as Job had good cause to call for pity; how barbarous is the practice of such, as instead of helping up such poor Christians, will reproach them and say, See now what you have got by gadding to Sermons, and keeping such company; you should have pitied yourselves; Could not you have regarded your own welfare, and have lived neighbor-like; but you must fall a praying, and a pondering? But see what it comes to now. Oh wretched creatures, if the Devil himself were

clad in flesh and blood, what more desperate words could he use then these? Consider you that fearful place, Psal. 69:22,23-26. It is a fearful curse the holy Ghost denounceth against such men. Let their table become a snare, and that which should have been for their welfare, let it be a trap; Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let not them come thy righteousness; And wherefore is all this? Why, ver. 26. They have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; If God have wounded a poor soul, and thou addest to his grief, it brings a heavy curse of God, not only upon thyself, but upon all thy goods, lands, and estate, and soul too; Take heed therefore how you speak to the grief of such wounded souls. Read also Deut. 25:17-20. Remember what Amalek did to thee in the day when thou camest out of Egypt, how he spoiled them that there were feeble and weak with thee, therefore blot out his remembrance from under Heaven, Exod. 17:16. All things fell out to them in Types; Amalek was the first that fell upon the people of God, and because he fell upon the feeblest and weakest, therefore the Lord will have war with him forever; Israel his coming out of Egypt, is but a Type of God's people coming out of sin, and passing through the red sea of Christ's blood, and going through the wilderness of temptations; and if Amalek was so cursed for hurting the weak amongst them; If then you see any fall foul upon a weak hearted Christian, while he is yet raw and green, the Lord will have war with such a man and his posterity, and will cut him quite off.

Use 2. Of reproof to such as were never yet pricked in heart or in conscience; If they that are pricked in conscience fall short of truth of grace, what will their case be that never yet were so much as pricked in conscience? You have many men so far off from being pricked in either with sense of sin, as that they take pleasure in sin, they spend their days in pleasure, and never felt prick in either heart or conscience for sin; some say,

let us fill ourselves with sin, for tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; Come let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die, Isaiah 56, ult. Others there are that are so wholly taken up with the business of this life, that they thank God they never knew what scruple of conscience meant, but they have kept a constant tenor of cheerfulness all their days. How lamentable is the case of such men, when as many a poor soul by remorse of conscience hath been knocked off from many sins, and yet fall short of salvation; it may be by the Laws of the Land, or for sinister respects they refrained a little, or for conscience sake, not many times one of a thousand can say, he hath refused any sin, 2 Thes. 2:12. That they all might be damned that had pleasure in unrighteousness; It is a sad and a heavy speech, he saith not, that all unrighteous men shall be damned, for who is he but is unrighteous in some passages? But he that takes pleasure in unrighteousness; it is the comfort of his soul, to riot in all manner of excess, and commits all sin with greediness, this is their doom, that all might be damned.

There are another sort here to be reprov'd, that have sometimes been pricked in conscience, and when they should have come on to timelier healing, have left quite off, and are come to this resolution; They thank God they are now got out of such heart qualms, and they will now bless themselves from such company and occasions, as might put such trouble of conscience upon them, but will this prove a safe course think you? If you see a woman with child come to her travail, and her pangs grow strong, if afterwards she leave off, and settle herself, you conclude her child is dead, and it will much endanger the mother; so if God have sometimes given us to come to pangs of new birth, and to feel many piercings of conscience, and give great hopes that the Lord Jesus is forming in such a soul, and

might it continue, doubtless so it would be, if you give over and desire to settle, when it is high time you should be delivered in such a case, not one soul of a thousand ever comes to live in God's sight. Let therefore no man think himself in a safe condition, if he have neither come to heart nor conscience piercing.

And yet another sort is reproveable, who have some pricks of conscience, and so continue some pretty time, by some duties of humiliation, and only rest there, and go no farther. Conscience stings bitterly, and it must needs fall to such duties, as fasting, and prayer, and this a man is willing to stoop to, and thereupon he continues in such duties, and makes account that will serve the turn to stop the mouth of conscience: and what will this do? If afterwards a man take as much liberty to sin as ever before, and walk in no more fear of God, and love of the brethren then before; this is the most fearful delusion the poor soul can be exposed unto, that a man should set up his rest here to stay, and never consider, whether his heart loath sin more than ever before, and therefore take heed we rest not in any such works as these.

Use 3. To every soul of us that hath found his heart come to a better frame; if ever God hath brought your hearts to any kindly pricking for sin, rest not till you may truly say, there is no Christian man but you count him your brother, rest not till you can look at all the children of God as thy chiefest brethren and sisters, who have most wounded and pierced thee, let thy heart most esteem of them, give not over till thou hast struck a Covenant with every soul, that knoweth what it is to be pricked in heart, and be willing to consult with thy brethren about thy spiritual estate; It is true, sometimes a child of God may keep his conception long very close, the Prodigal had none to consult with, but he said within himself. You have

some Christians, especially such men as have knowledge and parts, have not need to complain so much, nor to ask such counsel, as those that are ignorant, they know their unworthiness of any mercy from God, and they go to God, and fill heaven and earth with cries and groans; but you rest not till you find God answering you with the testimony of his favor; but if you do not know what to do, then rest not till you have got some to advise you. Take up this example from these ignorant people, and the Gaoler, Acts 16:19,20.

And further come unto God, and Christian friends with a resolution and purpose of heart, that whatever God calls you to do, or suffer for his names sake, you will not fail to do it, but set yourself about it.

Use 4. If you be come thus far; then it is a word of everlasting consolation to such as can find in this manner their hearts bowed to this gracious frame of spirit; If God hath thus kindly pierced thy heart, it is a good sign that he will finish this work in thee. You say, But may not a man have his heart pierced, and yet sit loose from his brethren, and sometimes look at those as his enemies, that are his nearest friends? And may he not sometimes start back from doing or suffering that which God calls for? Is it not possible a man pierced in heart may do thus?

Answ. It is, but it is ever true, that those men whose hearts are pierced may be too blame sometimes herein; Such a thing is not impossible, and would it were not over usual; for many times the issues of corruption are stopped and they cease bleeding, and then it is wonder to see, how they can forget their brethren and sisters, and they are now toiled and tumbled in the world, that they are not able to do and suffer the will of God; and though such may have comfort in their hearts that have been pierced, yet they ought to keep the issue of their corruption always open: It is therefore for

such to renew the piercing of their hearts, and that by wisely applying every word of God to them. Learn to know your brethren and sisters, and to follow after God in the use of every Ordinance; you shall not find a more comfortable evidence of your good estates before God, then when you keep afresh within you the love of your brethren, and find your hearts inwardly cleaving to every good duty, and to be ready to do and suffer anything for God; keep this frame in you, and then fear not, you will have comfort in your way in the end.

SERMON XII. – ACTS 2:37 – IV.

MEN AND BRETHREN WHAT shall we do, &c.

We now come to the third Argument by which this humiliation is described. When they heard this; that is, When they heard Peter particularly apply the Doctrine he had delivered; Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, &c. Then they were pricked in their hearts.

The pricking of the heart it wrought by hearing the word of God, applied to the convincing of our souls, both of our particular sins, and of the greatness and goodness of that God, against whom we have committed them.

This may be of use to us all, that desire to have our hearts pierced effectually and savingly, When they heard this word of the Gospel that Peter had preached touching Christ, and heard Peter touch their particular sin against Christ, they so heard the Word, that they were convinced of their particular sins against Christ, and they were also convinced of his greatness and goodness; God hath made him Lord, advanced him to sit at his own right hand, and so his goodness, they have killed and crucified the anointed

one of God, this Jesus whom you have crucified, God hath made him Lord for his greatness, and Christ for his goodness. And when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. So then, there are three things go to the kindly piercing of a man's heart; First, Hearing the word; Secondly, Conviction of a man's particular sins; and Thirdly, A fight of the greatness and goodness of that God whom we have pierced.

First, Hearing the Word; It hath pleased the Lord much to delight in this Ordinance, and to make it only a principal sovereign means for the piercing of the hearts of his people; Hence it is, that the Word is called Goads and Nails, Eccles. 12:11. God hath set an edge upon the Word, and given it a piercing power; the Word is called a two-edged sword, Heb. 4:12. A sharp and a keen Arrow; God hath given the Word a piercing nature. But how is it, or why doth God make his Word so piercing?

Reason. By ordaining the breath of the word, to be the breath of the Spirit; whenever his word is dispensed he will accompany it with the breath of his own Spirit, which sets an edge upon it, so as they shall sink deeply; It is the Spirit of God that gives it a point, and this God hath vouchsafed to his whole word, both Law and Gospel, and therefore the Gospel is called the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:8, and the Law, the ministration of condemnation, ver. 9. So that if a man speak Law, he not only tells a man of condemnation, but he ministers it unto him; so as a man sees plainly, he is in no better case, then in an estate of condemnation; and so the ministration of the Gospel by the Spirit of holiness, assures a man of his righteousness by Jesus Christ, Gal. 3:5. God hath ordained, that together with the word, the Spirit should be dispensed, whether a man preach Law or Gospel.

And this upon a threefold ground.

First, By this means God doth most suitably answer the creation of the world, in the new creation of decayed corrupt nature; By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, Psal. 33:6. What, will the speaking of a word make a World? No; A vanishing word will not; but if God put in the breath and work of his Spirit, then the world is made, Gen. 1:1-3, and God hath ordained, that when he would come to repair decayed nature, by the same means by which he made the world, by the same will he repair it, and therefore in his name must the word be spoken, and by the breath of the Lord, a Congregation is gathered together, and Christians established in grace, and all the host of them, and now all things are become new; If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. How comes it to pass, that the word lights on me, first to wound me, and then to bind me up? Why, the Lord hath created the fruit of the lips to bring it to pass; Here was a small work, the breath of a Fisherman to convert three thousand souls, a thing unlikely by the power of nature; but if God set in with him, then there is a creating work of God, and now such souls cannot rest, till they find rest and peace in God.

Secondly, God by this means doth convey an Antidote or preservative into the hearts of men, by the same means which Satan at the first did infuse his venom into our first Parents; Did not he seduce them by the hearing of the ear, the breath of the Serpent poisoning their hearts with unbelief? God therefore that sent Christ to dissolve the cursed works of Satan, untwists this work again by a savory and wholesome work of his Spirit, by conveying it into our minds, and judgments, and consciences, and so dissolve the cursed work of Satan.

Thirdly, God therefore doth it, that he might confound all the wisdom of the Orators, and Philosophers, and wise men of the world, 1 Cor. 1:21. It

pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe; all the learned Philosophers could never convince a man of a sin, they could sometimes persuade men by moral persuasions, but they could never pierce their hearts, nor teach them the knowledge of Christ; God hath made them all fools in that behalf, that so the faith of God's people might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God's grace. Rom. 10:14,17.

But have not men sometimes been pierced by the workers of God? What say you to Joseph's brethren? Gen. 42:21, and so the Jailor, Acts 16:26 to 29.

Answer. The works of God do sometimes work especially to the piercing of the conscience, but not so usually to the pricking of the heart; but if they do, yet they do it as sanctions of the word, as they are confirmations and seeds of the word, they may drive in some word we have heard closer and nearer to the heart: Joseph's brethren could not be ignorant of their sin against the life and liberty of their brother; now they coming into a distress, it sets on what they knew before. So it is likely the Jailor had heard Paul speak something, else how come he so readily to ask the way to salvation? Sometimes indeed where ordinary means fail, God his Spirit can do it alone, without the breath of the word, but this is the ordinary way.

But secondly, There was more than hearing the word; the word was applied to the conviction of their particular sin, by which means their hearts came to be pricked: it is the nature of the word applied to convince a sinner, that thou art the man; so these hearers, they knew assuredly, that they were guilty of that sin. 2 Sam. 12:7,13. Samuel would convince them of that very sin above the rest, of choosing them a King, 1 Sam. 12, and thereupon they confessed it. So Judges 2:2,4, when they saw they had gone against God's charge, in that particular sin, that wounded them to the heart. So when our

Savior would take off the Woman of Samaria from scoffing, he convinced her of her particular sins, John 4:14-16, this made her to say, Sir, I perceive thou art a Prophet, and then questions with him about Religion; had she been pricked in conscience only, she would have quarreled with him, what had he to do with who kept her company, but a pierced heart is of another temper.

The reason of this is taken from the confusion of heart and face which is wrought in a soul by convincing it of its particular sin, as to express it thus, Joseph's Butler charged Judah and his brethren, that they had done ill to take away his Masters cup; why, say they, with whom soever it is found, let him die the death, Gen. 44:6,12,16, now when he searched and found the Cup in Benjamins sack, then say they, What shall we speak unto my Lord? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants, behold we are my Lord's bondmen; here is the Cup found amongst them; Benjamin he is guilty; and now they know not what to do or say: Just thus hath God put us to the stand, and finds the Cup in our sacks mouths; this or that very wickedness is found in the mouth of my sack; in my soul, and in my hand; then we are set to the wall, and our hearts blush within us; What shall we now say to the Lord, or how shall we excuse ourselves? Now we see we are sons of wrath, children of death: As a thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel, being found pilfering the glory of God, and giving it to the Syrians, and Egyptians. Jer. 2:26. This prepared the woman that was taken in Adultery, to receive a word of comfort, John 8:4. He seeing her face and heart so ashamed of the business, had no heart to speak an ill word to her; now he was not wont to daub up any in sin, but it is to show you, that particular application puts a man's hand in his bosom, and takes him just in

the very act of some sin, this puts such confusion of heart and face upon him, as that it makes him very fit for a word of comfort.

3. All this will not yet work, unless it be applied to a man's particular sin, as against that great and good God, against whom they are wrought. The Lord hath made him whom you have crucified, a Lord for greatness, a Christ for goodness. Now that the knowledge of sin against the greatness of the Lord, doth so pierce the heart, it is evident by the pains that God takes to pull down the heart of Job, when he would have him to renew his repentance, chap. 38:39-41, and convinces him, that he hath been quarrelling against God, and God follows that argument, to show the glory of his mighty works, and that wrought upon him, for saith he, Behold I am vile, once have I spoken, yea twice, but I will proceed no farther, chap. 41:1-4, and chap. 42:6. When he remembers the word of God to him, and God had convinced him of his glorious Majesty; now saith he, I repent and abhor myself; and when God would pierce Saul's heart, how doth he it? Acts 9:54. Why persecutes thou me? He shows him his glorious Majesty, and then all astonished, he fell down and said, Lord, what wilt thou have me do?

And as thus his greatness, so his goodness is of mighty power to convince: I delivered thee says God to David, out of the hands of Saul, and gave thee a Kingdom, and if that had been too little, I would have given thee more; and why hast thou then despised the commandment of the Lord? 2 Sam. 12:7-9. This so wonderfully wrought upon him, that thereupon he penned the 51st Psalm. So Deut. 32:6. Do you thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people and unwise; Is not he the God that hath nourished and brought thee up? It pierces the heart to consider that we have sinned against so good a God.

Why his greatness?

There is a double work in this. First, terrifying the conscience, and showing us the fearful danger of sin. Secondly, it discovers to us our own vileness. So was it with Joseph his brethren, when they saw him whom they had sold for a slave, was now advanced to this greatness, they could not answer a word; they were terrified at his presence; and that made Saul to tremble, Acts 9:3-6. So Job he was struck in the like sort. But secondly, it works in a man sense of his own vileness, I abhor myself in dust and ashes, Job 41:2, and 42:6. The greatness of God's glorious Majesty doth so affect us, that we are sensible of our own vileness, that we should offer to exalt ourselves against the most High; this will so confound a man with sense of his own vileness, that his heart is much pricked within him.

Secondly, So God's goodness.

Reason 1. Because it shows us the desperateness of our danger; to sin against a great God, is great danger, but yet there may be a remedy, but to sin against a good God, that makes our case desperate, as thus, When a man's heart is convinced that he hath sinned against a good God, he sees he is now separated by his sin, from the goodness of that God in whom all his help lay. Isaiah 59:2, and Jer. 5:24,25. If a man sin against God his preserver, who shall then preserve him? If he sin against the God of grace and peace, where shall he find grace? 2 King. 9:22. Thou hast sinned against the God of grace, and what hast thou now to do with grace?

Reason 2. It convinceth us of the more vileness of our sins, to consider that we have sinned against a good God. These things chiefly make sin vile; The folly, the unkindness, and the dishonesty of sin.

First, Folly will shame a man much, 2 Sam. 24:10. Deut. 32:6. Now when a man sees he hath sinned against a good God, he sees himself a notorious

fool; foolish creature I, thus to sin against a good God!

Secondly, The unkindness, the ingratitude, and the unmannerliness of a sin, it makes a man to blush, and to be inwardly confounded, Ezra 9:6,9, 10. Have not we cause forever to be confounded, and hast not thou cause to be angry with us, till there be no remedy? Ver. 13,14.

Thirdly, The dishonesty of a sin, shames us much, Jer. 2:26. Two things are dishonest, theft, and whoredom; now both these we have committed against a good God, Jer. 3:20-25. These do all pierce the heart.

Use 1. First, it shows how far off they are from salvation, and their desperate condition, that despise to hear the word of God, and seek not to him that they might be saved. Thou dost not love to hear the word, then thou lovest not to have thy heart pierced; Salvation is far from the wicked, because they seek not thy Law, Psal. 119:155. They love to be far from the word of salvation, and then salvation is far from them; The word is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1:16. And he that turns away his ears from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abominable, Prov. 28:9.

Use 2. Suppose we live under the word and hear it; then we must desire that the word may be applied particularly, and personally, against our particular and personal corruptions, Psal. 141:5. Let a righteous man apply the word particularly unto me, and pierce my heart, it will not kill my soul, nor hurt my body, but will heal both soul and body, to immortality and glory; Many men could willingly hear a Minister flourish out a Sermon, but they care not for the word to come near them; but consider, you cannot more manifest to God and your brethren, that your hearts are naught, then when you will not be convinced of your particular sins. The sword of God, take it as it lies in the word, and it is like a sword in the scabbard, and the exposition is but the brandishing of it; but when application is made, that

thou art the man that hast done this, not to endure this, is an argument of a carnal heart, though sometimes even God's own people, do not love to be particularized; when you are in this temper, you are sinking down to hardness of heart, it was Asa his case, 2 Chron. 16:9,10, an evident forerunner of hardness of heart and unbelief: it is a wonder to see the loose corruption of our hearts, yea saith one, Such an one was met with today; we can tell where the word hits another, but take nothing to our own particulars; but if another man was hit in his right vein, and thou escape, what comfort can that be to thy soul? His corruptions by that means issue out, and they are healed, and thou camest as deadly sick as he, and thou not once looked at; and wilt thou gratify thyself in this, that God should think good not to speak one word to thee? We all come to the word, as to hear the Testament of our heavenly Father; now if a man read his Fathers Will, and find so much given to such a one, and so much to another, and to them particularly by name, and he not so much as named; would any man gratify himself in the forgetfulness of his Father, and would not rather be sorry? Now this is one part of God's people their inheritance, that in the Law and Gospel, God should tell us as it were by name, Thou art the man or woman; then say, we have cause to bless God that he should care for such a soul as mine is, and name me in his Testament. If a man be invited to another's Table, but the dish I only want, is carved all away from me; would I not be troubled at it? And so, suppose you sit here in the Church, and hear such and such doctrines, carved out to such and such Christians, would not you say, when will something reach me, and fit my purpose? You should desire, oh that God would convince me of something, wherein I have sinned against his greatness, and his goodness, and be so far from taking it in ill part, as to bless God for it; if it be threatening, say, Good is the word of the

Lord; say it is a good commandment that strikes down my lust, a good promise, that binds up my soul in life and peace.

Use 3. To help us all, if the Minister should forget to be helpful to us, and not light on us, wisely to apply the word to our own hearts, every threatening, commandment, and promise, according to our several conditions, help the Minister to hold the plough, acquaint him with our need, and if not, be sure to mix the word with faith, Heb. 4:2. Consider of all the sins you have committed, you must not bear off the weapon, as the manner of some is, or look at him that strikes as our enemy, but lay we down all quarrelling contestation against the word, and stand not fencing against God, but keep it close to your hearts, till your liveliest corruptions be issued out.

Use 4. If after application you still find your hearts stubborn, then lay them close to the word, and call to mind the sins you have committed against the great God of Heaven and earth, Isaiah 37:28. Sleight it not off with saying, God dwells in heaven, and regards not such small matters: Thy chiefest sins thou sayest are but thoughts; let me tell thee, they are in some sort worse than actions; A man commits whoredom it may be but once, but thou in thy thoughts mayest daily, with all the beauties in the Town. Thus labor to bring your hearts to godly sorrow, that they may be bruised to dust before God.

SERMON XIII. – ACTS 2:37 – V.

NOW WHEN THEY HEARD this, &c.

We come now to speak of the subjects of this humiliation: Who were these? They that thus hearing the word, were thus wrought on, and thus wounded by it; that you may know who they were, look back into the 12th and 13th verses: some of them were amazed at the Apostles prophesying with new Tongues; they were ignorant, for ignorance is the cause of amazement and admiration; they were never before acquainted with any way to eternal life; yea, these were also mockers, and now to convince these men, the Apostle takes all this pains in this Sermon.

The ignorance and scornfulness of carnal hearts doth not, nay, cannot hinder the Lord, from piercing or pricking of them.

What was in these men's hearts before? Ignorance, they were masked at spiritual doctrine, yea mocked and scorned the Apostles; so little did they discern the power of the Spirit, as that they thought it was no more than the spirit of Wine, and yet this doth not hinder the Lord from piercing of them. For opening of this Point, take notice of three things.

First, the danger of such a frame of spirit, for ignorance is such a frame of heart, as is not only dangerous, but in any man's view and reason, desperate. Isaiah 27:11. It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them, will have no mercy on them; What shall I say in this case, when God that formed them will show them no favor? I had almost said, now the Lord be merciful to them; but then I had spoken contrary to the word: though ignorant men think, God that made them, will save them; yet he himself saith, he will not have mercy on them, how then shall any man pray for mercy to them? Should we so pray, we should thwart the words of Scripture; So that, if when these ignorant persons stood amazed at this strange doctrine, should he have looked down upon them, and said, because they are a people of no understanding, therefore I will show them no mercy; Where then had all these poor creatures been? So Hosea 4:1. The Lord hath a controversy with you, because there is no knowledge of God in the Land: and ver. 6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Read also Ephes. 4:18. Alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them; a most fearful description of ignorant minded men; their understandings are darkened, and what follows upon that? They are disfranchised from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. Psal. 95:10-12. Because they have not known my ways, therefore have I sworn in my wrath they should not enter into my rest; a fearful word indeed. God hath sworn it, and there is no revoking the oath of God; he never swears upon condition; he may ordain a Priesthood of Aaron, by a word of promise, but if they reject the Covenant, he can tell how to turn the house of Aaron out of doors: but if he swear he hath ordained Christ a Priest forever, then his Priesthood shall never be shaken; had God only threatened ignorant people from entering into his rest, they might have hoped upon

repentance; had he sworn, within forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed, then a stone had not been left upon a stone, within forty days; but he only threatened it, and threatening's are many times understood with condition, but in this case, God hath sworn, and that in his deep displeasure, (and will not repent, Psal. 110:3,4) and then this case must needs be very dangerous: and though sometimes you have ignorant men, whom you take to be just well-meaning men, with whom you might trust untold gold, and they are forward, according to their knowledge, yet notwithstanding, if they be ignorant; for all this, the wrath of God may lie upon them to the utmost. Compare Rom. 10:1,2, he desires their salvation, for they have a zeal of God, though not according to knowledge; but yet see what he saith of these men, 1 Thess. 2:16. They killed the Lord Jesus, their own Prophets, and persecuted us, therefore the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost. Now though these men had zeal, yet because their zeal was not guided by saving knowledge, the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost; and if God have sworn they shall never enter into his rest, then judge you what a dangerous case these hearers are they, of whom it is here said, They were pricked in their hearts.

Now see something of the danger of scorning, Prov. 3:34. God gives scorning to scorers, but he gives grace to the humble. Now what is it to scorn? Scorning is the sporting of a man's self, with another man's contempt and disgrace; it is not merely speaking despitefully, but it is such an injury, as makes itself sport with the disgrace and misery of another: So the children scorned the Prophet, for in their eyes his baldness was a blemish, 2 Kings 2, latter end, and he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and forty two of them were destroyed presently; see the sin and the punishment together. But now when God saith he scorns the scorers, that he should

comfort himself in putting disgrace and contempt upon the creature, that is a most fearful condition: He that sits in heaven will laugh them to scorn, he will have them in derision, Psal. 2:3,4. He will mock when their calamity comes upon them of a sudden like a whirlwind, Prov. 1:26. He will take pleasure in their confusion, as they have made themselves pastime with his Ordinances and servants, he will put contempt upon such persons, Prov. 9:12 and Prov. 14:6. If a scorner would learn to be a wiser man, he shall not be able; and therefore in such a case, God is wont to forbid his servants to have anything to do with such men: He that rebukes a scorner, gets himself a blot, Prov. 9:7,8. As if God would not pity his own servants, as if they should cast pearls before such scornful spirits, and get blots to themselves for their labor. They despise and reject me, and think you to do any good of them by rebuking them? And if God exclude such men, and would not have so much as a wholesome word tendered to them, then let you them alone, God will take a time to scorn with them. Now if God's people have no warrant to dispense a word of counsel to them, their condition must needs be dangerous; See the reason of their danger:

First, ignorance shows you the blindness of their minds; A man is not more capable understanding heavenly things, when his mind is blind, then a blind man is to judge of colors. And for a scornful hearer, he is hardened in heart unto proud rebellion against God; such as expresseth itself in scorning of every word and Ordinance of God: But yet notwithstanding in the second place, (and you may stand and wonder at it) these ignorant scornful hearers, even these are pricked in their hearts: God sometimes effectually blesses a call to such, and he will have wisdom to cry unto them, saying, Even ye simple ones and scornors, turn you at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, Prov. 1:22,23. Would you ever think it possible, that when

God had sworn that such men should never enter into his rest, that now he should send Solomon to cry unto them to turn unto him; yet see here this word made good, and so Prov. 8:5. Ye simple, be of an understanding heart: The Lord Jesus there uses a creating word, Be of an understanding heart; So Acts 26:18. I have sent thee to be a Minister to the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light. For a man to be in the dark, and to have no eyes, is a double misery; yet so is it with any man in the estate of nature: Yet I send thee to give such men light, and to turn them from the power of Satan to God. And scorers are expressly called, Isaiah 28:14-22. Hear you this ye scornful men; Will God ever call such men, as can tell how to make a scorn and jest of the Devil and hell? He makes use of this, ver. 22. Now therefore be ye no more mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. Thus he gives them counsel. And in express terms read two examples of mockers, partly that in the Text, and Acts 3:19, and the very same men when they heard this, were converted, Acts 4:4. And Paul expresseth thus much of himself, 1 Tim. 1:13. I was a scornful oppressor, one that put scathe and scorn, together upon the people of God, yet I was received to mercy.

How then will this hang together? God swears he will never show mercy to such an ignorant scornful People; and yet that now he should come and beseech them to be reconciled to him?

Answer. For clearing this you are to understand, there is a double kind of ignorance, and a double kind of scorning; Some distinguish only between simple, and affected ignorance; but I conceive it is not all affected ignorance that God protests against, for Prov. 1:22, they loved simplicity, and yet God calls upon them to return unto him, and therefore against such he swears not; but in the case they be both simple, and love their ignorance, and yet have means of grace and knowledge offered unto them, and such as

are sufficient to convince and persuade them, and yet they will not be convinced and persuaded, but remain obstinate after God hath taken long pains with them, and will not hear, as they Acts 28:27. When it comes to such a froward obstinate ignorance, when God hath wrestled with them forty years, Psal. 95:10,11, and they yet stubborn, then let them alone, He that made them, will not save them.

And so there is also a double kind of scorning; The one is a scorning through ignorance; Many a man scorns God and his Word, as Paul scorned the people of God, he scorned he knew not what. Now in such a case, there is a possibility a man should be healed, and such you may admonish, but if after the receiving the knowledge of the truth, a man do willingly scorn the ways of grace, there remains no more sacrifice for that man's sin, Heb. 10:26,27. When a man knows this is the way of grace, and these be the servants of Christ, and yet scorn them, then you may not say, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do: These men in the text, they scorned they knew not whom; but being convinced, they scorn no more; but now, Men and brethren, &c.

Reason 1. Taken from the prayer of Christ, Luke 23:34, though they mock, and scoff, and spit upon him, though they made themselves merry with pouring contempt upon him, the Holy One of God, yet saith he, Father forgive them, they know not what they do; here were many of the common people, (as generally there is at executions) and they put all despite upon him that could be, yet for them he prayed, and he saith, Father, I know thou hearest me always, John 11:42, and this prayer will always take place in the like subjects.

Reason 2. Taken from the end of his death, His blood was shed, to make atonement, for the ignorance and error of the people, Heb. 9:7. There was

sacrifices in the Law, for the errors of ignorance, which is effectual to heal the people of such sins.

Reason 3. Hence it comes to pass, because the word of God is mighty, not only to give light to the simple, but makes the thing we should see, clear and evident, Psal. 119:130, and this springs from the former reasons; There is that in the word, which will soften the most hard and scornful heart, Jer. 23:28,29, and so to subdue scornful high thoughts, great and disdainful high thoughts, 2 Cor. 10:4,5. His word is like to an Iron Mace, to crush them in pieces that stand against it.

Use 1. To reprove the Papist of their merit *ex congruo*; They say when men are converted, they are prepared for it, by some good fore-going works, some merit of congruity, for which God shows them mercy: But what preparation is there in a blind man to see, or in an ignorant man to understand? Here are men as much unprepared for mercy, as ever you knew any, scorned Christ, made themselves merry to pour contempt upon the Apostles gifts, yet came to have pricked hearts: What preparation was there in Paul when he went to Damascus to do mischief? The people of God can tell, when God first looked into their hearts, they were most drowsy at such a Sermon, and their hearts more wandering that day then ordinary, and so unfit for mercy in themselves.

Use 2. To teach all ignorant scornful persons to take heed, how you take pleasure in so doing, for the best that can come of it, is to have your souls pricked to the heart for it; but you that have lived long under means of grace, consider what you do, it is a most fearful thing to live in an estate of ignorance, and can make jests of Religion, you cannot say, but for ought you know, God will show you no mercy, for all this while you are without understanding, and God saith, his people are destroyed for want of

knowledge, and if that be your portion, are you not in a poor case? You are outlawed from the life of God. Tell not God, that you are not book learned, if you live under means of grace; God's word gives knowledge, and you have understood the meaning of a good bargain, and of an alms, and yet if a man tell you what an estate you are born in, and likely to die in, you will not understand it; you know how the Lord sware against the people of Israel, after forty years provocation; It is true, God hath limited himself to forty years, he can stay till 60, or 80 years, yet it is much for God to stay 40 years. Flatter not yourselves in your ignorance, lest the wrath of God come upon you to the uttermost, it is no dallying with ignorance, no nor with scornfulness. Though we can tell how to jibe at the duties of the profession of Religion, yet take heed of it: if a man can make himself pastime with the honor of God, and the duties of his worship, it will be heavy in the end. The honor of a man is more to him then his goods or life, it is more dishonor to God to vilify his name, then (if it were possible) to take away his life; therefore scorn not: if God begin once to scorn you, he can tell how to laugh at your destruction; It is not therefore for you to dally with such things, and if any of you have been bold this way, do so no more.

Use 3. To all simple, ignorant, and scornful mockers, if you have not grown forward therein, if so, then I would get myself a blot; but I hope if any of you have scorned wife, or children, or brethren, I willingly hope, it was but of Ignorance, or else I should think my labor lost, and they that are filthy should be filthy still, and the scornful perish in his scornfulness.

This is therefore to exhort and charge you, that since God may, and doth sometimes, show mercy to ignorant scornful creatures, now to lay aside your scorning; How long will you scorners delight in scorning, and make it your glory that you can put flouts upon Religion? Hath not God stayed for

some of you forty or fifty years, and will you stay till he swear in his wrath, you shall never enter into his rest? Since there may be a possibility of pardon, now yield up your hearts to God. Say to yourselves, because I am one of no understanding, therefore the Lord will have no mercy on me; Now Lord, what a poor condition am I then now in? Have I scorned others, and doth God say, he will scorn scorers? Have I lived here in a congregation where I have been followed with means of grace almost these eighty years, and knows not to this day in what estate my poor soul stands before God? Now take it to heart, and see how you will answer this to God, never rest and sleep in such a condition, lest in the end you be past remedy. You say, suppose we would now turn to God, what would you have us do?

Solomon gives this counsel, Prov. 2:1-7. First hearken to the word of God, ver. 1, and your souls shall live, Isaiah 55:2,3. Our Savior's hearers fastened their eyes upon him, Luke 4:20, but wonder to see how instead of fastening our eyes upon the Preacher, we can look every way, as if we came to a Faire or a Market, and mind anything rather than the word.

Secondly, Apply the word unto your hearts, suffer not your heart to say, such a one was let blood in the right vein today, but lay your own estate to the word.

Thirdly, Cry after wisdom, ver. 3, that is, pray heartily to God, mourn before him, that thou shouldst be such an ignorant scornful wretch all this while; that thou shouldst live so long, and have so little grace, and all for want of asking; The blind man cried after our Savior, Mar. 10:51, and though the people rebuked him, yet he cried till he received sight; what though others rebuke you and say, You have knowledge enough, will you be a fool now? But alas, thou art a poor ignorant creature, cry hard that you may receive sight.

Fourthly, Seek after knowledge as for hidden treasure ver. 4,5, make account you do not seek for trifles when you seek for knowledge, but look at the knowledge of God and his grace as precious things, and reverence the Ordinances. It is irreverence, especially for young men, to fit with their hats on, when the word is read in the Congregation, Levite. 26:2, and Psal. 93, ult. And though the Sanctuary and our Churches do differ, yet when the people are there assembled, then God is greatly to be revered, Psal. 89:7. Come therefore reverently, and seek for knowledge, as for hidden treasure, seek it in the fellowship of God's servants, Prov. 13:20, and see the works of God, Psal. 107, ult. Scoff no more against the Holy one of Israel, Isaiah 37:23. Stand in awe and sin not, Psal. 4:4.

Use 4. Of eternal thankfulness, to them that are now called to God's ways, who have been ignorant and scornful; let such learn to bless the name of his grace, and patience towards all them yet uncalled, and bless his name that hath found out a way to heal, and save, and show mercy to them.

SERMON XIV. - ACTS 2:27 – VI.

NOW WHEN THEY HEARD this, &c.

We now come to the last Doctrine, which ariseth by comparing this verse with verse 23, and repeated again in the verse before the text; showing, that however Peter had told them, that what was done against Christ, was done by the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God; yet that doth neither extenuate their sin nor their sorrow, but rather aggravate both; This was a principal passage in this Sermon, and may not be left out; this reflected upon their hearts, to the aggravation, both of their sin and sorrow; whence observe this note.

That the determinate counsel, providence, and foreknowledge of God in giving us up unto sin, both neither extenuate the heinousness of sin, nor lessen the godly sorrow of an honest heart, for the committing of it.

It is a truth most evidently springing from this verse, compared with the 23rd. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain: Whereby he would have them understand, that the counsel and foreknowledge of God

did not excuse them from sin in this kind; God by his determinate counsel, and just, and wise hand delivered him; but you took him with wicked hands; and now when they heard that God had such an hand in it, it did not extenuate their sin, nor their sorrow, but this wounded them to the very heart, that they so wickedly had crucified him; they take not advantage to excuse themselves by Peters words, as to say, God had purposed Christ should die, and in his providence he let all things concur to the putting him to death, by delivering him into the hands of secular power, God had ordered everything that was done, and we can do neither more nor less then serve his providence, therefore what need we be so troubled about it? No, they do not thus; But they saw they had took him by wicked hands and slain him, and this pierced them to the heart; and this very point is held out unto us, Acts 4. 25, to 28. God's wise purpose inwardly, and strong hand outwardly, had determined this should be done, that the Rulers took counsel to do against Christ, yet compare it with Psal. 2:2-4, from whence it is fetched, and see what the Lord saith, The Lord shall have them in derision, and that is a most fearful judgment. So that God is the more provoked against the sons of men, when they rise up against him, though they do no more than he before had determined to be done; See this from some other Scriptures, John 19:11. As our Savior's words to Pilate, Thou couldest have no power over me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin: though neither Judas could betray him, nor the high Priest deliver him, nor Pilate condemn him, except they had power given them from above; yet this excuseth none of them, but they therefore have the greater sin, in abusing their authority and opportunity; for a man to take an advantage by God's providence, this aggravates his sin. It is a notable Scripture, John. 12:39,40. They could not

believe, because he had blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, &c. Why, but may not this excuse them? No; Now have they no cloak for their sin, John 15:22. A heavy judgment of God now then lies upon them. It is a grievous reproof the Prophet takes up against the Chaldeans, Isaiah 47:6-10: These two shall come upon thee in one day, loss of children and widowhood, &c. and yet compare that with Jer. 25:9. The Chaldeans did no more than the Lord said they should do; You shall have no pity, no mercy upon them; So that what the King of Babel did against the people, it was but as a staff in God's hand, yet thou hast laid an heavy yoke upon them, and hast not spared neither young nor old. This God complains of bitterly, as an horrible cruelty, and will take vengeance upon them in like measure, Psal. 137:2, last. So that this no whit the more extenuates men's sins, though they do no more but execute God's counsels, yet they are still said to do it with wicked hands. And so also doth it neither extenuate the godly sorrow of an honest heart for these sins. These honest hearted hearers have not their sorrow lessened, because they have done no more, but what God's hand did, yet this pierced their hearts, that they by wicked hands had taken him out of God's, just and wise hand, and had crucified him. So Peter works upon the same occasion, Acts 3:17-19. What thing God before had showed, he hath so fulfilled, &c. And what use doth he make of that? Doth he say, it was God's will it should be so? And therefore you need not trouble yourselves about it; no, But repent ye therefore; because ye have so fulfilled, what was fore-propheesied, repent ye, that is no ground for you to please yourselves in, this practice, but repent ye therefore. In such cases as these, you shall hear the servants of God express themselves in much brokenness of heart. Isaiah 63:17,18. They do not please themselves in erring from God's ways, because God hath

hardened their hearts; no, but are therefore the more humble and ashamed of it, that they should provoke God so far: Mistake me not, I speak not now of controversial points; but it is a Doctrine with one consent universally allowed by Divines both Protestant and Papist.

For further clearing the point, take these Reasons.

Reason 1. Taken from the just desert of wicked men, and godly men to be thus dealt withal, when God gives us up so far to fulfill any of his counsels by our sins; observe it duly. There is a five-fold distemper ordinarily in the sons of men, and I remember no more, which occasioneth God to deliver them up to become the Instruments of evil in his hands; and that is unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, hypocrisy, security, and pride.

You have the two first at large expressed in Rom. 1:21-26, when they knew God, speaking of the Gentiles before Christ, they did not glorify him as God, neither were thankful, &c. Therefore God gave them up to vile affections; because they did not walk answerably to that light they had, but turned the glory of God into the similitude of a beast that eateth hay, therefore God gave them up to beastly lusts; such as were against nature, things not meet to be named in such assemblies, yea even to a reprobate mind, to a mind that could not discern of palpable and gross wickedness: Thus because they were unthankful and unfruitful, God in just judgment gave them up to such wickedness. So Psal. 81:11,12. They would have none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts. See 2 Thess. 2:10-12. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God gave them up to strong delusions. When God sets men ways of righteousness, and gives them the light of his Ordinances, and men love darkness, then God gives them up to strong delusions, that they might believe lies.

In the third place, for hypocrisy, Such as turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with workers of iniquity, Psal. 125:5. When a man hath an hypocritical spirit, and looks not straight forward at the glory of God, but hath by-ways of his own, the Lord will take such as it were by the hand, and lead them forth to work iniquity, to wit, they shall have a fair door of providence and opportunity set open unto them, and what courses they have a mind to take, they shall have opportunity to embrace them.

And for security and pride, which are the two last, see it in Peter, and in the rest of the Disciples; Peter expressed his pride, when he said, Though all men deny thee, yet will not I; and so they were all secure and sleepy, when they should have prayed Mat. 26:33,34,40,41, but then were they given up to the most fearful evils. Thus God left Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32:25,31. This then is one reason why the counsel and fore-knowledge of God concerning our sins, doth not extenuate our sins; nor ought to extenuate our sorrow. God never gives us up to such sins; but in such cases as you have heard. And is not there then just cause, that men should be the more humble, that there is no way for God to do me good, but my suffering me to fall into such evils, that I may see the fearful estate I am in.

Reason 2. Taken from the holy purity of God, even when he leaves men to most desperate courses, even then he is most holy and pure; It is plainly described in the vision which the holy Angels declared to the Prophet Isaiah, 6:3. What makes them to cry out, Holy, holy, holy, &c? Why, the Prophet was now to be sent about this very business we have now in hand, he was to go to the people, ver. 9:10,11, to make their hearts fat, and their ears heavy, lest they should be converted: God is proclaimed to be most holy, when men are most wicked, for God doth not by an Almighty power make the hearts of men hard, nor doth he incline them to sin, he tempts no

man to evil, nor puts any habits of wickedness into any man's heart, Psal. 12, last, Psal. 5:4. But this he doth:

First, he leaves men to themselves, he gives them up to the hardness of their hearts, and that is a just hand of God upon them.

Secondly, he leaves them to Satan, 1 Kings 22:21,22, because Ahab would not love Elijah nor Michaiah, therefore God justly gave them up to a lying fancy.

Thirdly, sometimes God so far leaves men to themselves, as only to propound to them good objects, yet such as he knows they will make an ill use of, sometimes his patience and long suffering, Rom. 2:4,5. Eccles. 8:11. Pharaoh when he saw that he had rest, he hardened his heart, Exod. 8:15. Thus God can tell how most holily, though most fearfully, to execute the good pleasure of his will in the sins of men.

Reason 3. Taken from the liberty which is left unto the hearts and wills of men to do what they do with pleasure and delight, committing sin with much greediness, Rom. 1:28,32. Eph. 4:18,19. When men are past feeling, and given up to a reprobate sense, then they commit all licentiousness with greediness, yea (which is more then so) when they are left to sin, they grow so ready in it as that they cannot but sin, John 12:39. Therefore could they not believe because God had hardened their hearts; and whence came this? Why, first they would not believe, they had winked with their eyes, lest they should see, &c. Acts 28:27. So as that though they could do no otherwise, yet they did it most freely; when they were unthankful, unfruitful, hypocritical, proud, and secure, it was just with God to leave them to such a spirit of hardness that they could not believe.

Use 1. To reprove the profane blasphemy of such as do excuse their sins by God's predestination, and providence, as he in Plautus being examined

about his Adultery, Surely (saith he) God compelled me to it, and his will was that I should do it, it would else never have been done. O wretch! Little do such souls know what wickedness hath been in their hearts, that hath given God just occasion to give them up to such vile affections; it was not the will of God's command, for therein he forbids it; indeed thus far it was his will, as not to hinder it, and to leave a man to himself, or to Satan, or to opportunity to do it; It was not the will of God to command or allow, but to permit and to punish by so doing. When David had committed Adultery, God threatened he would give his wives to his son, and how would God give them to him? Why, so far he went in it, as to leave him to Satan, to leave him to fit opportunity, and the wicked counsel of Achitophel, yet this doth not extenuate, but aggravate his sin, for Absalom was then a proud vain-glorious wretch; and when a man is thus wicked, how just is it with God to give him up to such courses? The, Apostle answers to this point, Rom. 9:19. Thou wilt say, Why doth God complain? Who hath resisted his will? He would not vouchsafe an answer to such question. Alas! You are but poor pot-sheards of the earth; What if God will show his wrath, and make his power known? And when men have filled themselves with filthiness, if he give them up to Satan, and suffer them with long patience, and fit them for destruction, despise not thou the patience and wisdom of God; let this therefore repress all such as dare lift up their souls against God in this kind.

Use 2. Of much helpfulness to all the servants of God, that have any desire to humble their souls before him for their sins. Alas! (will a poor soul say) I have a proud and a stubborn heart, full glad would I be, if I could be humbled for my sins, but what means should I use to get my heart kindly humbled for my sins? Why, here is one notable means: Do but consider all the great sins you have committed, and if you find your heart untoward to

break for such wickedness, then let this one meditation take place in your hearts, and you little know what a blessing may come of it; say, Behold all this wickedness that I have done in God's sight, it is such as God in justice hath given me up unto: It will lead you by the hand to consider, Hath God forsaken me, and given me up to such base vices? Is it nothing for a Master to set that servant who had wont to serve at his Table, to feed swine? Is it not apparent that that servant hath provoked his Master very deeply? The consideration of this will lead you by the hand, will cause you to think, How came I to be thus left to Satan, and to work so much wickedness as I have done? In what a desperate, hypocritical, proud, and carnal case was my heart in at such a time? And God finding my heart in at such a time? And God finding my heart in such distempers, no wonder that he should give me up to such sins. The consideration hereof, how would it humble a man's soul in the sight of God? There is no means in the world so effectual to break the heart of a man kindly, as this is; it was the last means God used with Pharaoh, Exod. 9:16,17. I have raised thee up, saith God, to show my power, and doest thou yet exalt thyself against me? Art not thou yet humble, for all this that God hath left thee to such base courses? Then the next thing you hear of him, is the overwhelming of him in the deep Seas, never to rise more.

Use 3. It is an Use of instruction to all the people of God, and to other men, to stand in awe before God, and to fear him, because he is only able not to kill the body, but to cast both body and soul into hell, yea, and I say a greater word then that, fear him that is able to deliver both body and soul into the temptations of the Devil, into such vile and dissolute courses, that it were better for your bodies and souls to be frying in hell, then to fall into

such sinful courses, and yet he himself most pure and innocent in so doing; therefore let this humble us all, before the Lord our God.

Use 4. Of comfort to all the servants of God, when they find their hearts humbled in any measure for sin; You say, alas, what comfort can I take in such a case? I have committed wickedness in the pride and hypocrisy, in the unthankfulness, and unfruitfulness, and security of my heart, and is there any hope of any good to me? Why, though thou didst it foolishly and rashly, yet a wiser than thou did it by counsel; God had a wise and good end in it, and he will have thee to make a good use of it, if thou belongest to him, and therefore though thou must grieve, yet be not overmuch grieved; It was the counsel of wise Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 45:5. Now be not you grieved that you sold me hither; Why, had they not sold him out of envy? Yes, and he had brought them to be humbled for it, and though they did it wickedly, yet God hid a wise and a good hand in it: When once the Disciples of Christ had been humbled, and wept for denying and forsaking of Christ, why, then let not your hearts be troubled, for, now that he is crucified, salvation is come to Israel by that means. When we see a Physician tempering and giving his Patient deadly poison, we conceive the Patient hath a very unsound body, whilst there is not other means to heal them; yet the Physician knows how to keep his hand clean, and to do the Patient good by it at length, though it make him deadly sick for the while, yet it may bring much sound health afterward; So make account, if God give us a cup of humbling, if he suffer us to fall into blindness of mind, or hardness of heart, or the like, he saw we were in deadly distempers; and know that he that hath had an hand in all our wickedness, he knows for what end he did it, to make us more humble, and holy, and gracious forever after, which if we find in ourselves, we may forever be comforted.

PART III. - THE CHRISTIANS CHARGE.

SERMON XV. - PROV. 4:23 – I.

KEEP THY HEART WITH all diligence; (or as it is in the Original, Above all keepings, keep thy heart) for out of it are the issues of life.

Having formerly showed from Zach. 12:10, and from Acts 2:37, how we might bring our hearts into a right frame; Now let me show you how we may keep them so.

These words are a part of the Catechism, which David taught his son Solomon, when he was yet tender and young; ver. 3,4, of this Chapter, when in the third verse he saith, he was his Fathers son, he means, his dearly beloved son, or darling; he had many other sons besides Solomon, but he his Fathers son; as if he should say, his Fathers darling, and Mothers joy; as if he were the top and vigor of the affections of them both; And as they both did deeply affect him, so they both taught him, and led him along in his whole course. Though some Divines cut off the coherence at the tenth verse, yet indeed the whole Chapter is but one instruction. And thus you see the occasion of the words.

The words divide themselves in two parts.

First, An exhortation to the keeping of our hearts, and that exhortation amplified by an Argument from the less, above all keepings, as if the heart must be kept above all keepings besides.

Secondly, A reason to persuade to this work, taken from a man's life, it is as much as the life is worth.

Now first to explain the words, and then see the notes that follow. First, what is meant by the heart. Secondly, What is meant by keeping it. Thirdly, To whom this duty is directed. And then what are the issues of life.

For the first, By the heart is here understood, not as sometimes it is taken, for the mind and judgment, for they are no such faculties, as out of which spring the issues of life; A man lives not by his knowledge: And therefore by the heart in this place, is not meant the mind or understanding, no, nor the affections, for a man may have good affections, as Jehu. and Felix, and Herod, and yet not one of them live in God's sight.

The heart therefore here spoken of, is such a heart, as out of which, being well kept, springs life; evil things come out of the heart ill kept, But a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things, Mat. 12:34,35. It is the will of man, in which his goodness lies, and from the will it is communicated to the rest of the faculties; if the will be good, then is the understanding good, Psal. 111, ult. then is the conscience good, the affections and speeches good; the works of our hands, add the words of our mouths, come all from a well kept heart, that is a good will.

Now what heart is this, whether good or evil? I take it, he speaks of a good heart, because first, he speaks of such an heart, as out of which are the issues of life, and that must needs be a good heart.

Secondly, because I take these words, as spoken to Solomon, and he was one of a good heart, from his tender years, 2 Sam. 12:24,25. So that this

being spoken to Solomon, 'tis sign that even a good heart is to be kept, even the will of a man when it is regenerate and gracious.

2. What is meant by keeping? In the Original it is, Above all keepings, keep thy heart; but the word translated keeping, signifies two things usually in Scripture phrase; sometimes it signifies keeping a thing in custody, as it were in prison, so the word is taken, Gen. 40:3, and that hath reference to an evil heart; keep it as it were in prison, according to that, Heb. 3:12. Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God; as if a prisoner be ready to break loose, you will cause the Keeper to look well to him; so look well to thy heart, hold it in durance, or else it will deceive thee; yet thus far it may have reference to a good heart, A man had need confine the evil of a good heart, and not to suffer it to break out, otherwise it will, and so shall a man keep himself upright, Psal. 18:23.

But sometimes it signifies the watch and charge a man hath over the holy things of the Sanctuary, Ezek. 44:8,16, it is the same word that is here used, and you may take them both; Keep an evil heart as a prisoner, and so you shall mortify it; Keep a good heart holy and pure, and clean, even as a Sanctuary, for the holy Spirit of God to dwell in; You will keep a prisoner, but keep your hearts above a prisoner; You will keep your gardens, but keep your hearts above your gardens; You will keep your Vineyards, Isaiah 27:1,2, but keep the heart above all keepings; keep your heart above life: It is an ill kept life, that is kept with loss of the heart.

Thirdly, To whom is this exhortation directed? It is spoken to Solomon, and he considered not only as a good man, but as a young man, so that this is considerable in this case; Here is counsel given to young men, and those

whom we love best, though never so dear to us, this is the best counsel we can give them, Keep your hearts.

Fourthly, What is that which he saith? For thereout are the issues of life; It is as much as if he should say, For out of an heart well kept, doth spring and issue out such streams of good thoughts, and good affections, and conversations, and conferences, as express the life of grace, and prepare for the life of glory. Thus you see the meaning of the words. You see then Solomon here speaks of a good heart, of a heart given up to God, and set in a good frame: whence observe this Note.

When a man hath given up his heart to God, and it is set in a good frame, it is then the best and most needful work in the world to keep it so.

For it is to a heart set in a good frame, that this charge is here given, Above all keepings, keep this; It is the greatest business in the world, no such keeping to be expressed in the keeping of a man's estate, or credit, or treasure, or prisoner, or life itself. This work of keeping the heart, is a busier work, then any in the world; Hast thou a shop, or a house, or a place, or a sanctuary to keep? Why, yet above all these keepings, keep thy heart, and keep it most carefully when it is in a good frame. Now Solomon, now that God hath given you wisdom, and you are now beloved of God and man, when your way is paved with the blessings of God, and his mercies compass you about, now look that you keep your heart.

For the opening of this point; First, see the Reasons; and then Secondly, wherein this keeping of the heart stands.

Reason 1. Taken from the deceitfulness of our hearts, it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jer. 17:9,10. No prisoner so slippery, no chapman so cunning and able to deceive us, as a man's heart is; And though that be spoken of a carnal heart, yet though the heart be regenerate and

sanctified by the Spirit of grace, yet it hath still in it a tang of its old haunts; we shall taste of the old man, till death separate us, and therefore even David, a man after God's own heart, yet he had an heart, that could tell how to ensnare him with his neighbors Wife, and afterwards to plot to cover his sin, which shows you, that there is nothing so deceitful as the heart is; and therefore even David had cause to speak this, out of the experience he had of his own unclean and deceitful heart; he that had received a better heart, then yet had Solomon, and yet seeing it so bad, he had good reason to give Solomon this charge, Above all keepings, keep thy heart. This deceitfulness of man's heart is mentioned, Jer. 5:22-24. This people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart, they are revolted and gone; Though you might think the sands would soon be fretted through by the boisterous waves, yet God by his word hath made the sand a perpetual Bulwark against the sea, that it cannot prevail against it; but the heart of man is more unruly then the great sea, and more illimitable then the sea, Hosea 11:7. Their heart is bent to backslidings, therefore they ought diligently to look to their souls, Deut. 4:9, which shows you, we are apt to lose all that good God hath wrought for us; we can tell how to slip from under the power of God's grace to follow our own foolishness.

Reason 2. From the deceitfulness of sin, which will soon get within us; see your hearts be not unbelieving, Heb. 3:12. Sin is deceitful, and it easily besets us, Heb. 12:1. It gets within us at every hand, and thereupon we are ready to take some contentment in it.

Reason 3. Taken from the daily war which we are called forth unto, no day, but God calls us to war with some cross, or some temptation or other; now this was a strait charge God gave unto his people, Deut. 32:9. Take heed there be no wicked thing found in thee, when thou goest out to war,

because, if there were but one Achan found among them, it were enough to discomfit an whole host; Take heed therefore there be no evil thing found in us, for out of a well-kept heart, springs our preservation.

Reason 4. Taken from the approach that we are daily making towards God, we are to resort unto God to call upon his name, and to hear his word, and nothing so much hinders us, from finding God in an Ordinance, as an unkept heart, Psal. 66:18, which shows you, that if there be any evil in a man's heart, it disappoints him of all the hopes and fruits of his prayers. So when we come to hear the word, if God see any Idol in your heart, he will answer us according to that Idol; we shall find something in that Ordinance, to feed and nourish that corruption in us.

Reason 5. And that is especially intended in the text; it is taken from the great command, which the heart hath over the whole man; Keep the heart well, and you keep all in a good frame: all the senses behold not an object so much as the heart doth; Set before a man any pleasant prospect, and if his mind be on another thing, all his senses take no notice of it; if the heart be not taken up with a thing, the eye minds it not; present the ear with any sweet melodious sound, and it hears and minds it not, because the heart was otherwise taken up; but upon whatsoever the heart is set, to that the eye looks, and the ear attends, everything acts towards it, all goes freely that way, the mind, the judgment, the invention, the affection, and whatever a man hath, is all works that way, and therefore it is well said, Out of it are the issues of life; if you have the whole man, and not the heart, you have but a dead man, get the heart and you have all; as they say in nature, the heart is *Primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*, It is the first that lives, and the last that dies; according to the temper of the heart, such is the temper of the whole man; if the heart be good, though the affections should be disordered,

and the eyes wanton, if the will be right, all is right; If I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me, Rom. 7:20. If my heart be for God, it is not I that sin: If there be a Covenant made between two States, as suppose between France and England, if the Princes of both States keep Covenant, it is not some lawless subject or Pirate on either side that breaks the League, so long as the Princes do their best endeavors to punish it; so is it in the League made between God and my heart, it is not any disordered affection that breaks the league, but the sin that dwells within us.

Now wherein stands this keeping of the heart, or what is it? There be three things implied in it.

First, that we keep our hearts clean; God is truly good to them that are of a clean heart, Psal. 73:1. Psal. 18:23. I kept myself from mine iniquity; we must keep ourselves from sinful defilements; O Jerusalem wash thy heart from thy filthiness, Jer. 4:14. Keep thy heart from old and new iniquities, Psal. 4:16.

Secondly, we must keep our hearts prepared or fixed, the word signifies both, Psal. 57:7, that is, we must have our hearts fraught with all good things, fixed and set upon God, our hearts must not be like the heart of a wicked man, little worth, Prov. 10:20. But keep hearts of worth within you, I mean prepared for the presence of the Lord, as the Church saith, Cant. 7:13. In our gates is all manner of pleasant fruits; The gates of a Commonwealth, are the gates of Judicature, but the gates of a Christian is his heart, Psal. 24:7. So that when the Church saith, our gates are full, she means, there are no graces of God, but she hath stored her heart therewith, faith, and love, and humility, and whatever grace else.

Thirdly, to keep the heart, implies, to keep the heart in good order, that is, ever to have right ends, to use right means to attain those ends, to have a right measure and degree of everything; we may indeed set our hearts on the blessings of this life, yet so, as therein we do God's will, build up his kingdom, honor the name of his grace, otherwise it will not be lawful for us to set our hearts upon them, no not upon lawful things, Psal. 62:10, meaning not principally, for if you set your hearts on things for themselves, you will lose your hearts, and the comfort of them together.

Use 1. It is first a just reproof to many a soul, that is more watchful in keeping any blessing in the world than their own hearts, and so are transgressors of this gracious exhortation Of the holy Ghost; You have many men that can tell how to keep their purses, their credits, and estates, and it is commendable; there are men that can tell how to keep their friends, others can tell how to keep good tables, good servants and good horses, but did we know how to keep all these and not our hearts, we shall fall short of this charge here given us; you had better lose your purses; your friends, yea which is more, your lives, than your hearts; it is but a poor thing, to be skillful in keeping all these, and to bungle at keeping the heart, which stands most need of best keeping; It was a word that Ahab sometimes spake against himself, 1 King. 20:39. A man brought a man unto me and said, Keep this man, if he be missing, thy life shall go for his life: and as thy servant was busy here and there, the man was gone. Why, saith the King, so shall thy judgment be. Truly God hath put this charge upon us all, God hath given thee thy heart to keep, and hath bid thee, Above all keepings, to look well unto it, upon the keeping whereof depends thy life, and without it nothing but death; and if we shall now come and say to God, whilst we had this and that business to do, (as they said Luke 14.) our hearts are lost and

gone; then call in any rather than those, who for the comforts of this life, have lost their hearts. I do not know what men are more careless of, then of keeping their hearts; most will teach their children to keep anything rather than their hearts; you will bid them keep their books, keep their learning, keep their hats, gloves, and points, and I blame it not in you, but I pray you consider, Do not you think, that the very pins and points of your children will not one day rise up in judgment against you, when you so carefully teach them how to keep these, and not at all how to keep their hearts, for want of which, they are exposed to the ruin and destruction of their souls? And in this particular, I cannot excuse God's own servants; whence come (think you) our manifold complaints in this kind? I now speak to them, that know what it is to have the heart in a good frame: Though the heart be now in a good frame, ere long they will complain, and confess their heart is lost in a day or two's business, so as, when that they should come to the Ordinances again, in the midst of the week, or that day seven night, their hearts are gone, and they know not in the world where to have them; whence is that we complain, No body hath such dead and cold, heavy, and unprofitable an heart as I have? Why, doth it not come from hence; we have been negligent to keep our hearts? Have you kept your friends, and purses, and estates, and everything from losing, and only your hearts lost? What a shame is it, we can say we have lost nothing but our hearts this week? That which especially should have been kept, is the only thing we have lost, all is well, save only the heart, and that is lost, and what a shame is this? And this only through want of diligence; what a poor case was David in, Ps. 51:10. Renew a right spirit within me; Time was when God had said of him, that he was a man after his own heart, 1 Sam. 13:14. He had an heart that was careful and watchful, but now his heart is lost; David could tell how his

heart had given him the slip, his heart was soon gone after his lust, before he was aware, and so far, that when he should seek it up again, it is lost, and had not Nathan helped him, it maybe he had never found it; not that his grace was, or could be wholly lost forever; in his worst, there was something of the holy Spirit of grace in him; but it was so far lost, as he entreats the Lord not to piece it, but to create a new and right spirit within him; he had been much defiled, and now he desires a new spirit; though he had done very wickedly, yet he was senseless and hard hearted, and therefore is it not a shame to God's people, that we can tell how so easily to lose our hearts, that unless God extraordinarily help us to gather them up again, we should die dead hearted? And therefore let it cast a just reproof upon us, in that we have kept everything better than our hearts; we have lived it may be 20,30, or 40 years, and have not lost one friend, nor lost anything that could be saved by keeping, only our hearts we have lost, and many times we know not how.

Use 2. Let it therefore teach us all, to set home this charge upon our hearts, and upon all with whom we have occasion to deal. There are many good lessons in this Chapter, but above all learn this, it would not be lost labor to teach your children to learn such a Chapter, but learn first to keep your own hearts; you have been taught, that no member you have is so deceitful as the heart, it will soonest give you the slip, it is bent to backsliding, you had need keep your hearts clean, that God might preserve you in all your temptations, you will then profit by any Ordinance you partake in, and therefore let it be carefully kept. And for a Motive, if you shall thus do, it will honor you before God and man, and by keeping your hearts, you will find favor in the eyes of such friends whom you feared, by so doing, you should have lost; First, God will put honor upon you, 1 Sam.

13:14, and man will put honor upon thee, Prov. 22:11, the King shall be thy friend; a man shall never want great friends that keeps his heart pure and undefiled, an unbelieving heart is apt to think the more pure he is, the more danger he is in; but though great men should be displeased, yet it would be no small help to my spiritual estate, their checks and frowns would do us much good. But how shall this be done? First, trust not in your own keeping of your hearts, Prov. 28:26. In the fear of God therefore resign up your hearts into God's hands, be sensible of your own insufficiency to keep them, 2 Cor. 3:5, and 2 Tim. 1:2, so Jude 24. Commend your hearts to God in prayer, and trust him with all your affairs, Phil. 4:7. Allow not yourselves in the out coming of any unsubjected thoughts, check yourselves for unnurtured affections; there is not a vain thought passeth without a check, but it makes a rifle in our hearts, Job 31:1. The Courts of the Lord are exceeding broad, there is liberty enough in God's ways to do well, but not to do evil.

Again, be careful to treasure up those graces to which God hath made promise of keeping the heart.

The first is faith, that purifieth the heart, Acts 15:9. Faith ever hath the word for its warrant, Psal. 19:9, and also will derive all its daily strength from Christ, Isaiah 40:2, ult.

The second is the fear of the Lord, Pro. 16:6. When a man's heart is kept in the holy fear of God, it preserves him from evil.

Lastly, if this be done in love, it will keep all the affections and graces of the Spirit in good order, and you should labor to keep them alive, so shall you keep your hearts as they should be.

SERMON XVI - PROV. 4:23 – II.

KEEP THY HEART WITH all diligence; (or as it is in the Original, Above all keepings, keep thy heart) for out of it are the issues of life.

We now come to speak of the reason of this charge, For out of it are the issues of life; whence observe:

That the heart kept in a good frame, keeps life in all our performances.

When the heart is kept above all keepings, then out of it are the issues of life, otherwise, out of a heart ill kept, are the issues of death; but being well kept, whatever proceeds from us, whether it be thoughts of the mind, or affections of the heart, or words of our lips, or ways of our whole man, they are all lively and spiritual. Out of it are the issues: a borrowed speech of the issues that flow from fountains; from fountains well kept, flow streams of wholesome, clear, and sweet water; so the heart, it being the fountain of our thoughts, and words, and ways, out of it well kept, stows forth such things as have life in them; it is meant of spiritual life, Prov. 12:28. In the way of righteousness is life, and in the path way thereof there is no death, that is, no deading of present grace, nor destruction hereafter, Pro. 14:12 There is a

way of sin that seems good to a man, but the issues thereof are death; but on the contrary, when a man keeps his heart in a gracious frame, whatever comes from him is lively, if a word, or an affection, there is life in it; the thoughts of the righteous are right, Prov. 12:5. All is right when the heart is right, for the heart denominates the whole man, Prov. 11:23. The desire of the righteous is only good: this affection carries an end all the rest, for as a man desires to be, so he is, there is nothing but good in a righteous man's desire, it is good to all, only good; and as is the tree, such is the fruit, as is the heart, such are the issues thereof, Mat. 12:34. See what our Savior saith, he that ponders our hearts, and weighs, as in a balance, how can you, (meaning, having evil hearts) take the best words that a carnal heart can utter, and they are vanity; they always want righteous and right rules, and right circumstances, for time and place, whatever they want else, but sure they want life, the heart is dead: so that our Savior makes it a point of impossibility, that a man should come out with a good word, that hath an ill heart; there is no life in his words, if no life in his heart; and so for actions, Mat. 12:35. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things; the word in the Original is casts forth, or bubbles up, good things come from the good heart that lies within, and all the good thoughts, and affections, and duties that come from him are good, because the heart is good, and that makes all good; if he go about any duty, there is life in it more or less, there is a treasure of goodness there, and from thence steams out many good things; as if you walk in a garden well stored with sweet and fragrant flowers, all the savor that comes from them is sweet and savory, it is stored with sweet and odoriferous flowers, and therefore gives a fragrant sent, but if the garden be not well kept, but here and there lies an unsavory dunghill, out of that garden so ill kept, issues out loathsome and unsavory

stenches; an evil man hath an evil treasure in his heart, a treasure of pride, profaneness, covetousness, and evil treasures of wrath, and they heaped up against the day of wrath, and such a treasure in the heart, causeth it to steam forth loathsome and unsavory actions, affections, and speeches; but blessed are such as keep a good treasure within them, Their hearts shall live forever, Psal. 22:27. He being desirous to live such a life, as in which he might live forever; he earnestly entreats God, that he would set his heart right, and then his ways would be ways of eternity; Psal. 139:23,24, that is, purge my heart from dross, as a man would prove and try gold in the fire, refine it and make it pure mettle, now do thus with my heart Lord, as if he should say, A man shall never walk in a constant way of eternity, unless in a good measure his heart be cleansed from a way of sin. It is a strange speech, that in Psal. 66:18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer, &c. From whence he shows you, that cleanness of heart kept life in his prayer; If we keep our hearts clean, they will keep our performances lively, if in his heart he had had any affection or inclination to any wickedness, then God would not have heard his prayer, but he regarding no iniquity in his heart, that put life in his prayer, so as he never prays in vain; and as much is held forth in Psal. 19:13-15. Let but the heart be kept clean, that in his heart he doth not close with any wickedness, and desires to be kept clean even from secret faults; then shall the words of his mouth, and the thoughts of his heart be acceptable in the sight of God; there will ever be life in such a man's works and words; when is a man fit to have his desires granted him, but when his heart is clean? And when he hath expressed to God his desire that he might be cleansed, and that not only from great and scandalous crimes, but from secret faults, then God is wont to show himself strong with a clean heart, 2 Chron. 16:9.

The Redeemed of the Lord find favor, for as they are redeemed from the bondage of sin, so they are now acceptable in the sight of God, as children are acceptable to their Parents, when they speak with judgment and understanding; when we allow not ourselves in pride, and are not given up to worldliness, when we desire to be stored with the treasures of grace, and they are treasured up in us as if it were knots of herbs in a garden, being thus furnished with every grace, all that issues from it are issues of life. And besides, the heart being thus kept clean, it keeps sweet and lively in us, those four radical graces we spake of before, and from them spring the issues of life.

First for faith; The just man lives by his faith; Hab. 2:4. Gal. 2:20, so that if faith be the root of our thoughts, and words; that is to say, if we look at the word, for the rule of our words and actions, and depend on Christ for strength of our performances, and aim at the glory of God, if by faith we have principally respect unto these; this puts life into all our performances: it is the nature of faith to believe, that God is, and diligently to seek him, Heb. 11:6.

This far exceeds the most lively and heroical performances of the best of the Heathens that ever was; whatever they did, it was from the strength of their own parts; and not from Christ, and so not from the rules of the word; but the Laws of their own Nations, and the common applause of men. Brutus slew his two sons out of love to his Country, because they conspired Treason against the State; and whence was it? Why, *Vicit amor Patria laudumi{que} immensa cupido*, That he might ride on the wings of Fame; But these, are not living actions, have no life in them, because they want faith in the bottom.

And so, secondly, for the fear of the Lord; Pro. 14:27, it is called the Fountain of life; if a man walk in God's fear, he is kept in an holy frame, Jer. 32:40. He that fears God walks humbly, and humility hath the promise of living grace to be conveyed into all our actions; God will revive the spirit of the humble, Isaiah 57:15. And will look to him, Isaiah 66:2. This puts life and sweet savor in our prayers and conferences, and in everything we do.

And so for patience, that possesseth our souls in life, Luke 21:19, and so patience makes us perfect, James 1:4, there will be no complaining of the want of anything, but patience will help all.

And so for the love of God: Though I did much, and not in love, it would be profitable for nothing, 1 Cor. 13:1-3. Love to God and man keeps our hearts and carriage towards them lively.

Reason 1. Taken from the mixture of graces and corruption in every man's heart, and the strong power corruption hath to deaden grace; it will deaden our liveliest performances, in case the heart be not well kept, and so kept under, that grace maybe kept lively. This is to keep the heart well: To keep under those corruptions that abound in our hearts, to keep them subdued, and as much as in us lies mortified; and so will the strength of them be broken: And withal to keep in exercise the graces of the spirit; if we do not keep the heart well, then the corruptions of our hearts, which are elder then the graces of God in us, and therefore more subtle and strong then grace is, in regard of the body of them; it will come to pass, that the weight of corruption will press down the life of grace in us, I do not say kill it, but dull and dead it; for though grace be eternal, yet it may be cast into such loathing's, and swooundings, as you may truly say, your heart is dead within you, Rom. 8:13. If you walk after the flesh, you shall die; You to whom there is no condemnation, ver. 1, yet if you walk after the flesh, you shall

die; that is, Your best graces and works will be but dead; but if by the spirit, you mortify your corruptions, you shall live in grace and in every duty, you perform to God and man. So that from an heart well kept, spring the issues of life, because it keeps under corruption, for corruption unsubdued will choke grace much; worldly cares, sensual lusts, proud affections, these either not being espied, or winked at, will dull the sweetest graces in any spirit; but if a man by the spirit mortify these, then all our performances would be fruitful, our buying's and selling's lovely, it would not relish of oppression and deceit: Keep we the beds of graces well and clean, and our whole life and conversation will be sweet and savory. But if we suffer a spirit of pride, or worldliness, or emulation in us, or if we bring them not lower, and take care to weed and root them out, our walks will be unsavory, and our best duties yield us little, or no comfort.

Reason 2. Taken from the proportion which is between a good heart, and spiritual life, as is between the bodily heart, and natural life; If the bodily heart be kept free from such kind of malignant vapors as cause loathing and swoounding, and be well stored with vital spirits; then there is life enough in the body: so is it with a good heart in regard of spiritual life. The good will of a man, if that be kept from malignant vapors of noisome corruptions, and the graces of God's Spirit thrive in us, all will be kept in a lively frame; an honest heart will not care by what means it weeds out its corruption, that they do not nestle in the heart, and then the whole man be savory. It is a notable speech, that in Prov. 2:3.7. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he, as the man's heart is, so is the man; if the desire of the soul be towards God, why is he thinks in his heart, so is he; there is life in the whole man, if there be life in the heart. Rehoboam did evil in the sight of the Lord, because he prepared not his heart to seek God, 2 Chron. 12:14, the endeavor of his

heart was not that way: 2 Chron. 25:2,16. Amaziah did that which was good in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart, and therefore the Lord determined to destroy him, ver. 16. Many good things he did, public Idolatry he allowed not; yet when he came to trial, wanting a perfect heart, the Lord therefore threatened to destroy him: Let a man do never so many good actions, and take the *Summa totalis* of it all, and wanting a perfect heart, it will all be evil in the sight of the Lord; and while a man so continues, he may know that the Lord hath determined to destroy him.

And let another man do many things very weakly, and yet hath some care of his heart, God knows how to pardon it; Though Asa had many failings, 2 Chron. 15:17, yet his spirit was upright with God all his days, and that covered a multitude of failings that else were in him.

From the good pleasure that God takes in the heart above all the rest of the faculties of soul and body; 1 Chron. 29:17. I know thou hast pleasure in uprightness; famous is that, 2 Cor. 8:12. If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted; and he speaks upon occasion of giving alms, if a man have a willing mind to give, though he have but little to give, yet it is accepted, and if they had it, they would perform it. That there is a willing mind, that is God's work, but that there wants a larger hand, that is God's providence; if it be but two Mites which make a farthing, yet being with a willing mind, it is accepted. Suppose a man have a willing mind, to pray in the power of God's Spirit, to confer fruitfully, &c. that he might build up his soul in his holy faith, now all that comes from him is a lively fruit of grace, be it otherwise never so weak, Psal. 103:14. God knows whereof we are made, he remembers we are but dust, he knows we have many impediments to wrestle with; Now, if he see we do what we can to make riddance of our work, and mean while look well to what we have, God accepts such a

willing mind; so that the keeping of the heart well, breeds God's acceptance, and his favor is better than life, Psal. 63:3, Psal. 7:4, and 80:4. As the heat of the Sun is the life of the world, so the gracious shining of God's favor upon our hearts puts life into all that we do.

Use 1. To teach us what to judge of the fruit of an ill kept heart, the issues of it, what they are, you hear: if the heart be well kept, it will keep life in all our performances; but what if the heart be ill kept? Then the issues of it are the issues of death, dead thoughts, dead affections, dead actions, all dead that such a man doth; the heart of such a man is like the Field of the sluggard, Prov. 24:30,31, all overgrown with briars and thorns; so take a survey of a man's speeches and actions whose heart is natural, and his heart he keeps not, what may you say of him? His best graces are but dead, a dead heart brings forth slothful desires and works, good thoughts he may have to turn to God, good speeches on his sick bed; if God would but restore him, what a man would he be? Well, God restores him, but he is as bad as ever, it was a dead heart from whence it sprung; if the heart be dead, how can the hand be but withered? Well therefore doth the Apostle call such, dead works, Heb. 9:14, the conscience must be purged from dead works, if we intend to serve the living God, this is a reasonable service of God; all such works of nature are dead works; the most heroical works of the best Heathen, Aristides, Fabricius, and Socrates, all were but dead works, they wanted a spirit of living grace, without the fear of God; wanted love of God, and patience under his hand; whatever good things they did, yet they were not done with a perfect heart, and God will destroy them all; all such men's best duties, they are but so many dead works, because the heart is dead, all for want of first having a willing mind: but let us first give God our hearts, Prov. 23:26, and then what ever we do will be pleasing in

his sight, this then would be a living Sabbath to us, our whole work would have life in it. But how is it, that men are so dead and sleepy in these assemblies? Is it not because their hearts are first dead? And then how can their bodies but grow drowsy, and then all is of a dead savor, 2 Cor. 2:14,15. Nay, let me say this more, even to God's own servants, if you be loose-hearted, if you keep not your hearts above all keepings, there will issue out one of these two evils, either you will bring forth many fruits to the flesh, or else, the fruits you bring forth to the Spirit, will be dead and lifeless, and that is the misery of most of God's people, at one time or other; if you keep not grace clean from the weeds of your own corruptions, you will find many unsavory fruits that choke you; so David's adultery and murder, and carelessness of soul therein, were not all these fruits of the flesh? What think you of Abraham his dissembling, of Lots Incest, of Noah his drunkenness, Aaron's making the golden Calf? Are not all these workers of the flesh, and do they not deaden much? If Peter deny his Master and forswear himself, is not this a fearful dead work? And suppose we keep them better then so, that it breaks not forth into such evils, but we pray, and hear, and are diligent in our callings, partake with God in his Ordinances, and yet the spirit unprofitable all this while; Now then ask your souls, how have you kept your hearts? I tell you, you may pray at home, and come to Church, and hear the word, though delivered with never so much life and power, yet its but a dead savor to us, though it never so much concerns us, yet it works not upon us, and what is the matter? Why, this it is, we have not kept our hearts above all keepings, and thence it was that all our performances had no life in them.

Use 2. To exhort us all in the fear of God, above all keepings, to keep our hearts; yea, now I say more then I said before, above all duties keep your

hearts; you keep your duties constantly, your set time of prayer, and it is well, but unless you keep your heart better, all you do will be but dead works, you must keep your hearts above all: were you invested with as much wealth as the world could yield, yet keep your hearts above it; better lose a kingdom than your hearts; look to the keeping of the heart, above the keeping of Crowns and Scepters, otherwise thy prayers will be abominable; we oftentimes come off with dead works, through want of keeping these poor precious hearts of ours.

Use 3. Labor you to take diligent heed to all the corruptions that are in your hearts, labor to know what strains of pride, and hypocrisy, and covetousness is in the heart, come and complain of it to God, and labor to mortify it, and entreat him to subdue it in us, and suffer no thought to lift up itself against Christ; and whatever grace you want, do as good housewives do that want herbs for their gardens, where ever they hear of any to be had, they will seek and gather them; so observe such Christians whose graces excel you in any kind, and be often gleaning from them, and so in time you will get more patience, and meekness, and zeal, by gleaning from them upon all occasions, in your conferences with them. I therefore call upon you to keep your hearts, which is done by these two things; keep your hearts clean from corruptions, and use all good means to mortify them, and to that end apply the Commandments, promises, and threatening's, and examples, what graces you want, get yourselves furnished therewith, meditate duly upon the promises God hath made to that end, so shall you keep your hearts alive and all your performances.

Use 4. It is of great consolation to all such Christians, whose performances are very small, and abilities run shallow, only they are able to say, they walk before God in truth, and with a perfect heart; 2 King. 20:3.

His heart was with God, and it was the desire of his soul, that he could have believed more, and have been more humble, but here was his comfort, that he had walked before God in truth, and that God takes much pleasure in, he will accept such a man's prayers, though they be but weak, and our hearings, though they be but dull and slow; if the desire of our hearts be to seek God in every duty, then out of this frame of heart life will spring forth, whatever you conceive of it, yet there will be life in the business in the end.

Having already from the twelfth of Zach., and the second of the Acts, spoken of bringing the heart into a good frame; and from Prov. 4, of keeping it so; I know not now, what so fitly to speak of, as the addressing of a Christian soul, to live the life of faith, all his days before God in this world.

SERMON XVII. - GAL. 2:19,20 – I.

FOR I THROUGH THE Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.

The words depend upon the former, and are brought in as a reason to bring Peter to a sight of his error in dissembling with the Jews.

Yet notwithstanding, because they are entire in themselves, observe, That in the words the Apostle describes his freedom from the Law, of himself, and of all such others as himself was.

Observe therefore his estate in reference to the Law; First, Dead to the Law; Secondly, observe in this 19th verse, the occasion of that his freedom, and the means of it, I through the Law, am dead to the Law; here is expressed the end of such his death to the Law, which is, that he might live unto God; which death of his to the Law, and his living unto God, are both of them amplified by their proper and next causes. First, his death to the Law is argued by the cause of it, his fellowship with Christ in his crucifying; his life unto God, the causes of it are two:

First, principal, and that is the life of Christ in him; I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

Secondly, instrumental, and that is the life of faith in his soul; where the faith by which he lives, is amplified by the effect of it, life; and the object of it, faith in the Son of God; and the Son of God considered, as he is applied when he works new and spiritual life in us; That loved me, and gave himself for me.

Now though Peters failing, of which you read in the twelfth and fourteenth verses, was in breach of a point of the ceremonial Law, refusing fellowship with the Gentiles, because of some Jews coming to Antioch, yet because it was such as did trench upon the moral Law of God, therefore Paul in these former verses, carefully reasons against the practice, as an overthrowing of the Gospel of Christ, and labors therefore to overthrow what Peter had done, by sundry reasons. In which he labors to prove upon that occasion, that a man is justified, not by the works either of the Ceremonial or Moral Law, but to both these a man is dead, after he is crucified with Christ.

From the 19th verse, observe these notes.

First, That a justified person is dead to the Law.

Secondly, That a justified person is dead to the Law, by the Law.

Thirdly, A justified person is therefore dead to the Law, by the Law, that he might live unto God.

For the first: A justified person is dead to the Law.

First, what is meant by the law; and secondly, what it is to be dead to the Law. By the Law understand in this place, the Covenant of the Law, or the Covenant of works, as in chap. 4:24. These are the two Covenants, the one is Mount Sinai, the Covenant of the Law; the other is Jerusalem which is

from above, which is the Mother of us all; Now this Covenant of the Law, is that which the Apostle here saith we are dead unto; In that Covenant you may consider, what it did require on our parts, and what it did give on God's part; On our parts it required perfect obedience of the whole man, to the whole Law all our days, according to that Gal. 3:10. Now that which God did give on his part was, that in case a man did thus keep the Law, he would give him eternal life; He that doth these things, shall live in them, Levite. 18:5, and it is repeated, Gal. 3:12. And so also, God did inflict a curse, and eternal death upon every transgressor of this Law, Gal. 3:10. Now this Law gives us no grace nor strength, for the performance of this Covenant, but presupposeth it once given in our first Parents, John. 1:17, and therefore is impossible for the Law to give life, because it gave no grace to heal our sin; and so the Law gave us no surety to keep the Law for us, but that is a better Covenant that hath Christ Jesus for a surety of it, Heb. 7:22. But now to this Covenant of the Law we are dead. This Law as it stood in the Law of the ten Commandments, so it stood in the Law of certain Ordinances and statutes, the whole Ceremonial Law, which if a man kept he should live in them, Levite. 18:5. For of that Law he speaks as well as of any other, so that there was an hand-writing of Ordinances given to the Jewish people to be kept, and so it was to all the carnal Israelites, who were not born anew to a better Covenant. But to this Covenant we are now dead, which implies that we are now free from the Ceremonial Law, wholly free from that after once justified by Christ, then (Ephes. 2:14,15) they all ceased, these Ceremonies caused the Gentiles to fly off from the Israelites; they looked at the manifold ceremonies of the Law as ridiculous, but Christ by his death abolished these, and so we are wholly dead to the Law of Ceremonies, Colos. 2:14,20.

But now for the Moral Law, the Law of the ten Commandments, we are dead also to the covenant of that law, though not to the command of it; as that we must have one God, &c. yet we are free from the Covenant of it, that is, free from either expecting life by our obedience to it, or from fear of death by the breach of it; we are free from the curse of the Law, and from the provoking power of it, as also from the rigor and exaction of the Law.

First, from the curse of the Law, Gal. 3:10. Notable is that speech of David, Psal. 49:5. Why should I fear in the day of evil, when the iniquity of my heels follow me? Why should he not fear, when his sins follow him, and are ready to triumph over him? True, he had cause to fear, if he should stand to the Covenant of the Law, but ver. 15. God hath redeemed me from the power of the grave; If faith carry us to lay hold on Christ our Redeemer, we are free from the curse of the Law, and from fear of death by the breach of the Law. And as we are free from the curse of the Law, so we look not for life and salvation from the keeping of the Law; It is true, many temporal blessings we may get by it, yet it is not so much from the Law, as from God's acceptance of our Evangelical obedience, but otherwise we challenge not life, by any of our best performances: Nehem. 13:22, when he had done much good, yet even then Spare me, according to the multitude of thy mercies; when a man hath done all that he can, yet he doth not challenge righteousness by the Law, but desires mercy in Jesus Christ to accept their weak endeavors.

This is that you read Gal. 3:18. The inheritance is not by the Law, but by promise, and therefore we challenge nothing by our most perfect obedience to the Law.

Again, secondly, we are free from the provoking power of the Law, that is that whereby it stirs up in us an earnestness to the commission of sin; for

this is the nature of man, that if you forbid him anything, or limit him anything, that his conscience is bound to this or that duty, he can by no means endure it; *Nitimur in vetitum, cupimus{que} negata*; Had not God forbidden our first Parents to eat of the fruit of the tree, they would not have desired it; but stolen waters are sweet: For you read of the motions of sin by the Law, Rom. 7:5. In our carnal estate, many sinful motions we had, to stir us up to do wickedly, because the Law of God restrained us; meaning the Law did stir us up to more earnestness after it, by how much the more it restrained our liberty from it; but this now we are freed from. The Law to a godly man doth not provoke him to be more wicked, but if he see any Commandment of God against him, it is a sufficient discouragement to him to forbear that sin, Gen. 39:9. A godly man disallows himself in anything that is evil.

And so, thirdly, we are free from the rigor of the Law, so as though we do not fulfill the Law to the exact perfection thereof, yet we look for life by another Title, Gal. 3:18.

Now by this Covenant of grace it comes to pass, that God spares his children, as a man spares his son that serves him, Mal. 3:17. Thus you see what it is to be freed from the Law. But there is yet something more in the freedom, for it seems to be such a freedom, as is purchased by death, Gal. 3:13,14, and therefore there is some weight in the word, Dead to the Law; Dead to the Law, we are partly by the death of Christ, and partly by the death of our lusts, in ourselves, Rom. 7:4. We are dead to the Law by the body of Christ; Christ having died, he hath satisfied the Law; and look as the Law hath no Dominion over a man, when once he is dead, so our head being dead, the Law is satisfied, and our bond is discharged.

And we are dead to the Law also in the death of our own lusts, Rom. 7:6. By our sinful lusts we were kept under the dominion and bondage of the Law, now they being dead in us, we are freed from the Law.

Now because the second point is suitable to this, let me handle them both together.

We are dead to the Law, by the Law.

Now we are said to be dead to the Law by the Law: First, because the sentence and curse of the Law crucified Christ our head, and so consequently in him crucified us, Gal. 3:13. Deut. 21:23. Now then the Law gives sentence against Christ, as cursed, not for any desert of his own, but because he was willing to take upon him our sin, and therefore in crucifying our Head, it hath killed us.

But yet that is not all; Therefore, secondly, the Law doth kill sin in us, and thereby kills us, it kills all our former jollities and comforts in this world, that we have no life to the honors and pleasures thereof: Rom. 7:9. I was alive without the Law; till this Law came, I thought myself a righteous and just man; and when the Law came he was stubborn and murmured, that God had made such Law; then sin revived, it made him lively to wickedness; but I died, I was as a dead man before God: Not only all his lusts were mortified, and crucified, but his affections to the world, and all the comforts of it, they all die and decay in him; now he is crucified to the world, and the world to him, Gal. 6:14. The power of the death of Christ doth wonderfully subdue the heart of a man to a weaned affection from this world, it blasts a man's contentment, even the very ministry of the Law, Isaiah 40:6-8. When a man is once blasted by the ministry of the Law, a spirit of bondage breathing in it, it doth so darken and dead all his comforts, as that a man is dead to sin, and dead to the world.

Again, there is a further power in the Law, though of itself it work nothing, yet it is a Schoolmaster to drive us to Christ, Gal. 3:24. Not only the Jewish Ceremonies, but the Moral Law, when it discovers to us our sins, occasionally, and God blessing it to that end, the spirit of Adoption striking in with it, makes us cry out, What shall we do to be saved? Acts 2:37, and so the Jailor, now the Law terrifies him with sense of his own sins, and blasts all the comforts of this life, and by this occasion we are driven to Christ, the spirit of Adoption striking in, we are driven to seek to Christian communion; and being thus cast out, Christ finds us in one Ordinance or other, and gives us to see our part with him, in his death, and so we are freed from the fear of death, unto which before we lay in bondage.

And again, now also we have no life to the Law; Take you a man that is not in some measure dead to the Law, by the Law, and in some measure driven to Christ, and he will be very earnest after the Law; and therefore Paul opposeth this death to the Law, to the desire of false Teachers to be under the Law, Gal. 4:21. They are eager to be justified by the Law, Rom. 10:2. They will not submit to look for righteousness only by Christ, and Acts 24:20, they were all zealous of the Law; for want of fellowship with Christ in his death, they became zealous of the Law: but take a man whose heart is brought low by Christ, tell not him of rites and shadows, they are all empty and beggarly rudiments, he is dead to the expectation of any comfort by these means; Psal. 51:17. A broken and a contrite heart is better than sacrifice; an humbled heart, by the sense of the Law finds no favor in these things: though for their time they were of God's own appointment, yet now there is no life in them; but sprinkle me with hyssop, (which typified the blood of Christ) and thence it is, that as he is dead to the Ceremonial Law of Moses, so he is dead to the Moral Law also; he hath no heart to look for any

recompense by his obedience; when he hath performed any duty never so well, tell him of meriting by it, and his heart is wholly dead to it, Luke 17:10. Even then spare me O Lord according to the multitude of thy mercies; he knows his case miserable, if God should enter into judgment with him. Nor doth he fear death, by how much the more he hath fellowship in the death of Christ; tell him of death and hell, and he will say, Wherefore should I fear in the day of evil? Like a man that hath already been in hell, and born the wrath of God in his soul, he now fears not what flesh can do unto him, and so he is dead to all his gifts and parts as Paul was.

Now the reason why every justified person is dead to the Law, is, first, because it was the good pleasure of God to glorify Christ, Gal. 3:16, the inheritance is by promise, and the promise is by Christ, ver. 14.

Secondly, it is taken from the impossibility of the Law to give life, Gal. 3:21. Had there been a Law that could have given life, then righteousness had been by the Law, but it was impossible for the Law to give life, by reason of the weakness of it, Rom 8:3. Had we stood in our integrity, it could have given us life, but being fallen, now it is impossible.

Use 1. It may be first a refutation of a principal Popish Doctrine, calling men to look for life of grace and glory, from the works of the Law. For you see the Apostle saith, that a justified person is dead to the Law, that is, dead to the Covenant, not to the Command of the Law; this sense is the most literal, that we by the Law are dead to the Covenant of the Law, so as we look for no salvation from the Law in regard of our best performances; all we look for at the best, is but pardon of sin, and sparing, but we look for it by promise, and by promise made to us in Christ, so that such a conceit is opposite to this Doctrine: When we have done the best we can, we may not promise to ourselves life by our obedience to it. And the very truth is, if

they look for righteousness by their keeping of the Law, they must expect death by their disobedience to the Law, and then what would become of them and us all? In this respect no man living can stand in the sight of God, Psal. 143:2. Meaning of the works of the Law, no man living could be justified. The Papists say, some men there be, that may plead so; but I would fain see the man that dare stand out, and tell God that he looks for righteousness by his perfect obedience to the Law of God, when as Abraham, and David, and Paul durst not expect it; and indeed it is desperate presumption against the grace of Christ.

Use 2. It may serve to avoid a cavil which some do gather out of such like places of Scripture, who are enemies to the Law: They say, that after once a man is justified by Christ, he is no more subject to the Commandment of the Law, he doth nothing now in conscience of the Law, he takes himself not bound to it. And you have another sort of them who say, that not only a Christian is freed from the obedience to the Law: but take you any man in the days of the Gospel, and no man ought to have the Law pressed upon him, but only the Gospel, and the promises thereof to be expounded and applied unto him: but both of them mistake this Scripture. Indeed this place exempts all from obedience to the Ceremonial Law, so far we agree with them; and for the Moral Law, we grant, that we are dead to the Covenant of the Law, but not to the command of the Law; you say unto me, and so do they; but how shall I know that I am not dead also to the command of the law?

You may know it from some evident expressions of the Apostle, that he allows us not to account ourselves dead to the command of the law, Ephes. 6:1,2. He speaks there of the Children of Christian Parents, and he presseth them to the obedience of the law; for though we expect not everlasting life

by our obedience to the law, yet our obedience to it may procure us many blessings, though not from our desert, yet from God's acceptance, and Rom. 3, ult. Christ established the law, Mat. 5:17, we should walk even as Christ hath walked, and because he hath ratified the rule of righteousness, given by Moses law, it comes to pass that though we be freed from the Covenant of the law, yet by the Covenant of grace, we are bound to keep the Commandment of the law, so as to do our best endeavors that way; and hence it is, that the Apostle James presseth obedience to the law, Jam. 2:8-11, so that we to this day are subject to the law, bound to take heed we transgress it not, and this law of liberty must judge us at the last day: Take the Covenant of the law, and that is an estate of bondage, Gal. 4:24, but take it as we are freed from the Covenant of the law, and only the command of the law lying upon us; and so it is a Law of liberty, James 2:12. If men therefore be hypocrites under the law, it will condemn them, and it will judge God's servants and make them fly to Christ; so that they who plead exemption from the law after justification, they transgress the righteous order of the Gospel of Christ; and for them who forbid the threatening's of the law to be Preached, they do most preposterously mistake the wholesome doctrine of the children's bread. The Ceremonial law, that indeed was accomplished in Christ, but for the Moral law, the law of the ten Commandments, we are never said to be dead to that while we live, The law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives, Rom. 7:1-3, so as the law ought to be pressed as that which would kill us, until that by the law, our hearts be dead unto the law of sin, and to all the comforts of this life; he mentioneth one law, Thou shalt not lust, and that is the tenth Commandment; and after that, then indeed threatening's are not to be pressed absolutely, but so as may mortify our corruptions; when the

sentence of the law hath once driven us to seek unto Christ, then the terrors of the law are not to be pressed to such a soul; but think not that all Christians that are baptized, are freed from the Law, and know that carnal men, even in the time of the Gospel, are under both the covenant and curse of the Law, The wrath of God abides upon them that believe not, Joh. 3:3, ult.

Use 3. To show you the comfortless condition of all such souls, as to this day are not yet justified, they are yet all subject to the whole Law of God, Rom. 7:1, while you yet live in an estate of nature, sin is mighty in you, and the old man reigns and rules in you, while you are strong and lively in sin, you are not yet dead to the Law; there is no man dead to the Law, but by the Law; if the Law never killed you, Christ never justified you, and then sin was never pardoned, and an unpardoned sinner is bound to keep the whole Law; whilst thou thinkest of thine own righteousness, and hopest to be saved by thy good meaning, thou art alive to the Law; though Paul sinned not against his conscience, Acts 23:1, neither Law nor conscience did accuse him, yet he looked not for righteousness by that means, Phil. 3:6,8. And all you that walk in acts of civil Justice in your callings, though it be much to be commended above men's disorderly walking's, yet I say, I beseech you, and charge you, as ever you look for salvation by Christ, that you rest not in these. Paul had as much to boast of as any man, but he is now dead-hearted to all these, and so will you be, as soon as ever you have fellowship with Christ and his death.

Use 4. Of comfort and direction, to comfort all the servants of God, that ever had experience of their death to the Law, by the Law; if ever the Law of God blasted thy sin, and thy estate, and the World, and thou hast found them all as dead things, let this then be a direction to thee; thou must now

take heed, that thou dost not suspend thy peace, upon thy good performances, and exact obedience to God, for that is the misery of many a poor soul; could they but always perform duties with life and power, they could believe that God had pardoned their sin; but when they see they are so weak, and so cold in their best duties, then they cannot believe; but when thou art dead to all thy best performances, as well as to thy sins, it is a sign thou art dead to the law, for it was the law that brought thee to a sight of thine own corruption, and let thee see the emptiness of thy performances, and therefore now look for no comfort from them, suspend not thy comfort and peace, and contentment upon thy exact obedience to the Law; and therefore for comfort, fear not what the law can do against thee, only make not Christian liberty a cloak to flesh and blood, but walk we with God, as closely as we can, and though we do fall short of what we desire to reach unto, yet doubt not but Justification and salvation is laid up for us in Christ.

Come we now to a second Note, though it be the third in order.

God leadeth a Christian soul unto the Law, by the Law, that he might live unto God.

Thus Paul expresseth God's manner of dealing with him, and he speaks in the name of all justified persons; I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God; so that this is Paul's case, and in him generally, the case of all justified persons.

That you may understand what is meant by living unto God, see some part of the Coherence of the words with the former. In the 15th and 16th verses, the Apostle saith, that he, and such native Jews as himself was, knowing they could not be justified by the law, but by Christ, they therefore sought righteousness by faith in him. Now against this protestation of the Apostle, an objection might be moved by carnal reason, and the Apostle answers it;

the objection may be raised thus, That if justified persons renounce the Law, seek righteousness by faith in Christ, this will open a door to licentiousness, and justified persons will make no conscience of the Law, but live without and besides the Law, under pretense of justification by faith, and so you shall pin upon Christ the sin of all justified persons. This is mentioned in the 17th verse, Is Christ the Minister of sin? &c.

Now the Apostle labors to prevent this objection, and gives a double answer to it. First, by aversation, or a word of abomination, as his manner is, God forbid; that we should transgress the Law without fear or care, God forbid.

Secondly, he answers it by three Reasons; all of them showing the necessary conjunction and connection that is between justification and sanctification; the first of the Reasons removes the imputation of sin from Christ, and not from him only, but from any who are justified by him, ver. 18, the Reason stands thus, If I build again the things that I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor, and not Christ. And as he removes it from Christ, so from himself, as unreasonable, that a man who hath labored to be freed from sin, and looks for righteousness only by Christ, that he should turn again to it, to show, that it is incompatible to such men's spirits.

The second Reason is taken from the end which God aimeth at in using the means that he doth use to bring us to justification by Christ; and the means he useth is to kill us to the law: and to what end doth he use that means? Not that we might live to ourselves, but unto God, as in the words of the Text.

The 3rd Reason, is taken from the near communion which every justified person hath with Christ, in both his death and life; as I have part with Christ in his death, so have I part in his life, and therefore having partnership with

him by justification of faith in both his death and life, therefore The life I now live, is by the faith of the Son of God. Thus you see what is meant, by this living unto God; Now then, to prove the Doctrine, and see what it is to live unto God in particular, and then the Reasons, and the Application, Rom. 7:4. We are dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that we might be married unto Christ, and bring forth fruit unto God; this is the way by which God leads us on to spiritual life; to the same purpose you read, 2 Cor. 5:15. Christ once died for all, that they that do live, should live no longer unto themselves, but unto Christ, who died and rose again for them; so that when men are driven to seek righteousness by Christ, they do by the power of his death, live no longer to themselves, but unto Christ, that is the end of the work of Christ, 1 Pet. 4:1,2. As Christ suffered in the flesh, &c. So arm yourselves likewise, to be of the like mind; he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that he should no longer live unto sin, but to the will of God; and therefore now none of us live or die to ourselves, but to the Lord, Rom. 14:7-9. For this cause, Christ died and rose again, that he might be Lord of quick and dead. Now for further opening of this point, see what it is to live unto God in particular, and then, how this death to the law leads us to such a life.

Living to God, in that place, Rom. 14:7, is opposed to living to ourselves: now what is it for a man to live to himself?

First, (as Civilians say) a man lives to himself, that is, his own man, bound to no man, but is free to live as pleaseth himself; a man in bondage lives to another, what he hath, and what he can do, is another man's, but a man that lives to himself, is as it were his own Master, no man can claim any interest in him; and so did the Jews expound it, John. 8:33. We were never in bondage to any, free from all men, in respect of subordination.

Secondly, A man is said to live to himself, that lives according to his own will, and principles, and for his own ends, as in usual phrase of speech we say, such a man lives to himself, as regards no man's profit, or pleasure, or credit, but his own, he cares for nobody, further then his respect to others may accommodate his own occasions and ends; A man lives from his own principles, for the rise of his work, and for the end of his work, he aims at no further end then himself.

Now thirdly, that which follows upon this, that such a man lives to himself, as lives without being desired of other men, to himself he lives, and to himself he dies, no man is better for him, and he may die when he please, no man will hinder him, as it was said of Jehoram, he lived without being desired, and so he died, 2 Chro. 21:20. Now this is that which the Apostle denies to justified persons, There are none of them lives or dies to themselves, but whether we live or die, we live and die to the Lord; so that then the meaning of the phrase is this.

First, when he saith, we live unto God, his meaning is, We acknowledge ourselves, not to be in our own hands, not to be free, to live as we list ourselves; so now we do not live according to our own principles, we acknowledge the Lord hath right and interest to us, Rom. 14:8. We are bought with a price, and therefore his that bought us.

Secondly, to live unto God, implies, that as now God's we are, to him we belong, and not to men or Angels, or to ourselves; so now, we do not live according to our own principles and Rules, nor the wills and lusts of other men, nor their counsels, nor examples, nor commands, but we live unto God. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; I live now, from an inward principle of the Lord Jesus, he lives in me, and he speaks as the Father hath given him commandment, John. 14, ult. And the Son can do nothing of

himself, John. 5:19. This is the whole life of any member of Christ, we dare not live as we list, nor after the wills of others, further then we see Christ in them, for Christ's we are, 1 Cor. 7:23, so that they who now live, shall not live to themselves, 2 Cor. 5:15, but unto him; so that the life of a Christian man, as it springs from Christ's command, so from the work of his Spirit, and works not for its own ends, further then it is subordinate to Christ, for the glory of Christ, the building up of his kingdom, the doing his will; this is the bent of the whole life of a Christian.

And thirdly, hence it follows, That a Christian man thus living, as one that lives from Christ, and through Christ warranting his course by his word, and quickening his actions by his Spirit, and working not for any low ends, but for the ends of Christ, the glory and will of Christ; hence it comes to pass, that a Christian lives to God, in respect that he lives not a life unregarded or undesired, but God hath a special eye to his whole course, God desires him, and he will move others to desire him, Job 14:14,15. For thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine own hands, he shall not die undesired; Why sayest thou, my way is hid from the Lord? Isaiah 40:27,28. The most High doth neither faint nor wax weary, and they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; If a man live by waiting upon God, for warrant from his word, for life from the Spirit for what he doth, God will not suffer such a man to run into such courses, as in which he will take no notice of him.

Thus you see what it is to live unto God; the two former being most principal, but this other follows upon both.

Now for the next thing; Can you show us any Reasons from the word of God, that God leads his servants by death to the law, to make them live unto God?

Reason 1. Taken from the power which the Law hath had, over and against such as are dead by the law, to the law; when the law hath had such power over a man, as to kill him to the law, then the law hath done with a man: take a male factor that hath committed any capital crime, when the law hath had power over him, and put him to death, now he no longer lives to the laws of this world, but he lives to another world, Rom. 7:1, so is this case, there is not any Christian that hath been put to death, by the law of God, that hath been struck down by the terrors of the law, but ever after he is as a dead man to this world, and he now lives as a man of another world, his conversation is in Heaven, Phil. 3:20.

Reason 2. Taken from the second marriage, which God calls us to, when he calls us to death to the Law, by the Law; Rom. 7:4. We are dead by the law; so as that the law, and consequently sin which had power over us by the law, should have no more dominion over us that we should be married to Christ, and so bring forth fruit unto him, so that when by the law we are dead to the Covenant of the law, now all the fruits we bring forth are to the Lord Jesus, we depend upon his grace for guidance, and upon his word for warrant, and his Ordinances we frequent, the seeds of his grace we conceive, and so bring forth fruit unto God.

Reason 3. Taken from the purchase which Christ hath made of us unto himself by his death, the possession which he claims, whensoever he strikes us dead to the Law, Christ having died for us; he therefore died, That we might not live unto ourselves, but unto him, 2 Cor. 5:15. When Christ strikes us dead to the Law, so as he doth not only blast our lust, but makes us run to Christ, by which occasionally, the life and death of Christ working together, brings us on to Christ, and by this means Christ hath laid fast hold on us, for otherwise; the Law of itself would never lead us to Christ, were

not the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our hearts, so as that the soul cannot rest, until it find something of Christ dispensed to it.

Use 1. This serves to warn all Christian men from three principal vices, that do commonly accompany their lives, Self-pleasing, Security, and Diffidence, all of them expressly here reproveable, Rom. 15:1,2. When we live no other life, but to please ourselves, we think we are our own, and we live from our own Rules, and to our own ends, and live securely, and many times God's own servants are to be blamed herein, they grow diffident, and think neither God nor man cares for them; do but therefore try, and you may know, whether ever the Law had any kind of working upon your spirits, or no: If we be such as stand upon our own freedom, Our tongues are our own and we will speak, Psal. 12:4, and we break the bonds, and cast the cords from us, Psal. 2:2,3. If we will stand upon our own bottoms, free to live according to our own wills, and rules, and principles; certainly the law of God never had any work upon such unbroken hearts. And so you may make it an use of trial, if we thus stand upon our own bottoms, the Law never came so near us, that we understood the true sense of it; and how many are there, that live in the bosom of the Church, who yet will bear no yokes, nor be bound to anything? You say, you respect God, though not his servants. The Scribes and Pharisees pretended they respected God the Father, though they did not the person of Christ, and yet when they cast his cords from them, they resisted God himself; so if God by his servants call us to repent, and to lead a new life, and we have a devise to put this off, because we think it is the devise of some curious brain, this is not a legal way, and so put it off, this is to stand out against God himself; but if God give us an heart to think that we stand bound to his Law, it is a sign the Law hath had its work upon us, else we could never have lived to any man's ends but our

own; but when we live so, as to advance nothing but our own pleasures, we need not wonder if we live without being desired, and die without being lamented; and therefore let this wean us from such a disposition, for if we do not live to God, then we live without God in the World, and so the life of an Atheist.

Use 2. This may serve to teach men, not to be too sharp in censuring their brethren in such ways, as wherein they desire to live unto God, and dare not but so live; Rom. 14:7-9. One man keeps a day to the Lord, another man keeps it not, why, both do it to the Lord; Who art thou then that judgest another man? For he lives not to himself, but to the Lord. While a man lives by the Rules of the Word, and in whatever he doth, he seeks the glory of God, and the good of the Church, though other men do not so, yet judge not one another in cases of this nature; Suppose one man keepeth this or that day, prescribed by Moses law, another man keeps it not; he that keeps it, thinks he is bound by the law of God to keep it, and for the edification of the few whom he would not offend, another man keeps it not, because he thinks they are abolished in Christ, for the benefit of the Gentiles, yet he that doth either, doth it to the Lord; so that here is the point, If it appear that the life of our brethren is by the Son of God, and by the Spirit and word of God, and desire to live no other life but so, then be sparing in judging and censuring one another.

Use 3. It may be to provoke any man to an holy and Christian life before God, and not to be afraid of the means that lead to it; Many a poor soul thinks when God begins to work upon him, he fears he shall never see good day after; if once the Law of God strike in upon him, that once he begins to become a dead man to his lusts, cannot drink, nor swear, &c. if he begin to make conscience of his ways, he thinks he shall now live a disregarded life,

but be not afraid of that which is the life and comfort of a Christian soul, the only way to bring a man to an honorable life, wherein he lives not to his base lusts, nor to the unthankful and base world, but unto God; and in very deed, till a man be by the Law struck dead to the Law, that a man find himself a dead man in the sight of God, no better than a man given over to death and destruction, till then, he is full of self-pleasing, and self-seeking, till then, a man lives to himself, and unto others but for himself. Take you the measure and scantling of any natural man upon the face of the earth, take but the scantling of your heart, and give me the *Summa totalis*, and see if he lives any way but to himself, and for himself; show me the noblest Heroes among the Gentiles, the bravest spirits among Christians, the stoutest and wisest among the Sons of men, and let them tell me if this be not so, That a man that lives a life of nature, whether he lives or dies, he lives and dies to himself; and shall we think this to be the only brave life, which the sons of men satisfy themselves in, the only honorable life? And a man would think himself a mad man, if he should live otherwise; to live besides a man's self and the world, is counted a life of frenzy and madness, whereas indeed, a man must be besides himself, or else he cannot live to God. So when Paul discoursed of his own conversion and manner of life, the Governor told him rightly, he was besides himself, he stood not upon himself, as many a man in such a case would have done, and yet, Paul knew full well, he was never nearer God, then when he was furthest off from himself, never more sober and wise then at such a time to preach the Gospel; And therefore in the name of Christ, let me call upon you, not to be afraid of legal terrors, nor of a Christian life; look not at such ways, as an utter undoing to you, it is the only way to live unto God, despise not such a life; true it is, As long as thou doest well to thyself, men will praise thee,

Psal. 49:18, and men will think that thou deservest to live in the world, but know this, that we should not wholly live to ourselves. And therefore since the Holy Ghost is pleased, to call us on to lead an higher life then nature, I beseech you, let me persuade you to some better affection to the life of God, be not discouraged with it, nor discourage others from it; know this, there is an higher life then the life of nature, a life that lives not to itself, but from the hand, and word, and Spirit of Christ, from the Rules of Christ, and to the glory of Christ, and to the good of others.

Use 4. To direct and comfort Christians, that by the Law are dead to the law, to encourage such men the more to go on, and to be far from the former life which they have lead. Know if ever the Law of God have struck you dead to sin, it hath struck you down from all dependence upon your own righteousness, so as that now forever you must live to the Lord Jesus: Why are you discouraged because of dullness and livelessness in the performance of holy duties? You would still live to the Law, but your life is from Christ, and not from your own works, be they never so good.

And let it be a further direction unto you; labor to be weaned from the world: not that I call upon any man to neglect his calling, but that must be had respect unto, though after the other; A man must not be so careful for his daily bread, as that he wholly forget, and neglect his duty to God. And for your comfort, let no Christian man think, he lives an unregarded life; many men complain, they may die when they will, nobody owns them; David himself sometimes was ready to think so, No man cared for my soul, Psal. 142:4. It was his complaint indeed, but there was sin wrapped up in it, Isaiah 40:27. If thou livest to God, make account of this, there is not the poorest Christian, that hath learned to live to the Lord, but God will regard him, both in life and death; Thou shalt never live but desired, nor die but

lamented, and therefore never fear what will become of thee, though thou beest cast aside as a refuse commodity, and every wretch can tell how to trample upon a poor Christian, yet know, that the candle of the wicked shall be put out, when he dies he shall stink, as the snuff of a candle, but the light of the righteous shall shine, and the memory of the just is precious; and when thou diest, the stoutest and toughest heart will secretly say, Would God I might die the death of such a man, and that my latter end might be like his.

**PART IV. - THE LIFE OF
FAITH.**

SERMON XVIII. - GAL. 2:20 – I.

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH Christ, nevertheless I live.

These words (as you have heard) contain a third Reason or Argument, brought by the Apostle, to prove, that men who are justified by faith in Christ, dare not give up themselves unto, nor allow themselves in any known sins.

And it is taken from the fellowship which a justified person hath in the death of Christ: Crucified with Christ, and therefore dead to sin.

Now this his crucifying with Christ, because against it, it might be objected, but you live still? Therefore he amplifies his crucifying with Christ, by the diversity; I live still; he shows you what kind of life it is:

First, for the root of it, it is a life; I live, yet not I, but Christ in me.

Secondly, In the flesh, in his mortal body.

Thirdly, He shows you the instrument of this his life, Faith in Christ Jesus, which though he live in his mortal body, yet his life is not a carnal and corrupt life, but a life of Christ, Christ lives in him.

So that in these short words of the text; I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; you have set forth, both the life and death of a Christian.

A person justified by Christ is crucified with Christ, for Paul speaks in the name of all that seek for righteousness by Christ, ver. 17, the note is evident from the words.

To be crucified with Christ, implies two things. First, to have fellowship with Christ in his death; see it manifest: and we are said to have fellowship with Christ in his death, in three respects:

First, In regard of the value of his death, the merit, price, and ransom of his death, which it made and paid for us; he offered up himself to take away the sins of man, Heb. 9:28, so that by the propitiation and atonement he made for us, our sins are taken away, Rom. 3:24,25, and you know when God speaks to the soul, humbled by the voice of a Messenger, one of a thousand, to declare to man, where his righteousness is to be had; God will say, Deliver him, for I have found a ransom for him, Job 33:23,24, so that there is no poor soul that finds a ransom by Christ, but it is as much as if he had paid it himself. Mat. 20:28. The son of man came to give his life a ransom.

Secondly, we are said to have fellowship with Christ in his death, in respect of the virtue of it; his death doth not only pardon, but in some measure crucify, so that the body of sin in us is crucified by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to that Rom. 6:6. Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of death may be destroyed in us, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin; Gal. 5:24. As many as are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; So that now by virtue of the crucifying of the Lord Jesus, all our sinful lusts are mortified, so as that we are in some measure struck off from putting forth such vigor and strength of

affection to any worldly comfort, as before we did. In respect of which, it is said Gal. 6:14. God forbid we should glory in anything, save in the cross of Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world. These goodly buildings and Palaces are not the things he sets his heart upon, there is not here left a stone upon a stone, no more triumphing in such comforts as these be; and this John the Baptist was wont to preach; that all flesh was grass, and all the glory thereof but as the flower of the field. This is because of the spirit of bondage and mortification, breathing upon them, Isaiah 40:6-8. Thus we draw virtue from Christ crucifying and mortifying our lusts, so far as they are unsettled and carried inordinately after any worldly comfort: Indeed God hath allowed all the comfortable good things of this life to them that obey and love the truth, 1 Tim. 4:3-5. But yet so, as that in respect of the strength and vigor of our affections, we say, Whom have I in heaven but thee? Psal. 73:35.

Thirdly, A justified person hath fellowship with Christ in the likeness of his death; for that Paul doth exceedingly desire and long after, Phil. 3:10. I counted all things loss, not only that I might be found in him as justified by faith in him, but that he might know the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, and be made conformable to his death, meaning that as Christ did suffer, so he might feel Christ in all his sufferings, and that his own sufferings might be conformable to his death, according to 2 Cor. 4:10. I bear about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus; he means that he did continually expose himself to such kind of sufferings, as his calling led him to, that as Christ died for him, so he dies for Christ in this world. All his afflictions were some kind of resemblance of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus; so a man is partaker with Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings, 1 Pet. 4:12-14. When a man is brought on to fiery trials, or any

other affliction in this world, then is he partaker of the sufferings of Christ; for though it be true, a Christian cannot so carry his sufferings as in some things to be like Christ, yet in some others he may.

There be two things in Christ's sufferings, wherein we are not like unto him. The one is that he suffered the whole malediction or curse that was due to us for our sins, now the curse of God is removed, and now they come as pledges of God's Fatherly love to heal the corruption of our nature, and to perfect the work of faith in us.

The other is, that Christ in his sufferings made satisfaction to the Father for the sins of all the people of God; he gave his life a ransom.

This is not to be found in our sufferings. But yet three things there be, in which we have fellowship with Christ in all our sufferings, when we suffer as Christians.

First, in respect of the cause of our sufferings; That look as Christ suffered for righteousness sake, so we must not suffer as evil doers; for to suffer as an evil doer, is opposed to the sufferings of Christ, in that place of Peter aforenamed, we must agree in this, both to suffer without cause in respect of man: There is cause why Christ should suffer, as having our sins upon him, and there is reason why we should suffer chastisement for our sins from the hand of God, but in respect of man, it must be without cause.

Secondly, there must be a likeness in the manner of our sufferings: as Christ suffered meekly and patiently, Isaiah 53:7, so ought we patiently without murmuring; yea and joyfully, Hebr. 12:4. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith.

Thirdly, There must be a likeness in the fruits of our sufferings, look as Christ learned obedience by it, so must we, Heb. 5:7. They bring forth the

quiet fruit of righteousness, Heb. 12:11. Thus are we said to be crucified with Christ, by having fellowship with him in his death.

Now in the second place, we have such fellowship with Christ in his death, as is a kind of crucifying, which implies three things.

First, crucifying you know was a lingering death, they were many hours a dying, fainting, and pining away; though Christ was soon dead, yet so were not the other; and it implies thus much, That we in our sufferings shall have a lingering work of it, wearing, and wasting, and consuming of us, till in the end we lay down our heads in God's peace. 1 Cor. 15:31. I die daily; notwithstanding all the comforts I have in Christ, the supportance and consolation I meet with, yet I take them to witness, I die daily: Corruption daily died in him, else he could not so rejoice in his sufferings; the outward man dying daily, and the inward man renewed day by day, he had a lingering death of his lusts, not but that he hasted after a speedy subduing of his lusts, but yet at the best he had but a lingering work of it.

Secondly, crucifying was counted an accursed death; now the curse is removed, but yet because God would have us drink of the cup, we shall taste of the bitterness of it, in the mortification of sin, Isaiah 38:17. God sprinkles our afflictions many times with much bitterness, and all to this end, that sin might be more and more bitter to us, and we more weaned from our lusts, and prepared for a better life; mortification many times puts us to much anguish, No affliction is joyous for the present, Heb. 12:11.

Thirdly, crucifying was a shameful death, especially among the Romans, which was without the gate, as if they were not worthy to live in the fellowship of any place; so was Christ crucified, Heb. 13:12,13. And therefore, if we would be partakers with him in his death, we must be content to be thrust out of the gate; and hence it is, that the world

reproacheth us, and counts Christian profession a disgraceful way, and the more like unto Christ it is, the more loathsome it is to the world; let us therefore go forth and bear his reproach.

Now for the reasons of the point.

Reason 1. It is taken from God's acceptance of Christ as of a public person in his death and sufferings; he died not to and for himself, but the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all, Isaiah 53:56. He was wounded for our transgressions, and by his stripes we are healed; and God might fitly impute our iniquities unto him, and his sufferings to us, in respect that he made him the head of his Church, the Savior of his body, Ephes. 5:23. Christ is the Savior of his mystical body, by becoming the head of his Church: So look as the head suffers, all the members suffer; so God making Christ our head, he suffering, we suffer with him.

Reason 2. It is taken from the power of the spirit of Christ, which by his death he hath purchased and procured for us from the curse of the Law, that we might find the promise of the spirit through faith in him, Gal. 3:13,14, so that we now receiving the spirit of Christ from the death of Christ, hence it is that we are made conformable to his death; for the same spirit of Christ that raised him up from the dead, doth also quicken our mortal bodies, Rom. 8:13. And the same spirit by which he died, doth mortify sin in us, Rom. 6:6. Hence is that speech, The old man is crucified in us, the mighty power of Christ working a spirit of mortification in us, that spirit mortifies the pride of our hearts, the vanity of our minds, the hypocrisy of our spirits, the rebellion of our natures, and crosseth the principallest of our affections to the profits and pleasures of this world, and all from the power of the spirit of the Lord Jesus, applying the efficacy of the death of Christ to our souls, and thus are we made like unto Christ in suffering.

Use 1. It may first serve to take away a scandal that many times is cast upon the Doctrine of Justification by faith, imputing to it licentiousness, and opening a door to liberty to all sin; the common objection of Papists against this Doctrine, who do object, as the false Apostles did, but the Apostle convinces the falsehood of such an Objection by many reasons. There is no man seeks righteousness by Christ, but he destroys the body of sin; no man partakes in Justification by Christ, but he is crucified with Christ, and if we therefore be justified by faith in Christ Jesus, there is no man weaned from sin, more than such men, no man more weaned from the things of this world, nor so much, as he that is justified by faith in Christ Jesus; no man hath fellowship with Christ in his death pardoning his sin, but he hath fellowship with him also purging him from sin, so that herein the Apostle puts an answer into the mouth of all justified persons, against that cavil against this Doctrine of Justification by faith in Christ.

Use 2. It is a sign of trial, to know whether any of us be justified by faith in the Lord Jesus, the main point that concerns the peace of every man's soul; It is that great case of conscience, in which whosoever is not resolved, he knows nothing of conscience or of Religion as he ought to know, and the Apostles word herein is very emphatical, Seeking for righteousness. Thou shalt know it by this; So many as seek to be justified by Christ, they are crucified with Christ: Well then, art thou alive to all thy lusts, the strength of thy spirit goes an-end with all thy lusts further then the Law restrains thee not, there is no lust but thou strongly affectest it, whether it be pride, or vain fashions, or worldliness, or whatever else, and so you may try it by all the former things delivered.

Use 3. It may serve to teach Christian men that have found their part in Christ, and have found lusts decaying; Be not troubled with the sufferings

you meet with in this world, go on in this world, go on in this work, it is the most happy employment thou canst follow; Thou findest a lingering work of it, to get a proud heart humbled, to get a wanton and unclean heart made pure in the sight of God; why, it is enough if they be but a dying, though lingering, so thou beest but doing, and dost not please thyself in thy lingering, though it be but slow work, yet it is crucifying work, and though a man crucified live a while, yet he lives but a dying life, and though there be bitterness and shame in the work, yet notwithstanding go forth and fight the Lord's battles, and suffer joyfully from God's hand, and from men's; God will bruise thee, and make thee to have experience of sorrow, as well as Christ had; the world will have an eye to thee, thou shalt not go without some nailing to the cross; yet fear not for all the evils that shall befall you, thou hast fellowship with Christ in all thy sufferings, and that is enough for thee. And therefore suffer constantly, and learn obedience by it, and be sure you grow more fruitful, and more abundant in all the works of righteousness.

A crucified Christian yet lives.

Nevertheless I live, What doth he mean by that? Why, first I live a natural life in this mortal body, these crucifying's are not such as crush me to death; Yet I live, I thank God, I am lively to go about all the duties God calls me to; and I live also a spiritual life, 2 Cor. 6:9,10. We are as unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live, crucified with Christ, but yet I live, 2 Cor. 4:8-11. Troubled on every side, always persecuted, and yet not destroyed, even when most crucified, yet still they live.

Reason. Taken from the efficacy of the life of Christ, in the death of Christ, and so from the life of Christ, in the death of Christ's members, 2 Cor. 4:10,11. Always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus,

that the life of Christ might be made manifest in us; so that when a Christian man is crucified with Christ, here is the fruit of it, the life of Christ is manifested in our dying body of sin, mortifying our corruptions, supporting our spirits, in our weakest and worst times; for when the Lord Jesus was crucified upon the Cross, he spoiled principalities, and powers, and trampled upon all our enemies; so in the death of all his members to their lusts, he spoils the powers of darkness, and triumphs over all the enemies of their salvation.

Use 1. To satisfy the minds of such as are afraid of their friends, wives, or children, brethren and sisters, afraid they should be lost, and be men of another world, if once they become crucified and mortified, if once they find them seeking righteousness by Christ, and dead to the Law, and weaned from the world; many a poor soul is apt to think itself undone, and so will our best friends pity us, and say, alas for us, we are utterly undone, so many persecutions and afflictions, as we are now subject unto, as men quite cast away: but be not deceived, see what the Apostle here saith, he would have all the world know, he is not an undone man; Though I be crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, I live a bodily life vigorous, and a spiritual life gracious. Therefore let no man be afraid of mortification, and the duties that lead to it; yea, let me say to you, Look as you see it is with a man in his carnal estate, when he thinks himself most lively, he is then a most dead creature, dead in trespasses and in sins, Ephes. 2:1,2, and 1 Tim. 5:6, so let me say to thee, when thou art dead to sin, thou art most alive to God, through Jesus Christ; but should you say to a carnal man, I am glad to see you so lively, and so cheerful, and so live-like, he may say to you, Alive! Alas, I am dead in trespasses and sins: But come to a Christian and say to him, I am sorry to see you so drooping, what all a-mort, all crushed

and crucified; what would he say? Why, Yet I live, and were I a little more dead, I should live a more lively life then ever yet I did; and therefore, be not afraid of being too much weaned from the world, fear not the livelihood of yourselves and yours, for at the worst you shall be able to say, Yet I live.

Use 2. Of comfort to all such Christians, as are indeed mortified and crucified with Christ in this world; Do you so always carry the matter, as when they are most ready to fail you, you may bear up your hearts with this resolution? Nevertheless I live, persecuted, but not forsaken, dying, but behold we live, having nothing, yet possessing all things, poor, and yet making many rich; so that if you find at any time, your spirits dismayed and discouraged with any weakness of body, or distress either of the inward or outward man, yet a man must inure himself to this speech, Nevertheless I live; What though I be crucified with Christ? Why, I live still: What though many things befall me amiss? It matters not, so that I fall but into the arms of Christ; suppose I fall into the jaws of death, yet though dying, behold I live; thus must every Christian resolve within himself, when he meets with hard measures, from God's hand, or from man's. God thought it comfort enough for Baruch, and yet he spake but of a natural life; Behold, I will give thee thy life for a prey, and that is enough for thee; and so Ebedmeleck the good Ethiopian, I will not deliver thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, but thou shalt have thy life for a prey; though he lose profit and pleasure, yet nevertheless he lives; though heaven and earth should fall together, and estate all crushed, nevertheless I live; he shows not forth his own dead-heartedness, but the life of Christ; he never suffers but for well-doing, and he learns obedience by it, and he gets his corruptions mortified, and his distempers healed; and is not this a most comfortable condition, when a man may say, I am crucified with Christ, yet nevertheless I live?

SERMON XIX. - GAL. 2:20 – II.

YET NOT I, BUT Christ liveth in me.

Now he corrects, or indeed rather explains himself, how or what kind of life it is that he lives; Not he, how then? Christ lives in him.

So that in these words, you have a denial of himself, to be the author and root of his own life; he denies himself to live, even then when he doth live.

Secondly, You have an acknowledgement of the Author and root of his life; Christ lives in his life.

A living Christian lives not himself, but Christ in him.

Or thus:

The life of a Christian is not his own life, but the life of Christ Jesus.

Either of both these express these two parts of the verse; A living Christian lives not himself, not his own life, but Christ lives in him.

First, See how a living Christian lives not his own life, after once he hath had part in the death of Christ, and hath thereby been initiated into the life and power of Christ's death, and so become a mortified and crucified

Christian in some measure, such a Christian lives not his own life in this world.

There is a threefold life, A carnal life, a spiritual life, and a natural life; and in some respect, a living Christian lives none of these lives.

A carnal life is expressed in three things, in living to a man's lusts, in living to the world, and in living to a man's own wisdom and reason.

Now a Christian man lives to none of these; He lives not to his own lusts: How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Rom. 6:2. He looks at it as an absurdity, and indeed in some measure monstrous, ver. 6. The body of sin is dead in us, that we should no more serve sin; and ver. 7, he that is dead with Christ, is free from sin: arm yourselves with the same mind; now you live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; this life Paul doth not live, he is not lively at his lusts, they are death to him; for though a Christian man may be defiled, and sometimes overtaken, yet so far as he is a living Christian, so far he is a dead man to those lusts, they are the deadness of his heart, the discouragement of his spirit, the hell of his soul, that he is compassed about with such evils as these be; Oh wretched man that I am, &c. Rom. 7:23,24, as if it were the death of his life, that he carried about such a body of death with him. Now then, saith the Apostle, if I do that which I hate, It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me, Rom. 7:20. It is the misery of my spiritual life, that I am at any time dead-hearted to spiritual duties, and somewhat apt to close with temptations to sin, whether darted by Satan, or stirred up by my own corrupt heart; and therefore if there be any life of sin in me, in the least measure, it is the death of my heart.

And secondly, so neither lives he in regard of the world, for though you may have a godly man busy in his calling from Sun rising to Sun setting,

and may by God's providence fill both his hand and head with business; yet a living Christian when he lives a most busy life in this world, yet he lives not a worldly life.

There are four or five several differences between a Christian his living to the world, and another man's that is not yet alive to God, and hath no fellowship with Christ in his death.

First, A Christian man principally seeks Christ above and before the world, Mat. 6:33. He doth first look for spiritual things, he had rather have his part in Christ, then in all the blessings of this life, he would first order his heart to Christ, his principal care is about that, and if he do not so, he looks at it as his death, which a worldly man doth not.

Secondly, As he first and principally seeks Christ, so all the good things he hath, he looks for them from Christ, he goes not about his business in his own strength, but what he wants he seeks it from Christ, and what he hath he receives it from Christ, Gen. 33:5,11. If God bless him with children, with health, or with estate, or whatever other comfort of this life, he looks at it as a free gift of God's grace, he doth not sacrifice to his own nets, nor to the dexterity of his own hands, but these are the blessings God hath graciously given to his servant, though common, and such as everyone hath, yet not so to him.

Thirdly, A Christian man, as he receives the world from Christ, so he enjoys them all in Christ; I mean he enjoys it not in the sense of his own desert, but he looks at himself less than the least of them all, Gen. 32:10. I am less than the least of all thy faithfulness to thy servant. This is to enjoy all in Christ, not in his own worth, but in the merit of Christ.

Now this a Christian doth, whatever his business be, in his worldly business, he doth not lead a worldly life.

Fourthly, He useth and employeth all for Christ, In our gates, saith the Church, are all manner of pleasant fruits, my Beloved I have kept them all for thee: When he hath many blessings, he considers what he shall do with them. This is the frame of a living Christian, one whose heart is given to Christ. I have indeed all manner of these things, fair houses, well furnished rooms, pleasant provision of all sorts, but my Beloved I have kept them all for thee; though I have never so much, yet it is all for Christ, 1 Cor. 10:31. That God may be glorified in Jesus Christ; this is the sum of his eating and drinking, and buying and selling, &c. this is the upshot of all, this is all for Christ, and this is so to live in the world, as not to live like a man of the world, and so he makes good work of his worldly business, though in themselves never so intricate.

Fifthly, A living Christian lives unto God, even then when he lives in the world, in that he is willing to leave worldly business, and worldly things for Christ, leave them all, rather than part with Christ; this is the resolution of his spirit, and his practice when he is put to it, Psal. 45:10. Hearken O daughter and consider, forget thy kindred and thy Fathers house; let them all go, forget thy pleasures and treasures in Pharaohs Court, so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty, that if anything stand between obtaining of Christ, and the enjoying of the world, let all go; were the comfort of this life never so precious and glorious, yet forget them all, let them all be as a dead commodity for a living Christ, Matth. 16:27. We have forsaken all and followed thee; and if afterward the world and Christ should fall out, as sometimes they will, and ere long it will be that a man cannot keep his heart in a comfortable plight with Christ, but it will cost him loss of friends, and sometimes loss of estate, and sometimes loss of life, why yet a Christian will forsake all for Christ, if once the world and Christ come to fall out; and

in this case a Christian thinks it no hard choice, though Demas did, 2 Tim. 4:10. I pass not at all, saith a Christian, so that I may but finish my course with joy, Acts 20:23,24. This is the true life of a Christian in respect of his Christian life, and wherein he differs from a worldly man; for there is no worldly man that lives a worldly life, but his first care is for his estate to settle that well, and when he hath thus provided for him and his, in the remanent of his time he will seek Christ.

And when he gets anything, he depends much upon his trade, he lives unto himself, and what he hath he thinks he hath deserved it, and he will be much offended with God's providence if he be crossed in his designs and labors. And that which he hath, for whom doth he keep it? He will say for wife, and children, and kindred; but how they will use it, that is no matter. And if it come to a parting blow, that either the world or Christ we must lose, they think men very unwise that will part with a bird in the hand for two in the bush. They may go away sorrowful, but away they will go, if there be no remedy, rather let Christ provide for himself; for their part, they will bear no such burdens for him; but now a Christian lives not to the world, and if he should so live, it were rather a swoon of Christianity, then any life and power of Christ.

For a carnal life, which is a life of living to a man's own wisdom and reason, he lives not that life neither, If any man would be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. 3:18-20. No living Christian but he must deny his own wisdom, judgment, and understanding, that he may be wise in Christ; You say, what, would you have men senseless, and mopish, and not understand themselves? No, no, here is the point, True grace doth not destroy a man's wisdom, but rather enlargeth and enlighteneth it wonderfully; so as that men by nature are blind, but spiritual

wisdom enlightens the eyes of the blind. It is an excellent speech, that in the Heb. 11:1. Faith is the substance; in the Original it is, Faith is the subsistence of things not seen; The meaning is, that if we should tell many a man, that the favor of God is more worth then any blessing of this world, the blood of Christ more precious than gold, the spirit of grace the best companion for the soul, &c. these seem to many a man but feigned things, no subsistence in these things: This is but some strong imagination of some melancholy brains, he sees no such matter in them, and he is persuaded there is no such thing, it is only faith, that sees subsistence in these things; To a faithful Christian there is subsistence in all the promises, there is weight in the examples, threatening's, and Commandments of the word, subsistence in the favor of God, and in the blood of Christ, and in fellowship with the spirit, and in other things there is none at all. Now in this case a man must see all his wisdom to be but folly, all the high thoughts he had of the world and himself, he must look at them all as vain; and all the low thoughts he had of Religion and the ways of grace, he must look at them all as folly and madness; So that here a Christian is dead to his own wisdom; that which sometimes he thought to have been his chiefest good, is now nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, but when he comes to see spiritual things have only true subsistence in them, then he leads a wiser life then ever he did before.

Now for his spiritual life: A living Christian, his whole spiritual life is Christ, and not himself, his spiritual life is not his own life.

There be three parts of spiritual life, which a Christian lives in this world, the fourth (which is the life of glory) he lives in that which is to come.

A life of Justification, a life of Sanctification, a life of spiritual Consolation.

1. A life of Justification, Rom. 5:18. Now a Christian man looks for Justification, not from all his spiritual performances, prayer, preaching, receiving Sacraments, &c. He looks at all these as loss, that he might win Christ, Not having his own righteousness, Philip. 3:6-9.

2. For his life of Sanctification, he doth not make account that himself is sufficient, as of himself, to think a good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5. When God hath given him grace, yet he can do nothing in any lively manner, unless Christ assist him, and help him at every turn, 1 Cor. 15:10. By the grace of God I am that I am, and the grace in me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, it is not I that have took all this pains; though he had a good calling, and an honest heart, yet not I, nay, neither was it the grace of Christ that was in him, but the grace of God that was with him; it was the spirit of God breathing in his grace, that made these spices thus flow forth, Cant. 4, ult. Though he had many precious graces bestowed on him yet not he, nor any grace in him, but the grace of God with him, that wrought with him, and acted, and did all he did wherever he came; Now blessed be God that makes manifest the savor of his grace, 2 Cor. 2:12-15.

3. And thirdly, for his life of Consolation, there go two things for the making up of a man's consolation, partly God's favor, and that is better than life, Psal. 63:3. Psal. 30:5. In thy favor is life.

Secondly, The prospering of God's work in themselves and others, 1 Thess. 3:8. Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord: they were his joy, and his crown and glory; But was that his life of Justification, think you? No, nor of his Sanctification neither; though the Church had fallen, yet Paul his work had been glorious in God's sight, and he had still been justified and

sanctified; but it was the life of his consolation: this is our life, and the crown of our rejoicing if you stand fast in the Lord.

Now for a man's natural life, how can a man be said not to live his own natural life? Yet a Christian may say, that in some measure he lives not his own natural life, but Christ lives in him, Acts 17:28. In him we live, move, and have our being: You say, so hath a carnal man his life from Christ; True, but he acknowledgeth it not; In him was life, and that was the life of men, John. 1:3,4. A Christian man hath his natural life from Christ, as from an head that gives both spiritual and natural life; In him thou hast given me life and breath, and thy visitation hath preserved my being, Job 12:10. Christ gave us our life, and he preserves it, we cannot better explain it then thus; A wind-mill moves not only by the wind, but in the wind; so a water-mill hath its motion, not only from the water, but in the water; so a Christian lives, as having his life from Christ, and in Christ, and further then Christ breathes and assists, he stirs not; Psal. 104:29,30. My times are in thy hands, Psal. 31:5. Dan. 5:23. Thou hast not honored thy God, in whose hand thy breath is, and all thy ways, it was the sin of the profane King not to regard it; All his ways and turnings, his sickness and health, and all his changes, they are all in God's hands; Jer. 10:23. I know that the way of man is not in himself; upon thee have I been cast, from my mother's womb, thou hast poured me out like milk, and by thee I was curdled in my mother's womb, so that I live; What you Paul? No, not I; as if it were too broad a word for a Christian man to speak, Though I live, yet not I.

Now secondly, how may it be said, that Christ lives in a living Christian; How? As a root of his life, as the Author both of his spiritual and natural life: for his carnal life, that he is wholly dead unto; but for his other, Christ is the Actor and root of all, for God hath given him above all to be head of

the Church; as the members live a reasonable life from the head, so doth the Church from Christ; Without me you can do nothing, John 15:1,2, he is called the Prince of life, Acts 3:15. 1 Cor. 15:45. And this comes to pass partly by God's acceptance of him as our head; God hath appointed him to be our head; and also by the communication of his Spirit to us, 1 Cor. 6:17.

And thirdly, by faith, for it is faith that receives Christ to dwell in us, Ephes. 3:17, so that by these we dwell in Christ, and so live in him, and he in us, for by this means Christ is made our root, Rom. 11:17, so as we that were by nature branches of the wild Olive, are now made partakers of the good Olive: and hence it is, that we bring forth savory fruit, some fruits there be, which if you never transplant them, they will grow wild, but transplant them, and they will bring forth fruit; so take any man that is wild by nature, and let him be crucified with Christ, cut him off from fellowship with Adam, and his lusts, and implant him into Christ, and then he is made partaker of the true Olive, and so will bring forth good fruit.

Use 1. It may be first an evident sign of trial to everyone of us, of our own estates, whether we have part in Christ's death yea or no, whether we be living Christians, or no; Christians we are, we cannot deny, and so have an outward right to partake with the rest of God's people; But would you know whether you be living Christians, or no? Consider, a living Christian lives not himself, but Christ lives in him; Christian signifies one Anointed with the grace of Christ, 1 John 2:27. Now for this consider what hath been said; If thou beest a living Christian, thou livest, yet not thou, but Christ in thee; And let me say this to every Christian soul, and take it as an eternal truth, if to this day thou livest to thy lusts, and livest in any known sin, and it is the delight of thy soul to live in pride, and covetousness, &c. if you live in any sin, and desire so to do, thou mayest be called a Christian, but thou art a

dead Christian. But you say, you thank God, you have bid adieu to all your lusts: but it was a shrewd saying of old, *Licitis perimus omnes*, we most of us perish by lawful things; and therefore I say further, Dost thou not live to the world? Thou sayest, Is it not lawful for a man to be diligent in his calling, thou canst not leave thy business, as such and such as are bankrupts; Well, God forbids thee not to be diligent in thy calling; let me tell thee, if thou canst so live in the world, as that thy first care is to seek Christ, before the doing of any work of thine own, and if to manage thy calling thou look for help from him, and look at thyself, as unworthy of any mercy from God, and ask thy heart, who is all this for? Is it for Christ? Canst thou say, I have kept them all for thee? And canst thou come to this resolution, that if Christ and thy calling come to be at variance, yet thou canst part with all to keep fellowship with Christ? Then thou livest in the World, but art not a man of the World; Christ sits next to thy heart all this while, and then thou art well; but otherwise let me tell thee, if thou canst first be busy about thy calling, and think you have wit enough for your own business, and you think you deserve all you have, else you would not be so much disturbed when you are crossed in it; and if you use them not for Christ, but you lose him in the use of them, and you keep it, that you and yours may be some great ones in the World; and if a cross way come, that Christ and your estates must part, you turn your back upon Christ, and upon all that profess his name; then be not a liar against the truth, thou art of the world, and livest to the world, and the Lord Jesus hath yet no hold of thee; and therefore be sure if it be so with you, you have failed in one of these; you have stirred about worldly business, before you looked for Christ, and gone about them in your own strength, and in sense of your own worthiness of them, which makes you discontent when you are crossed in them, and

you consider not for what end you laid up all these; and hence it is, that when it comes to a parting blow, many a Christian is foiled about the world: and therefore look seriously to it, and if you conceive worldly things have some subsistence in them, but not so of the things of God, then it is not Christ that lives in you, but you live to yourselves.

Use 2. To cast a just reproof upon living Christians, that Christian men should not live like Christian men; a shame for Christian men still to live in pride, and uncleanness, committing the works of darkness; and therefore be ashamed that ever you should take up the life of a Christian, and still be more forward for the world, then for Christ; still to be impatient for worldly crosses, and still to want serious thoughts for whom is all this, and yet not come to consider how you must part from all these. This may cast much confusion upon the face of a Christian man, that to this day they cannot say that they live unto Christ. Some there be, who say, that they live unto Christ, and some that say, they will not have Christ to reign over them, Luke 19:14, some there be that say; Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast his cords from us, Psal. 2, but it were a shame that any Christian should do so.

Use 3. To teach us all, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to desire to make known to our own consciences, and to the world, that we are crucified with Christ, and live to God; let us say, it is not enough for a Christian to live besides his lusts, or that the world is less to be regarded then Christ, &c. but I pray you practice this resolution daily, unless you have some thoughts of this daily, you will lose your spiritual life daily, and you never find your hearts lost in worldly business; but when you want a heart daily to consider what God calls you to, you must therefore have these thoughts daily. And further, take this counsel, if thou beest troubled about thy

justification and peace with God, let this comfort thee, that thou knowest thou livest not by thine own graces, but by Christ.

Use 4. Of comfort and consolation, to every soul as can truly say, this is the frame of their hearts, they do not live themselves, but Christ in them; be not you discouraged at your own weakness, but make account your living in Christ will bear you out, and therefore labor to be loose to the World, and live like those that have a living fountain to run unto, for supply of whatever you stand in need of, that so all the rest of our time may not be a life of our own lusts, but of Christ in us.

SERMON XX. - GAL. 2:20 – III.

THE LIFE WHICH I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

In these words he shows you the Instrument, by which he lives this life of God, and that is, faith in the Son of God. The life I now live in the flesh; he means not the life of corrupt nature, though sometimes living in the flesh, be so taken in Scripture, as chap. 5:17. But a man lives not the life of corruption, by faith in the Son of God, but that life he lives by his own sinful lusts; and in the Apostles language, he lives not that life at all; but he means the life he lives in his mortal body, so long as he lives in this world, whether it be a natural or a spiritual life, he lives by the faith of the Son of God.

The life of a Christian, is a life of faith in Christ Jesus.

A point which the Holy Ghost often speaks expressly, Hab. 2:4. The just man shall live by his own faith, according to this, I live by the faith of the Son of God; and that he there speaks of faith in the Son of God, is evident from the verse before; When they were afflicted by the Babylonians, the

Prophet stirs them up to wait for deliverance; but how shall they do in the mean time? Why, if a man cannot stay and wait, his heart is not right in him, but the just shall live by his faith; this is a main principle of our Christian faith; so Rom. 1:17. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by his faith, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:37, 2 Cor. 5:7. For further opening of this point, let me show you that this is true, and then the reason and application of it. It is a double life which we live in this world, setting aside the life of lust, and corrupt nature, which a man crucified with Christ is wholly dead to, but now the life a Christian doth live, is partly a spiritual, and partly a natural life.

Now spiritual life is threefold, the life of justification, the life of sanctification, and the life of comfort and consolation, for all these are called life in Scripture.

First, for justification, Rom. 5:18. Col. 2:13. Forgiveness of sin and justification, in Scripture phrase, is all one; as a Judge in acquitting a malefactor, he gives him his life; so justification, and God's pardon of sin is all one; and that is the life of every poor condemned soul, that is born in sin, and hath been under the bondage of the curse of God's law; he hath quickened us in forgiving us all our sins.

Now whence comes it, that we are thus justified, and that our sins are forgiven us? Is it not by the faith of the Son of God? Rom. 3:28, he concludes, (which shows you it is no occasional speech) but he speaks of a principal point; We conclude that a man is justified by faith, so that when the conscience is struck with remorse for sin, and the heart deeply distressed, and thereupon he looks at himself as an undone man, then by this, (faith helping to draw a poor soul near to Christ, to seek peace and

pardon from him) he finds that indeed God hath discharged him of all his sins, and this is the life of our Justification.

For the life of Sanctification, Eph. 4:18. He principally means, they were estranged from the life of sanctification, by the ignorance that is in them, and the blindness of their minds. Now it is by faith that we live the life of holiness, and purity of heart, therefore Acts 15:9. Faith purifies and sanctifies the heart. But how?

First, by deriving holiness and purity from Christ, who is made to us of God our sanctification as well as our justification, 1 Cor. 1:30. Waiting upon God is an act of faith, which acts itself by hope, whereby we renew our strength, Isaiah 40:30,31. 2 Cor. 3:5. We trusting upon Christ for the righteousness of justification, that conveys a spirit of grace into our hearts, by which we come to be purified from sin, and so live the life of holiness.

Secondly, Faith helps us to live a life of holiness, by giving us to lead our whole life by warrant from the word of God, Rom. 14:23. Faith will not step one foot forward further then the word directs it, Psal. 119:9. How is it that we come to take such heed to our ways? Why, only by faith, by which we look at all our actions, as warranted by the word, and from thence we turn not aside any way.

Thirdly, There is in faith a power to incite, and encourage us to do all that we do, to walk in such good ways, to encourage us to be speaking and meditating on good things, Psal. 116:9,10. I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the living; I believed, and therefore I spake it; I spake how I would live for aftertime, that I would walk before God in the Land of the living; and what encouraged him so to speak? Why, I believed, and therefore I spake it; And the Apostle quoting that place, saith, We believe, and therefore speak.

How doth faith come thus to encourage a man? Two ways:

First, There is an act of faith, that breeds boldness in Christians; when faith sets them a work, it emboldens them, so as to see his way plain before him, and so to go about with courage, Eph. 3:12, we have access with boldness through faith; an unbelieving heart is ever scrupulous and doubtful, and uncertain, and goes about every work faintly and deadly, but let but a Christian see, that this is the revealed will of God, there is your way, and that will put life into his business.

Secondly, There is this also in faith, it doth present our work to God in the name of Jesus Christ, and it makes us to believe that it shall be accepted, Col. 3:17. Faith doth all in his name, and that encourageth us to believe it is accepted, though done never so poorly on our parts, yet because we distrust ourselves, and do all in the name of Christ, faith emboldens us much in the acceptance of it.

Thirdly, The life of Consolation; a Christian man may have his sin pardoned, and lead an holy life, and yet a wonder to see, even his life of justification and sanctification may be but a dead life to his sense; For did you never see such a Christian live a sad and uncomfortable life? Had you never any experience of it, that your best life was but a living death? Though sin be pardoned, yet you have no comfort in it; and though you live a blameless and a fruitful life, yet you find no life in it. Therefore it pleased God to provide, that when he gives life of justification and sanctification, he also bestows the life of consolation, which puts life into the two former, as they put life into it, and this is also called life, 1 Thess. 3:8. Now we live if you stand fast in the Lord; why, did his justification and sanctification depend upon their standing? No, let them stand or fall, his justification and sanctification stands firm; But the life he speaks of, is the life of

consolation, his heart was inwardly comforted and refreshed to see them stand fast in the grace of Christ; so Chap. 2, latter end, This is his crown and joy, if you stand fast.

The favor of God is the life of a Christian, Psal. 30:5. Yea thy favor is better than life, Psal. 63:3. God forbid the life of a Christians justification or sanctification, should stand upon other men's obedience, but the life of his consolation stands in the sight of God's favor to us and other men, so that all these three lives are all lived and had by faith.

Now faith hath sundry acts by which it works joy and consolation.

First, it refresheth our hearts with God's peace, upon the experience of our justification, Rom. 5:1, and peace is the life and comfort of the soul, Phil. 4:7. It passeth understanding, and keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Secondly, Faith in all our businesses casts all our care upon God, 1 Pet. 5:7. Trust and roll thy ways upon him, trust on him, and lean not to thine own wisdom.

Thirdly, There is another act of faith, that keeps consolation alive in the heart, and that is, faith enters into that which is within the veil, and shows us the light of God's countenance in the midst of all our troubles, Heb. 6:19, it lays hold on Christ, and gives us to see, that all the trials and temptations we meet with, come out of the Fatherly love of God for our best good, and out of his very faithfulness, Psal. 119:75. I know that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me; and that keeps comfort alive in the heart; we see by faith that God knows we have need of all our sufferings, Rom. 5:1,3. And not only so, but we rejoyce in tribulations, though it come to threshing's, (as the word signifies) though it leave us naked and bare, yet faith can help us to rejoyce in it.

Fourthly, Faith keeps consolation alive in our hearts, by quieting our hearts to wait upon God's leisure for seasonable deliverance, Isaiah 28:16. He that believes makes not haste.

Secondly, We live as a spiritual life, so a natural life also by faith; that life which we live in the flesh, in which we eat, and drink, and sleep and go about the business of our callings.

First, it helps us to live a natural life, by restoring us from sicknesses and diseases that else would extinguish natural life in us; Go thy way, saith our Savior to the Woman, Mat. 9:22. Thy faith hath made thee whole; there is a power in faith to put life into decayed nature; So for deliverance out of danger; Prepare me lodging, saith Paul, for I trust I shall be delivered to you again, Philem. 22.

Secondly, we live a natural life by faith, in that it is only faith, that acknowledgeth our natural life to be received from Christ; In him we live, move, and have our being, is a voice of faith, Acts 17:18. John 1:3.

Thirdly, we live a natural life by faith; in that we go not about any work of our labors, wherein we show reason, but In the name of the Lord Jesus, Col. 3:17, we trust unto God for his blessing upon all, and so we live this natural life by faith in the Lord Jesus.

Reason. Is taken from the power which God hath given unto faith to receive Christ, and to act the life of Christ, for Christ is said to dwell in our hearts by faith, Ephes. 3:17, and we receive Christ by believing on him.

Now you know the Lord Jesus wheresoever he dwells, he is a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. 15:40. Do but give way for the Lord Jesus to dwell in us, and then we receive a mighty power of a quickening spirit from him, quickening us with assurance of pardon of sin, and power of grace and consolation: and hence it is that in Scripture you may observe, faith is applied to all the

activity, and dexterity, and livelihood that is found in the most stirring members of the body; faith is said to do the office of the eye, of the mouth, of the hand and foot, and tongue, and ears. Of the eye; by faith Abraham saw Christ's day, John. 8:56. Sometimes you read of hungering and thirsting after Christ, John. 6:35, and we feed on Christ by faith, as the body feeds by the mouth, and by faith we are said to receive Christ as by the hand, John. 1:12, and Enoch is said to walk with God, and that was by faith, Heb. 11:4,5, 6. Sometimes some profit not by the word, because it is not mixed with faith, Heb. 4:2, so, Hear and your souls shall live, Isaiah 55:2, and Acts 16:14, and it is the prayer of faith that finds hearing with God, Jam. 5:15. So that faith is lively and mighty through God, to cast down strong holds; and unless faith be active and stirring in all, the whole man is but a dead trunk, all is but dead, unless faith put activity and dexterity in all.

Use 1. It is first a reproof to all the sons of men, that have not yet attained to this grace of faith; let a man be never so lively in the life of sense, that he can relish his meat and drink, and sleep, and walk, and talk, &c. yet all the actions of his life, without the life of faith, is but a dead life; when a man is most lively in the life of sense, it is but the action of a dying man; let a man live the life of reason, and so as that he can discourse never so wisely and judiciously, and that he can converse with all sorts of men, and transact businesses in great dexterity, yet it is but a dead life. If a man be lively in whoredom, drunkenness, pride, &c. this is the life of lust, and is but a dead life; A woman that lives in pleasure, is dead while she liveth, 1 Tim. 5:6. This is no life of Christ, Is it any other life then a Turk, or an Infidel may live? What, is there no difference between men that have been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, and the life of a Jew, or a Barbarian? Am I called a Christian, and live not the life of a Christian? A Jew or a Turk may

live the life of sense as well as I; or is there no use of reason among the Romans and Grecians, before they heard of Christ? Were they not the fountains of all the liberal Sciences? And shall the life of a Christian be no more than the life of a Pagan to this day? Yea, and which is worse, Shall a Christian live the life of pride, and wantonness, and covetousness, and distempered passions? Shall men pretend to be Christians, and yet not at all to live the life of faith? Now what a dead life is all this? What a pity is it to see men and women so active at the life of sense and reason, and lust, and so dead-hearted to the life of faith? And yet this is all the life men live, till God put a principle of life by faith into the heart; in the mean time, if God should cut the thread of our life, we should have dropped into hell without recovery: what a poor life is it, that men should be active about sense and reason, and lust, and gain, and yet sin unpardoned, and the life of holiness not so much as sought after to this day? What pity is it to see so much life of nature working the death of our souls?

Use 2. To exhort us all, as ever we desire to be living souls in God's sight, and to live like Christ, (and can we live as Christians without faith?) to learn to live by faith; and the better to stir you up to this, consider that not only our life is dead, but without this, the life of Satan works mightily in us, Ephes. 2:2, without faith we have our conversation after the spirit that ruleth in the air, it works energetically, and what a poor life is it, to work the life of Satan? Yet consider that without faith, everything in this life is unclean, 1 Tit. 15:16, the very meat and drink we receive into our bodies is unclean, because we receive it not by faith, 1 Tim. 4:3, it is the want of faith that keepeth good things from us; Christ could not do many things among them, because of their unbelief, Mar. 6:5. Unbelief kept Moses and Aaron out of the promised Land, Numb. 20:12, and the Prince from tasting of the

plenty, 2 King. 7, ult. All the distempers and disquietness you meet with in this world, springs from unbelief; look but back to all the murmurings of thy soul, and tell me if it be not all an act of unbelief, Numb. 14:2,11. How long will this people murmur and not believe? If God have promised to give them the Land, what need they to murmur, how great soever the people be? Is it not an easy matter for God to blow down their Cities? If therefore you see any discontentment or murmuring, know it is want of belief; and therefore as ever you desire to live a quiet life, as ever you would see comfortable days, and would see your sin pardoned, so learn to live the life of the Lord Jesus, learn to attend as for your lives, to the word of the living God, which is able to beget the life of faith in you, Rom. 10:17. Live not under dry nurses: In the fear of the Lord, delight in such a Ministry, as wherein the tongue of faith may speak a word in due season, Isaiah 50:4. And so, be careful to pray for a spirit of faith; You say, how can you pray for faith, without faith? Why, if a man be importunate for a spirit of grace, he shall have it, Luke 11:9, to 13, though he be not heard as a friend, yet he shall be heard for his importunity; if you have but learned to pray for grace, God will give you it at length, and wrestle with God for a blessing; And by all means take heed you live not a life of lust, nor content yourselves in a life of sense, for either of these will choke faith; so long as we are lively at our lusts, there is no room for faith: Religion loves to lie clean and sweet, Christ will not dwell in an house of drunkenness, and profaneness, &c. therefore abandon all unclean lusts, Cease to do evil, and learn to do well, Isaiah 1:16, and take heed of the world, or else it will choke the life of faith.

Use 3. It may serve to teach Christians that have received this life of faith, to learn to live by their faith; Many a poor Christian hath received it, yet the Lord be merciful to us, such bunglers are we, we cannot live the life we

have received; what a shame is it, that we should know we have received Christ, and yet live no more like him? As you may see in the manifold failings of men, contrary to the forenamed lives.

Use 4. Of comfort to any Christian man, that either desires, or doth live this life of faith: Many a poor man is willing to become a Christian, but that he thinks he shall live an uncomfortable life, that he shall now bid adieu to all his old acquaintance, and live like a mope in the world; but be not deceived, there is no fear of such discouragements in the life of faith; the life of grace and of faith, is far beyond the life of sense and reason; for a man to live such a life, as to see all his sins pardoned, and to do all his actions by the rule of the word, and to wait upon Christ for acceptance, let me tell you, the Angels in Heaven live no better a life then this, and therefore let no man be discouraged, for there is no life like to a Christian life; notwithstanding all other lives you may lie down in sorrow, Isaiah 50:11. And for you that have already learned to live this life, let me tell you, the more faithfully you live, the more lively you will be.

Use 5. An use of trial to know whether we live this life of faith or no, if not a life of faith, thou dost not live the life of a Christian, either thou wantest faith, or the exercise of faith; but of this see more as followeth.

APPLICATION I. – INSTRUCTIONS IN FAITH.

WE COME NOW TO a sixth use of the point, because it contains in it the whole life of a Christian; Let it therefore be the use of instruction to all Christians, to learn how to live this life of faith, both of justification, and sanctification, and consolation, which is our spiritual life; and also how to live a natural life in this world, and all by faith.

Now first to open to you the life of faith in matter of justification, which is the first foundation of our Christian and comfortable life in this world.

Justification you heard consists in pardon of sin, through the applying of the righteousness of Christ to the soul, Col. 2:13. He hath quickened us, forgiving us all our trespasses, and sins; Our souls are dead, until the pardon of sin hath put quickening into them, We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the Law, Rom. 3:20. Now then that you may be instructed in the practice of faith, to the obtaining of the pardon of your sins, upon which depends all our comfort in this life and in another; Let me show you, how faith doth justify us, that we may the better learn to live by faith in Christ Jesus, for the pardon of our sins.

There be four principal acts and works of faith, which it doth exercise in the heart of a man unto his justification. And there be some others which faith doth exercise in a man's heart after his justification, and in all these he doth live the life of faith.

First, to our justification, faith hath this work in the heart, it convinces the heart of a man, convinces him of two things; First, of sin, and consequently of the danger by reason of sin, not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ to salvation all this while: when the Holy Ghost is come, he will convince the world of sin, Of sin, because they believe not in me, John 16:8, that is the first work of faith, as it prepares us, and leads us to justification, and makes way for it, though not that act which doth justify us; faith in the truth of God's word, revealed to us in the ministry thereof, it convinces us of our sin, and especially our sin of unbelief; we find ourselves convinced of infidelity, and of our dangerous condition by reason of that sin. A man may hear a thousand Sermons, and yet they never work kindly upon him, till they be mixed with faith, Heb. 4:2, that is, not with so much faith as to convince him, that the word of God is true, which he hath not believed hitherto. It is true indeed, by the preaching of the Law, and the application thereof to the conscience, a man's heart may be made sensible of sin, and of his dangerous estate, but that may, and many times doth, end in utter despair; and so may this faith that convinces us of sin, in regard of not believing, end in despair, if it here rest; but this faith when God gives it a convincing power in the soul, and intends to lead to justification, it doth not only convince of sin and danger, but it convinces us also of the truth and goodness of all the promises offered to us in the Gospel, and satisfies the soul that there is pardon with God, Psal. 130:4, there the spirit of God breathes in a humble Christian out of deep distresses both of inward and

outward estate: but what doth faith in this case? It convinces such a soul, that yet nevertheless there is pardon to be found with God, and there is plenteous redemption wrought by Christ: and there are many gracious promises revealed in the word, and faith convinces us of the truth and goodness of them, could we but get our part in them. And as it possesseth us, that there is mercy with God, so it convinces us of a possibility that mercy is to be had, Who knows (saith the King of Nineveh) but that God may have mercy, &c. Jonah 3:9. Joel 2:13,14. This is the first work of faith as it sets us forward, and leads us on to justification. There is an opinion that many a man hath of the possibility of the pardon of his sins, which springs not from the conviction of faith, in respect of the riches of God's grace, or the plenteous redemption of Christ, or the truth and goodness of God's promises, but it conceives a possibility of pardon from the hope he hath, that he hath not lived so wickedly, but God may have mercy on him, as well as on another man; Now when faith convinces a man of sin, and withal of a possibility of pardon, yet it convinces him not upon that ground, because he hath not sinned so desperately, for he thinks himself of all others the chief of sinners, Tim. 1:13-15, so that if a man can but see the work of faith in his heart, he may conceive he hath had the first work of faith upon him, as it leads on to justification.

2. A second work of faith is, that it subdues the heart, and that word reacheth far, it subdues it to sundry exercises.

First it subdues the heart to lay down all opposition against God, all weapons of hostility, it strikes them all out of his hand, it subdues us to lay down all confidence of our own worth and goodness: even as a Rebell that hath taken up Arms against his Prince, and if a gracious pardon be proclaimed, that if he will lay down his weapons and come in, if you should

now see him submit and throw down his weapons, and forsake his strong holds, and yield himself up to his Prince, is it not an evident sign, such a man believes the truth of his pardon? For if he did not, he would stand still upon his guard, and maintain hostility against his Prince; if but once he lay aside these, you may be sure he believes his pardon; and so may you speak of your own souls, if you can submit to God, and lay down all confidence in yourselves and your own worth, you may know it is faith in confidence of the pardon that hath subdued your hearts thus far; this is that which the holy Prophet holds forth, Isaiah 55:7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and God will abundantly pardon; it is an evident sign that we draw near unto God, for pardon of our sin, when we forsake our former imaginations; Ephraim shall say, what have I to do anymore with Idols? Hosea 14:8. In thee the fatherless find mercy, ver. 3. When they renounce running to Idolaters, and cast aside their Idols themselves, then they believe there is mercy to be found with God for fatherless creatures, and therefore they will have no more to do with any sin. This is another work of faith, and tends to, and leads on the soul to justification.

Secondly, as faith subdues the heart to lay aside enmity against God, so it subdues us to a reverent esteem and affection to the means of grace, and to the Instruments that convince us of our sins; and though a rebellious heart kicks against them, yet faith will subdue the heart to a reverent and amiable respect to those persons that have thus convinced them, Acts 2:37.

Thirdly, Faith subdues us to a serious consideration of our own estates, and to consider what we should do, and likewise to a consulting with others about it; A natural man minds not the things of God, he will find himself anything to do, rather than that, but faith brings the heart to a serious consideration of its estate; Luke 15:17, it is said he came to himself, and

grows solicitous what he should do, and if a soul cannot help it self, it cries to others, as they did, Acts 2:37.

Fourthly, Faith subdues the heart of a Christian to a readiness to do anything according to what his own heart sees by the word is to be done: Sirs, what shall I do to be saved, Acts 13:16, and Acts 9:5,6. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Say but what, and I will do it; as the rich Merchant man, he would go sell all for the pearl, Mat. 13:45,46. This is the work of faith, to do or suffer anything, so he may but find Christ.

Fifthly, faith subdues the heart in the end to an humble confession of sins against God, that though before we never knew what it was to pray, at least not humbly, now we can confess our great wickedness; and that which before we thought but little, we now see to be out of measure sinful; we now look at ourselves as chief of sinners, now we largely lay open our vileness and baseness, the carriage of the matter seems to be worse than our sins themselves; I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son; It were, he thought, a shame to such a Father, to have such an unthrift to be his son, he had not the temper of a son in him, and now he would be content to be as an hired servant; now our uncircumcised heart is humbled, Lev. 26:41. So the King of Nineveh in this case, he rises from his throne, and puts on sack-cloth, they debase themselves to the dust, as unworthy of any mercy.

Thirdly, Faith, when it leads us to justification, it opens the heart, and that both to speak to God in prayer, to long after him with sighs and groans, and unutterable expressions, and also it opens the heart diligently to attend to the word of eternal life, Acts 16:14, to see what great need we have of listening to the word, Psal. 85:8. I will hearken what God saith, for he will speak to his people peace. And as it opens our hearts to listen, so it opens

our hearts to an earnest calling upon God for peace and pardon; everything sinks deeply, now that faith opens the heart. Now, saith the King of Nineveh, let man and beast cry mightily to the Lord, Jonah 3:7,8. That is the nature of the work of faith, it opens the heart to cry for renewal of justification, Psal. 55:1,2. Now a man can tell what he stands in need of, now he doth not only confess his wickedness, but declare his iniquity, and is sorry for his sin, Psal. 38:8. Lord be merciful to my soul, for I have sinned against thee, Psal. 41:4.

4. A fourth act of faith as it leads to justification, is, that it hath a power to establish and fixe the heart upon Christ, so as the heart relies on Christ for pardon, and upon him alone. This is that act which doth justify us; it fixes the heart upon Christ, to look to him, and to wait upon him, and depend on him, to cast myself upon him, though I do not yet know what he will do for me, there I look for it, and never give over till I find it: This is properly called believing on Christ, rolling myself upon him; and to this the promise of justification, and pardon of sin is made; as a child that had been scared by some terrible sight, turns away from it, and clasps about the Father, not because he is unsafe, but that he may be safe; such is the case of a poor Christian, that hath been convinced of his sin, and scared at the sight of it, he is discouraged from confidence of his own goodness, and being sensible of his danger, he clasps hold upon Christ, and looks for salvation from him, and therefore cleaves and hangs about him for it, and waits upon him, though he be not certain what Christ will do for him; this soul is now properly in an estate of justification, like as it is with a man, that hath plunged himself into desperate debts, and many Serjeants pursuing him to lay him up, which if once he be taken and laid up, he knows he must never thence depart till he have paid all, which he knows his estate will never

reach unto, and of a sudden he spies out a man, of all others the most likely to take up the business for him, and he hath no hopes but in him, yea none can do it but he, and he hath done it for many, and now he will not let him go, but wearies him with suits till he become bound for him; so is this case, when once the soul of a Christian is brought to this pass, it looks at Christ, and neither rich nor poor, young nor old, but at him; then indeed our souls put forth that act, by which we are justified: in the sight of God from all our sins. This act of faith doth insert itself into all the former; when a man is convinced of the danger of his sin, he believes a possibility of pardon, and so of the rest. In all these is this act of faith interwoven, to rely upon Christ for grace and peace and pardon, and not to look from him. Isaiah 45:22. Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved; this is to come unto Christ that we may be saved, John 6:35. To this, healing and pardon and peace is promised, Mat. 11:28. This is the formal act of faith, by which we believe on Christ for justification, not that act by which we believe our sins are pardoned; we do not say (as the Papists conceive we say) That faith by which we are justified, doth justify us, by putting forth this act, to believe that our sins are pardoned, and that the promise of grace is ours; but we say we believe on Christ, and rely and wait upon him, that all the promises may be ours, that special grace and mercy may through him be conveyed unto us: so that this is the very point, when a Christian man's heart is brought to this, being humbled with sight of sin, the heart opened to confess the sin, to look after Christ, and no whither but after him, now is the soul brought on to justification; and now faith having thus brought the soul to justification, it hath a further act about our justification.

That is, by the gracious and mighty power of Christ, and the virtue of the promise, it persuades us that all the promises are ours, that pardon of sin,

and special grace is ours. This is an act of faith, that flows from our justification, and follows it, and is conversant about it; it applies God's special love to me, as well as to any other. Thou hast in love to my soul delivered me from the pit of corruption, Isaiah 38:17. This is not that act of faith which doth justify him, but that which declares and manifests his justification, faith having justified us, it then puts forth this act to make us believe that we are justified, and that our sins are pardoned, and to quiet our hearts therein, Psal. 32:5. I said, I will confess my sins, and thou forgavest me; When he could come to God, and look after God, for the putting away of his iniquity, this is not that act of faith by which his sin was forgiven him, but it was forgiven him before, and faith now comes and shows that it is forgiven. And from this act of faith, flow three notable fruits.

First, Peace of conscience, Rom. 5:1.

Secondly, Boldness of access to God, Rom. 5:2, Eph. 3:12.

And thirdly, Joy in the holy Ghost, Rom. 5:3,4. 1 Pet. 1:8. This is the work of faith after justification.

But besides this, there is another act of faith which renews our justification, and continues it, and establisheth us therein, it renews the sense and sight of the pardon of our sins; for consider, it is the failing of many Christians who are truly justified, and have made use of their faith to cast themselves upon Christ, and yet after that time, they detain this grace of faith in much unthankfulness and unrighteousness, and use not their faith to renew and continue their justification until they come to fall into some gross sin, and then they clasp about Christ again, and thence comes all that deadness of heart, that is in many of the best of God's servants, by not putting their faith to exercise in this kind; their conscience grows dull and cold, and the sweetness of the pardon of their sin is vanished and departed,

and hence it is that ye have many an old experienced Christian as much to seek, as many a soul that never yet knew what assurance meant; he will pray with more life, his heart more subdued to the will of God, and more convinced of his corruption, then many an experienced Christian that in time past had more sense of his justification. And hence it is, that an ancient Christian will take more carnal liberty to sin against God, then many a poor soul dare do, that never yet knew what it is to be assured of pardon of sin; but he follows hard after Christ, he is more savory, and more feelingly goes about any Christian duty, then many a man that hath had much assurance: Not, but the truth is there still, but it is very dead and dulled; justification is there, but the life of it is much decayed: This is therefore a life of faith, and a work of faith, as it is conversant about our justification. Consider here Abraham and David's example; David when he had fallen into a soul sin, he sought for mercy; but Abraham's fall was not like this, yet even Abraham when he was holy, was justified in the sight of God, yea even then it is said, he was justified in the sight of God, and that by faith, Rom. 4:3-5. Now saith the Apostle, To him that worketh, wages is due, not of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly: And speaking of Abraham, his faith is counted for righteousness, even Abraham believes in him that justifies the ungodly: What do you think Abraham looked at himself as an ungodly man, when he was justified in the sight of God? Yet so saith the Apostle, though a man lived as graciously as Abraham or David, yet blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile; Let a man keep his spirit without guile, yet he must not believe in the sincerity of his own heart, but in God; Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified, Psal. 143:2. Faith not only helps us to clasp about

Christ, but it assures us, that we are justified, and daily puts us in mind of our ungodliness, and unworthiness of any mercy, it still puts us in mind, that of sinners we are the chief, 1 Tim. 1:15. This is a true, and lively work of faith, it makes us sensible of our daily ungodliness.

If indeed that faith which justifies us were but a transient act, and no more, our justification would lie dead, but that faith that justifies us, makes us daily carry in our hearts a sense of all daily ungodliness, and of our need of the grace of Christ, for daily peace and pardon, and therefore causeth us daily to seek to Christ, as if we had never known what assurance of justification had meant.

Use 1. Now to apply this first to all those who have sought for peace and pardon of sin, and have not found it to this very day. The truth is, you wrong your souls, because you seek for justification in that wherein it stands not; many a poor soul never thinks himself justified, nor his sin pardoned, till he can believe it; such a soul lives a very wearisome life, and without ground, for such a misconstruction of the truth of God doth much disquiet a poor soul.

Object. You say; May I believe that I am justified, and that my sins are pardoned, before I be assured of it?

Answ. I answer, Yes, for the assurance of your justification is not that which justifies you, but that which comforts you; as soon as ever God gives you an heart to rest upon Christ, and to roll yourselves upon him for justification, and to wait upon him, and to look no other way but to him, thou art justified in God's sight. And therefore to help thee herein, take this counsel.

First, look not so much at the heinousness of thy sin, though never so great, for they are not so great, but God hath pardoned as great and greater,

this is a burden insupportable, thou takest thy sins more to heart then God would have thee.

Secondly, apply thy heart to bewail thy unbelief before God, be ashamed of it, that having had so many experiences, thou shouldest be no more confident of God's mercy to thee.

Thirdly, pray for a spirit of faith.

Fourthly, meditate upon the abundant grace of God in Christ; with him is plenteous Redemption, rich, and precious, and free promises; look wishly at them, and there is a secret power in them to persuade the heart of a man to believe.

Fifthly, meditate of the many sinful creatures God hath showed rich grace and mercy to; Our Fathers trusted in thee, Psal. 22. God hath showed mercy to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, to David, and all these gross sinners. And this may be a means, through God's grace, to quiet thy heart, though yet thou hast found no assurance.

Use 2. Let this be applied to you that have found all these works of saving and quickening faith in your souls; if you have found faith convincing you of sin, subduing your lusts, opening your heart, and hath assured you of the pardon of your sin, let me say to you, as you have begun to learn to live by faith, so live forever daily by the same faith, say not, that faith that justified you is dead; time was when you were in trouble, you sought, God and he quieted you, but it is not so now, and therefore you think there is an end of your justification. Nay, but Abraham lives by his faith, as long as he lived in this world; many a poor Christian wonders he should be so dead-hearted, and so little power of grace in him; why, but hast thou not forgot thy justification? Hast thou not left off to stir up thyself to lay hold on Christ? Isaiah 64:5,7. We have not taken pains with our souls to clasp about Christ

for new supply of justification; wonder not then if our best righteousness be like a menstruous cloth: and therefore as thou desirest to maintain a lively spirit in thee, so daily walk in the sense of thy ungodliness, and daily clasp about Christ, that pardon of sin may be as new a mercy to thee as ever it was.

APPLICATION II. – ASSURANCE OF JUSTIFICATION.

WE NOW COME TO speak of the second work of faith, concerning our justification, by which it doth assure us of our justification; for the life of faith doth not only bring us on to the justification, but in time it brings us to the assurance of it; It is a point of special use, and very necessary for all that have not attained this assurance, and expedient for such to consider as have already attained it; It is by faith that the Apostle here saith, Christ hath loved him, and given himself for him; it doth not only procure us pardon of sin, but it tells us and assures us of it.

Now, how doth faith prevail with our hearts, to assure us of our justification?

Answer. Faith works this by four principal Acts of the life of faith, which are these. First, by applying general promises to our particular estates, general promises of general mercies; I put them both together; mercies, whether of God's free love, and mercy in himself; or whether merciful great works that he hath wrought for us, or gracious promises he hath made to us: though they be general and common to all the people of God, yet faith

assumes them and singles them out, and applies them particularly to a man's self; faith claims a propriety in all that good, which God is in himself, which he hath wrought for his people, and hath given to his servants; as is evident in the text, Who hath loved me; You? What you Paul, more than Peter? Why, he hinders no man from claiming his part in the common salvation, but whatever they do, he challenges his part; I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me; and Peter lives by the same faith, not by Paul's faith, but by the same faith of the Son of God, who hath loved him; and so doth every Christian man, he lives by applying God's free grace and love, which rests in God himself, and by applying that great redemption God hath wrought for us in Christ, which is the common means of salvation, to all that believe in him, and we live by those promises he hath given us. This is the proper work of faith, it applies the mercy and grace of God, the redemption of Christ, the promises of the Gospel, and makes them all a man's own particular, and by that we live, and faith it is, that so applies them. But somewhat more plainly, because it so nearly concerns our salvation: see how faith is said to apply these general promises of general blessings to our own particular estates.

It is the property of faith to apply, not only promises, but the whole word of God, as well as the attributes and benefits of God; as see in particular, faith applies the Commandments, and threatening's, as also the promises; and by applying one of these, it applies them all.

How doth faith apply the Commands of God? Why, Psal. 119:66. I have believed thy Commandments; The meaning is, I do believe it is my duty, to perform every one of the Commandments, as much as any man's duty else, it is my case, to me is the Commandment given, he doth not name me, when he saith, Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day; but whosoever

thou art, remember that thou keep the Sabbath day holy; Now faith saith, this is particularly spoken to men, whatever my name be, to me is the Commandment spoken, and I am bound in conscience to yield obedience to it, to make it mine own duty, though I be not named, yet faith tells me, it is given to me; Another man that is of an unbelieving heart, he applies it not to himself; did he believe it, he durst not allow himself to do any evil in God's sight, or any that belongs to him; So when it is said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; the Commandment names not Joseph, yet faith makes him say, How shall I commit this great wickedness, and so sin against God? The Commandment takes hold of his heart, and he dares not break it; Psal. 119:11. I have hid thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee; And so for the threatening's, when God threatened Nineveh should be destroyed, Jonah 3:45. The people believed God, and everyone turned from his evil way, and cried mightily to God; Now faith believes a threatening, as well as a promise, because it applies it, as spoken to itself, it makes it mine own case, and therefore it takes some serious course to prevent the judgment threatened. This is the property of a lively faith, and so it is with the promises, faith believes and applies them, I have claimed thy testimonies as mine heritage forever, Psal. 119:111. They are the very joy of my heart: Faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. 10:36.

Now consider, there is a great deal of difference between a Commandment, a threatening, and a promise, in respect of faiths ability to apply them. Where God hath bestowed a lively faith upon a man, so as he is able to make a Commandment his own, and a threatening his own, and is therefore struck in conscience with obedience to the one, and fear of the other, yet, it is an harder matter to apply the promises; Why? Because the promises are of a more spiritual and heavenly nature, then either the

Commandments or threatening's be; no Christian but believes a Commandment or a threatening, long before he can believe a promise; and the reason is, because the Commandment, and threatening's are written in men's hearts by nature, but the promises are merely Evangelical, and the Gospel is far above the natural frame of men's hearts, and thence it is that faith is very backward, after it is once true, to apply promises; indeed a dead faith would fain be meddling with promises, but true faith that bows the heart to apply, Commandments and threatening's may yet fall short of applying promises. Tell a man of the Commandment, of keeping the Sabbath holy; I should have kept it, saith the soul, but I have broken it, and therefore the threatening is due to me, The wages of sin is death, I am therefore a poor damned soul; this faith can very readily apply, but then come on with a promise, that Christ came to seek and to save such as found themselves lost, and that He came to call sinners to repentance; and You hath he quickened, that were dead in trespasses and in sins; the soul hath much ado to believe this, he will say, This promise belongs to any rather than to me; to such as are able to pray, &c. but I am a faithless, dead-hearted creature, to me these promises belong not; yet notwithstanding, the same faith that learned me to apply Commandments and threatening's, will bring me on to apply promises too; it is but the same grace that puts forth itself a little stronger, and so applies the promises; and so in time it will come to this, If the promise say, Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, and I see myself a lost creature, then faith tells me, the promise is given to any that find themselves thus and thus qualified; Doth the promise say, Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden? I see myself so, and therefore the promise belongs to me; so that though my name be written in the promise, no more than in the Commandment, yet faith lets me see it, in

such a condition as upon which the Commandment is made; I therefore claim the promise for my comfort, as well as the Commandment for my duty: this is the first work of faith that assures me of my justification; If therefore such a soul should now find itself willing to believe the commands and threatening's for its portion, why then conceive, the same faith that makes the Commandments and threatening's thine, makes the promise thine also; Take one, and take all. It is the Command, thou shouldst believe in the name of the Son of God, as well as to keep holy the Sabbath day; notable is the Scripture to this purpose, Isaiah 1:18,19. It is as full and gracious a promise, as any the land of promise flows with, that If a man's sins were as scarlet, they shall be as wool; But how shall I know that this is my portion, that God will wash away my bloody and continued sins? Why, If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good things of the land, but if you be disobedient, you shall perish. How shall I know then that the promise is mine? Why, God hath commanded that you should believe on the name of the Son of God, 1 John. 3:21, and it is my duty to believe, that though my sins were as scarlet, they shall be white as wool; How shall I know that? Because God hath given me a heart willing to obey, not out of horror of conscience, and fear of wrath, for that may fail a man, but if my heart yield to it, that the Commandment is holy, just and good, then I have as much right to the promise, as to the Commandment. The same David that saith, Psal. 119:24. I have made thy Commandments my delight, and Counselors, saith verse 111. I have claimed them as mine heritage: If I can make the Command my counsel, I may claim the promise as my inheritance forever; so that faith works this: to whom the command is given, and received with willing obedience, to them belongs the promises; and thus faith assures me of my justification.

Secondly, Faith brings a soul to assurance of justification, by putting life into our prayers, for it is the prayer of faith, that both saves the sick and the sinful soul, Jam. 5:15. To show you, that it is faith that helps a man to pray, and by praying for pardon of sin, God answers the desire of a man's soul, and seals up to him the pardon of it, for, The Lord will fulfill the desires of them that fear him, Psal. 145:18, when God bows our hearts to obey his Commandments, and then gives us hearts to pray, he answers our prayers, and makes it appear, he hath not turned his ear from us, Psal. 66:18-20. If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me; but he hath heard me, &c. God gives a man faith to apply Commandments, so that he regards no iniquity in his heart; why, then blessed be God that hath heard my prayer, and given me to find his mercy; faith puts life into my soul, in regard of the Commandment, and that puts life into my prayer, I regard his word, and trust he will regard mine; thus faith sets a man to work in prayer, and thereby find, that God hath regard unto his prayers, so you read, 1 John 3:22. Hereby we know that He heareth us, because we keep his Commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in his sight; faith sets us upon a course of obedience, and quickens our hearts to earnest prayer, and so makes our hearts believe it shall be granted.

Thirdly, Faith brings on a soul to assurance of justification, by preparing his heart to receive the Spirit of grace; it is the Spirit of grace, that seals us to the day of redemption, Rom. 8:16. Ephes. 1:14. Sealed with the holy Spirit; The Spirit of God doth seal it up to my heart, with some lively experience of God's mercy, that my sin is pardoned and washed in the blood of Christ.

Now how come I by this spirit? Faith prepares my heart to receive this sealing spirit, Ephes. 1:13,14. In whom after ye believed, yet were sealed; If

God give us the earnest of eternal glory, we are sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, which Spirit speaks evidently and certainly, 1 John. 2:27. Now faith makes room for the Spirit of grace to come into the heart; and that it doth, by purifying the heart, Acts 15:9. Now faith purifies our hearts, by applying all the Commandments of God to our souls, so as that we dare commit no iniquity, and so are clean and marvelous innocent, ashamed, and dare not meddle with any sin. Now the soul stands in awe of God's word, and now faith having purified the heart, to make conscience of sin, it makes room for the Spirit, for the Spirit will not lodge in an unclean heart: as in particular, John was sent to prepare the way for Christ to come; and he comes by his Spirit into our souls, as well as by his human nature in the flesh, Luke 3:4-6. That all flesh may see the salvation of our God; How doth he this? By bringing down high mountains, and lifting up low valleys, making rough spirits plain, and crooked spirits straight; and it is the work of faith that doth all this, faith makes a man see himself, of all sinners the chief and most miserable, and of all creatures the most unworthy of mercy; and lifts up low hearts, that were sunk down like valleys, to believe there is hope in Christ; and so faith in time by this means brings on a soul to see the salvation of God, and so come to lively assurance of the precious promises of God to become ours.

Lastly, Faith assures us of our justification, by scattering all the doubts, mists, and clouds of all that darkness, that obscures our assurance of justification. It is the nature of faith to work out doubting and distrust. Now there are four doubts which do most bemist, and overcloud the eyes of God's people that are justified, and yet cannot see it, nor be assured of it.

Doubt 1. The first doubt that troubles the mind of a justified person, is the abundance and store of sin, he sees such a world of filthiness in him, that he

never saw before, as that he thinks, it is scarce possible that ever God should be merciful to such an unprofitable creature as he hath been; and it works more strongly, when God afflicts the body with sickness, as well as the conscience with sense of sin; this wearies him, and makes him to think, that salvation is far from him.

But now faith by applying the promises makes out that doubt, that it is not store of sin, that can hinder the favor of God to my soul, Jer. 51:5. Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, though their land was filled with sin, against the holy One of Israel; It spies some or other such word, that I shall not be forsaken for my sin, though I be brim full, though filled with sin; where there is fullness of sin, there is emptiness of grace; and yet faith scatters this, by spying out some such promise as this; God never loved me at the first for my goodness, and he will not hate me now for my wickedness; Israel was not forsaken, no more shall I, though I be full of sin; Childhood, and youth, and riper years, all full; and the same faith applies such a promise as that: Though my sins were as Scarlet of a double die, committed over and over again, though crying sins, and such like scarlet, that will never be washed out; though notable notorious sins, though eminent and seen afar off, yet there is a power in the blood of Christ, to make them white as snow: Now faith will stumble upon some such promise or other, and so assures us by removing this doubt; And as it removes this doubt, of store of sin, by applying the promises, so also by applying the plenteousness of Christ's redemption, Psal. 130:2,3, 4. With the Lord there is mercy, and plenteous redemption, ver.7,8. And also, by applying the plentiful mercy of God, Psal. 51:1, so as though my sins were never so many and great, yet God's mercy is infinitely more. And thus faith hath scattered the first doubt, that hinders the assurance of my justification.

Doubt 2. Another doubt is, These promises of rich mercy and plenteous redemption, indeed might be mine, could I be but truly humbled; but I want thorough humiliation, my heart is not humbled enough, and these promises are made to humble souls.

Answer. This is a sore objection, but faith will not rest until it hath scattered this, as well as the former, and faith helps us against this, by spying out three or four passages of humiliation, which argues it to be sufficient in God's acceptance.

First, Faith will help the soul to look upon Christ, and to grieve as much for crucifying him, as for mine own woeful estate, Zach. 12:10. We look upon him by an eye of faith, and so it helps us to mourn bitterly, that we have sinned against him, and that is humiliation enough to find mercy; If I can mourn for my sins against Christ, and the means of grace, as well as for mine own miserable estate, I have humiliation enough, and faith will persuade me so.

Secondly, If I be so far humbled, as to come off with self-loathing, that my heart is broken, because I have broken God's heart; this is humiliation enough to find pardon. It is a notable place, that of Ezek. 6:9, these are they to whom God will show mercy, They shall loath themselves, because they have broken my heart; When we first mourn for our piercing of Christ, and then loath ourselves for so doing, this is humiliation enough, and it is a sign God remembers us, else we could never have remembered him.

Thirdly, We have been humbled enough, when we have found sin an evil and a bitter thing in itself, Jer. 2:19. Faith applies this to us; to look at sin as a base unworthy carriage, that such wretches as we should stand in no fear of God to this day, this casts bitterness and shame upon a man, and when it is so, then is a man kindly humbled, Eccles. 7:26.

Fourthly, A man is fit for mercy when the heart is humbled, so far as to stoop to the yoke of all God's Commandments; when we look at ourselves as not too good, nor too great, to take up God's yoke of chastisements, or Commandments, willing to do or suffer anything, Mat. 11:29, when his heart is set to do it, as well as he can, and it grieves him that he can do it no better, then is he humbled enough, and faith will assure him, that he is so.

Doubt 3. Thirdly, Another doubt that faith clears, is this; The heart is troubled because it wants faith: These promises are very comfortable to them that have faith to believe, but I want faith; and, He that believeth, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, is damned already; I want faith, and that keeps me from comfort: Now faith in the heart will not rest till it hath cleared itself, as

First, It will be very unquiet, till it come to discern itself, and that is an undoubted testimony that faith is there; it so boils and wrestles against these unquiet doubting's, Psal. 132:4,5, it will not rest till it have found out, either assurance, or sense of want of assurance; the more life is in a man, the more he struggles against his disease.

Secondly, Faith makes a man diligent in seeking to, and using all means for the quieting of his heart; he seeks to the word, and Sacraments, and conference of God's servants, duties of humiliation and the like, where Christ is likely to be found, Cant. 3:1-3.

Thirdly; Faith in the meantime doth not charge God foolishly, but subdues the heart to a reverent fear of God, and an amiable respect unto him, in the midst of all his doubting's, but an unbelieving heart murmurs that God should single out him from so many others, but faith blames its own heart, it is not lift up. There is nothing wanting in God, nor in his Ordinances, saith faith, but the want is in myself.

Fourthly, Faith the less it can cleave to the promises, the more it lays hold on the Commandments and threatening's, and so it subdues a man to tenderness of conscience, and so is made more watchful against all the occasions of sin.

Fifthly, In the end faith comes to see, that it may have strong faith, without assurance; he can see he cleaves to Christ, and yet wants assurance; then he comes to see, that it is not want of faith, that he wants assurance, and this helps him much.

Doubt 4. The fourth and last doubt, is from want of feeling. Many a soul thinks, he either never attained true justification, or if he had, he hath lost it, and he doubts all his former hopes were but delusions, because he wants feeling.

Now here faith, First, will assure us, that notwithstanding we may do well enough, though we have no feeling, for 2 Cor. 5:7, the soul hath learned to live by faith, and not by sense; so did Abraham, Rom. 4:19, 1 Pet. 1:8.

Secondly, Faith will bow our hearts to wait upon him, that hides his face from the house of Israel, in case of want of feeling, Isaiah 8:17, Lam. 3:26,27.

Thirdly, Faith will out-wrestle want of feeling, by observing God's manner of dealing, either with himself in former times, or with other Christians in like case; as it was with David, Psal. 22:1. Feeling was gone, and how doth he then help himself? Why, our Fathers trusted in thee, and thou deliveredst them, ver. 4,5.

Use 1. Is first to all those that are yet in an estate of nature, and yet say, you are sure you are justified; Whence came that? You say, your faith in Christ wrought it, How? If you would not be deceived, I beseech you wrong not your own souls, yours is a dead faith, and hath not applied the promises;

yea, but it applies the Commandments and threatening's; if you can walk without obedience, your assurance is naught; Learn you therefore to seek purity of heart and life, if ever you would have true peace.

Use 2. It is to exhort those that desire to be assured of the pardon of their sins; say not in the pride of your spirits as Haman did, To whom should the Lord be gracious rather than to me? No, no, proud creature, if thou wouldest have mercy from God to save thy soul, learn to live by faith, apply the Commandments and threatening's, and pray for grace to apply them aright, rest not till thou seest just cause to doubt, and yet rest not till those doubts be expelled and scattered.

Use 3. Of comfort to every poor soul, that finds this work of faith in their hearts; If thou findest this kind of working, thou mayest be assured of thy justification, give all diligence to make this sure; if you can apply Commandments and threatening's as well as promises, and art diligent in prayer for assurance, and seest many doubts for multitudes of sins, and fear thou wantest faith and the like, and hast found faith overcoming these; then thou mayest comfort thyself in this, thy justification is certain, and thou mayest be assured that it is so.

APPLICATION III. – THE LIFE OF JUSTIFICATION.

WE ARE COME TO speak of the third respect, in regard of which we live by faith, the life of justification, and that is in regard that by faith we continue the life of justification, and by the same faith do renew the sense and assurance of justification from time to time, not only at the first justified, nor only afterward assured, but we continue and renew both these from day today; so that this is now the point to be opened as before: That a Christian man, as long as he lives in this world, lives by faith.

Now a man lives by such a principle of life as doth not only put forth a living act, but a continued act, so that a godly man doth not only receive life from the dead, by his faith in Christ, but he continues to live by the same faith to this very day; By faith you stand, 2 Cor. 1:24, implying that a man doth not only come on to live in God's sight by faith, but to stand and continue so; faith lays hold of justification and pardon of sin in such sort as that it continues it to us. David did acknowledge the blessedness of those to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, (which is justification) in whose spirit there is no guile; he doth acknowledge them blessed in the forgiveness of

their sin, that is justification, which stands in not imputing sin to us, and in imputing Christ his righteousness to us, now this is our happiness; not only when we are sinful and rebellious, and fallen off from God in a fearful manner, it is not only needful that God should then not impute sin to us, nor only after our apostasies into gross evils, but blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth to sin; when in his spirit there is no guile, when there is nothing but innocence of life, as much as godly sincerity can reach unto, even then doth he live by God's not imputing sin to him; I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, 1 Cor. 4:3,4, even then when he could say, It was the rejoicing of his conscience, that he had walked in simplicity and godly purity, 2 Cor. 1:12, yet then he professes he was not justified thereby, that is not it, that quiets his heart, nor yields peace to his conscience, he knows not any sin allowed of in himself, nor any duty, but he had set himself to it: so that a Christian man continues his life of justification, not by his obedience, not by his singleness of heart, nor fruitfulness of his life, but he is still justified by his faith in the Son of God, by challenging his righteousness to us; nor is it the habit of faith, that justifies us so much, as chiefly the act of faith, it is not the having the grace of faith in our hearts, that makes us live the life of justification, but the act of faith put forth in a daily believing on the name of Christ for daily pardon, for so the holy Ghost usually describes our justification; he applies it to the act of believing, Acts 13:39. By him, all that believe in him, shall be justified from all those things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses; he doth not say, all that have faith are justified, but all that believe and act it: This is the formal act of faith, so that God requires of a Christian, not the having of faith to his justification, but the acting of it, a kind of continued act, there must be some work of faith still to apply

justification to us, Acts 10:43. To him give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall have remission of sins, not whosoever hath faith, but such as do believe; for though it be true, that when a man hath once put forth an act of the grace of justifying faith, his sins are forever pardoned; Their sin and iniquity will I remember no more, Jer. 31:34. And though it be true, that once justified, forever justified, once blessed, forever blessed, Gen. 27:33, and though after that time we should immediately fall frantic, not able to put forth an act of reason, much less an act of faith, yet we are blessed; yet nevertheless it will be a sin unto us, if we do not again and again upon all occasions make use of our faith in this main point of our salvation; yea, and as it will be a sin to us, so it will be our misery, for the want of this will make the life of our justification more dead and dulled, it will be a very lifeless life, we shall have little enlargement by it, little power of godliness from it; whereas, were the life of our justification stirring in us, it would put much life into all the ways of grace.

Now because this is a weighty point, and nearly concerns the spiritual life of all Christians, see some grounds of the truth, that presupposing a man is come into an estate of justification, and to assurance of it, that there is yet more work for faith, that the experience of it may be maintained and continued to us from day today.

Three grounds there be, upon which this is established.

First, taken from that frame of heart, which is found in the best of God's servants. There are three or four things very considerable in this case. First, in God's justified ones, there is an ungodly frame of heart still in them, in regard whereof, we had need continue to act our faith, and to renew it; It is expressed in the example of Abraham, who had not committed Adultery and murder, yet he had not whereon to boast; he was not justified by works,

Rom. 4:1-5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David accounts him a blessed man, in whose spirit there is no guile, speaking of David in his best times; There is then in David and in Abraham, an ungodly frame of heart, though the simplicity of their hearts do not allow themselves therein; therefore Abraham believes in him that justifies the ungodly: It is a word you would think were too harsh to apply to such faithful men as either of them were; it is commonly applied to wicked men, 1 Pet. 4:18. Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? Yet the Apostle would confess it of Abraham, and he is as ready to say it of himself, Of sinners I am chief, 1 Tim. 1:15, of whom even now I am chief. Abraham even then accounts himself an ungodly man, when in his heart and spirit there is no guile; so that Abraham stands not justified by the first act of his faith, his calling, but by his acting this faith; As long as we have flesh in us, there is an ungodly frame of heart in us, Gal. 5:17, a frame that doth not acknowledge God in all our ways, not fears, and obeys God so as becomes us. Notable is that expression of Job. 16:4, when his friends had reproached him fearfully and shamefully, so as his spirit was much kindled against them, but saith he, I could speak as you do, and were your soul in my souls stead, I could heap up words against you, and devise words to vex your souls; meaning he had the same frame of spirit in him that they had, he had that frame of distemper in his soul, that if he would but let loose his spirit, he could make them appear to be no better then hypocrites, and he could undermine all the signs and marks which they had of their integrity; he could say anything against them, as well as they could against him; a sign there was an ungodly and uncharitable frame of spirit in him, if he would let go his spirit a while. To show you, that such eminent professors, as Abraham, and David, and Paul,

and Job, turn me out four such of all that are born of women, and yet they will all tell you, there is an ungodly frame in all their hearts; and Abraham believes in him that justifies the ungodly, and saith David, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile; And therefore it will be sin to us, if we be not daily sensible of grace from Christ, daily to justify such ungodly wretches as we are.

Secondly, There is such a frame of heart in us, as is not only full of all ungodliness, but this frame is apt, and will show forth itself in us many times above what we can imagine, which requires this continued act of faith. Mat. 18:1-3. An ill distemper arose among the Disciples, who should be the greatest; a curious and vain question, and full of pride of heart; and discerning that distemper brake out, our Savior tells them, Except ye be converted and become as a child, ye cannot enter into Heaven: to show you that they had need of a new conversion, which is by applying justification on our part: unless you set your hearts anew about this work, that this may be healed and mortified, you shall not see the kingdom of God, and if a man be excluded God's kingdom, it is a sign his sin wanted pardon, not but that sin once pardoned is forever pardoned; and though it is impossible, but that a man truly converted should enter into the kingdom of Heaven; yet he must again be converted, and seek for renewed grace from Christ, or else sin will lie in the way, which God hath promised it shall not: but God that hath ordained the one, hath ordained the other; he that ordained that the sin of his servants shall not exclude them from the kingdom of Heaven, he hath ordained they should often renew the sense of their justification.

Thirdly, Another part of the ill frame of our hearts is, that even our best duties, that proceed from our best regenerate part, are imperfect, even our most gracious part, that helps us to preach and hear, to receive Sacraments,

and the very graces of God in us are imperfect, and the fruits of those graces are imperfect, that we stand in need of Christ's righteousness daily to be applied to us to cover these imperfections in us. Nehem. 13:22, when he had been most faithful in his place, and had set all in good order, Yet spare me O God, according to thy rich mercies: to show you, that though the good man saw no guile in his heart, he sought the reformation of all things, yet spare me for the defects of my best duties, then he casts himself on God for mercy, for sparing and pardon in his best performances. So Isaiah 64:6. Our best righteousness is as a menstruous rag: so the Priest was to bear holiness in his forehead, to take away the iniquity of their holy offerings, Exod. 28:36-38. And though all other examples should fail, as none of them can fail, that is evident, John 21:18. Simon, when thou art old, another man shall bind thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not, signifying what death he should die, meaning he should glorify God by being crucified, and was not this a glorious and comfortable thing, that he should die the same death that Christ did? Yes, it was; but saith our Savior, they shall lead thee whither thou wouldst not; as if Peter could be content to be shut of his martyrdom: though doubtless he was willing to profess Christ to the death, willing rather to die for him, then anymore to deny him; yet he puts him in mind, that he should carry weakness and backwardness with him, even to the Cross. So that even our best works, even martyrdom itself stands in need of pardoning and justifying grace, and God his not imputing the sin of them to us.

Fourthly, Another ungodly frame in the best of God's servants, is a readiness in our hearts when we are at the best, to sit loose from Christ, and to fall off from God; of ourselves I mean. What the covenant of God intercepts, that is no thank to us, but there is an evil heart of unbelief in us,

ready to depart from the living God, Heb. 3:12, hypocrites will certainly depart, and ver. 13. God's people must take heed, lest they come to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; sin is too subtle for you, and will draw you away, and harden your hearts from God's fear, Isaiah 63:17,18, and not only every carnal man, but every good man in his best estate is altogether vanity, Psal. 39:6,12. Such a stream of corruption is there in our hearts, that if a man do not look well to his standing, and hold fast to the Lord daily, he will be carried away; it is fitly expressed, Isaiah 64:6,7. We fade away like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind carry us away; and the reason is the same in the point now in hand, There is none that stirs up himself to take hold of thee; though we have taken hold of God long ago, at our first justification, yet because we do not stir up ourselves to lay hold on him again and again, it comes to pass that we are blasted like leaves: therefore know, that the more pardon of sin is applied to us, the more the strength of sin is subdued in us, and therefore we had need to lay hold on Christ for a daily renewed pardon; and this is the first ground.

A second ground is taken from the necessity that lies upon us, for the performance of sundry Christian duties daily, without which they cannot be done.

As first, we are daily to pray for pardon of sin, Mat. 6:11,12. Mark 11:2,4, and if every day we be to pray for pardon of sin, then we are every day to put forth an act of faith, to apply the pardon of our sin.

Secondly, We are every day to turn to God, for conversion is a continued act Zach. 1:3, Jam. 4:8. Now we cannot draw near God daily, but we must turn to him for pardon as well as for healing.

Thirdly, We are daily to do all our duties in the name of Christ, Col. 3:17, and that is, that through Christ it might be accepted, and the failings of it

pardoned, and so to go about it, not in our own strength, to look up to God to spare and pardon us, when we have done our best endeavors.

We are daily to keep life in the whole man; Faith puts life into us, and into all our graces; love, zeal, patience, &c. no further live, then they work from faith: and now faith is not kept alive unless it be exercised, for though it ever live, it will be smothered, unless exercised; faith in Christ will be decaying, unless it be daily set a work to believe in Jesus Christ for daily pardon of our daily transgressions, and therefore build up yourselves in your most holy faith.

Thirdly, another ground is taken from the many daily means and helps, that God yields to us in the exercise of our faith, toward the pardon of our sin. God daily supplies us with occasions that way, and therefore we must take what God offers us in this kind; as for example, thou believest in Christ for pardon of sin; upon what promise dost thou believe? For every child of God is a child of promise: thou sayest, thou art weary of sin, and hast come to Christ, and blessed are they that seek God, their hearts shall live forever, &c. It is well; these promises will bear thee out, for there is no day thou redest the Scripture, as daily thou art to read it, Deut. 17:19. Psal. 1:2, but thou findest always some fresh matter to exercise thy faith upon; look how many such promises thou redest, so often art thou called upon to believe thy sins are pardoned. And observe again in the gracious providence of God, doth he not bear witness to thee that thy sins are pardoned, and art not thou then to strengthen thy faith in the assurance of that mercy? Judges 13:23. If we should die, God would not have accepted our sacrifice; which shows you that so often as we see God accept our prayers, our conferences, the diligence in our callings, what is it for, but to strengthen our faith?

Fourthly, There is seldom a day, but God gives us occasion to know more of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, to know more of his gracious acts, and of his gracious redemption than ever before; I hear it in such and such a Christians discourse, how gracious God hath been to him, and here is a new argument to live by faith, that sure I have more cause to trust upon God in Christ, and this will mightily carry God's work an-end in me; so the Apostle prays that the Colossians might be enriched with the knowledge of God, Col. 2:2. The more we know what God and Christ is, the better will we trust them, Psal. 9:9. Know, that God and Christ is a mystery, and so those great works of Election, Vocation, and Redemption are mysteries, the Attributes of God are mysteries, and therefore the more we grow in the knowledge of these mysteries, the more occasion have we to take hold of God, and to renew our resting upon him from day today.

Now to apply this two or three ways.

Use 1. First, by two words of strong reproof to all the people of God, that content themselves with repentance from dead works. Time was when they repented, and clave to Christ for mercy, and this were they glad to do, when their hearts were in thralldom by reason of sin, then were we glad of any good book, glad of any Christian conference to help us; It was then a Land flowing with milk and honey; but sinful is the neglect of God's people, the Lord be merciful unto us in this behalf; when God hath spoken peace and pardon to us, and given us some measure of strength of grace, God shall hear of us so long as we stand in need of pardon, but when we have got such strength of grace, as that the loins that hear us, bless us, then, as the Moon, when it is full, it is furthest off from the Sun, so when we grow full of ourselves, we little know what it is to stand in need of pardon of sin; you shall find this to be true.

This is the case of most of God's servants, that they are much to blame in this sin; a sin against the greatest grace that ever God gave them, which is justification: for you stir not up your hearts to lay hold upon it, but after some great fall, or after some great doubts, or some grievous affliction, as David; Then have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies, Psal. 51:1. This is faith, not working justification, but coming to Christ for justification. God shall hear of him, when his bones are broken, and his conscience wounded, so when full of doubts, as Psal. 73:13, when he doubts he had washed his hands in innocence in vain, then he runs to the sanctuary; and then, Whom have I in heaven but thee, or in earth in comparison of thee? Ver. 25. Psal. 143:2. And enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; and why? What is the matter? Why, the enemy had pursued his soul, and his spirit was like to quail within him; and so in some deep afflictions, then, Is the Lord amongst us or no? Exod. 17:7. When plagued more than other men, then we seek to God right early; and when we come to good duties, and much is expected from us, and we do but little, then can we seek God right earnestly. It is well God may hear of us now, and we may bless God that we are put to such plunges, for were it not for that, we should tread underfoot the blood of Christ. Take we heed therefore that the blood of Christ grow not cold in us, so that an universal deadness fall upon us; Let us remember the ungodly frame of our hearts when we are best assisted, as well as when least; you have a frame of heart in you, that could sin as grossly as any of your brethren, and you have an heart at the best empty, were you put to trial; consider you have daily occasion to renew your faith, else it will be but a sluggish faith, and then will faith, and patience, and humility, and every grace of God be dead in you; you will then lose yourselves in your daily callings, you will find your Families

neglected, and Christian duties slighted, unless you seek to God for a daily renewal of your faith in sense of your justification.

Use 2. Of direction. You say, I am to live by faith daily; how shall I do it? Why, first labor for justification; You say you have that; Why, then get assurance; You say, so you have; It is well, bless God for that: but you have more work to do in this particular; To continue and renew the sense and sight of your justification; How should I do that? Why, apply that you heard in the reasons of the point, consider daily what an ungodly frame of heart thou hast in thee, remember God calls thee daily to pray for pardon of sin, and to do all that thou doest in the name of the Lord Jesus; and dost thou not every day read something in the promises that adds fuel to the fire of thy faith? Consider, is there not more to be known of God then ever yet thou discernedst? And let me tell thee whatever thy business be, thou hast more need to mind this, then anything in the world besides, whatever it be.

Use 3. Of comfort to all the people of God that would live a comfortable life, for many a soul thinks thus: True it is, I bless God, I have some life of justification, but I shall never be able to hold on this life: it is too good a life for such an unprofitable wretch, I shall quench it presently.

But comfort thyself against that fear, for here is a remedy against it: Labor daily to see what need you have of the blood of Christ, and see what a base frame of heart you have, set faith awork in your daily duties, and exercise it upon the promises of God, and the gracious providences of God, set your heart about this, and this will comfortably follow, you shall hold your comfort day after day, and you will be more fruitful in your age then ever heretofore.

APPLICATION IV. – THE LIFE OF SANCTIFICATION.

WE COME NOW TO speak of the life of our Sanctification, how that is led and lived by faith. The truth whereof will appear by opening to you four principal grounds thereof, which may be not only so many reasons of the point, but likewise a declaration of so many means which faith useth to bring us on, to live this life of our sanctification.

First it is by faith, that we do receive to ourselves, the Authors, and Fountains, and Roots of our sanctification; Christ is made unto us of God our sanctification, 1 Cor. 1:30. The holy Ghost also, the holy Spirit of God works holiness in all the people of God that have fellowship with Christ, and both these we receive by our faith in Christ; Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, Eph. 3:17. To as many as believe in him, God gave power to be called the sons of God, John 1:12. To receive him, and to believe in his name, is all one; and the meaning is, that as soon as once the soul of a Christian is beaten out of confidence in its own good parts of nature, and is humbled at the fight of its own manifold transgressions, as soon as thereupon it casts itself upon Christ, though the soul know not as yet, what

Christ will do with it, yet so soon are we married to Christ, and filled with the holy Spirit. And so by faith we receive the promise of the spirit, Gal. 3:14, so that by the same faith whereby we receive Christ to dwell in us, we receive the holy Spirit also, to work from Christ and through Christ, all that power of godliness which a Christian life holds forth, and from that day forward; and from this cause it is that both the persons, and the duties, and the works of a Christian man are accepted; Gen. 4:4. To the person first, which by faith was justified, and then to his offering God had respect, Heb. 11:4. So that this is the point: That the faith of a Christian doth convey Christ to my heart to be mine, and the promised spirit to be mine; and hence it comes to pass, that both my person and my work comes to be accepted, from whence doth spring forth a ground of much and strong supportance to the servants of God in their weakest performances, for hereby not only our persons, and poor Christian duties are accepted but (which is wonderful) our very sinful infirmities; which may seem a paradox, and doth so to Christians themselves, that are sensible of their own insufficiencies to good, and readiness to fall into soul sin. It seems to them an unlikely thing beyond all sense and faith, that their infirmities should not break this league, yet faith, when it is lively, can see that though the action be sinful, yet the person is accepted. You read 1 Kings 15:5, that David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned not aside from following after the Lord in anything that he commanded him, save only in the matter of Uriah; But why only that? Do you think it was not a sin in David to number the people? Would God have killed seventy thousand with the plague for doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord? And did he not complain, Psal. 119. That he was subject to a way of lying? And did he not sometime wrong Mephibosheth, his faithful and good Subject, by hearkening to the

sycophancy of a wretched Ziba? And is all this right in the sight of the Lord? Why the Text saith, He turned not aside from any Commandment of the Lord, save only in the matter of Uriah: Now understand what I say; In all other the passages of David's life, though David did sin, yet notwithstanding his faith wrought against his corruption, and his faith did guide him many times according to the light he had; if he did anything that was not right, his faith wrestled against it, and would not leave till it had got the victory, as faith ever doth, 1 John 5:4, and thence it is that God ever ascribes the victory to faith; but now, if faith lie sleeping, or in a swoon, and not stirring and active, then corruption makes foul waste on the soul. Sin triumphs desperately in a man's heart, and carries a man to much wickedness in the sight of God; so David doth now in this case of Uriah, his faith was lulled asleep, and sin was mounted upon the stage, now here was nothing but sin, only faith was then in the heart of David, abiding, but not stirring, not exercising itself, and so thereby did he only evil in the sight of the Lord: so that when faith is active and stirring, God takes part with a soul, and gives sentence with the whole man according to his faith, that he doth not turn aside, even then when he doth turn aside. And you see the ground of this is, because by faith we receive Christ, and the spirit of Christ to dwell in us, and this spirit lusts against the flesh; and where there is such a lusting, God accepts it for the work of the whole man, because God looks at what he would do; and the spirit hath so sanctified the will and judgment, that he allows not himself in that which is evil, and then it is not he, but sin that doth it, Rom. 7. But on the contrary, as to the pure all things are pure, Titus 1:15, so to the impure nothing is pure; No Christ to purify with his blood, no spirit to purify with his grace, then to him everything is unclean, not only when it comes to gross sins, but even his best duties, his hearing,

receiving of Sacraments, &c. To the impure and unbelieving all things are unclean, yea even their very minds and consciences are defiled; and it is a strong word he useth, Reprobate to every good work; It is refused and rejected of God, he doth not accept, nor will he reward it with any spiritual or eternal blessing; he may reward some civil works, with some civil blessing, but not with an eternal: though Jehu be forward in reformation, Herod respective of John, yet if the heart be not purged by faith to receive Christ, and the spirit of grace, his person is not accepted, and so not his work, his best actions are but *splendida peccata*, glittering abominations in the sight of God. Now though every man know this, yet he doth not think of it many times when he hath most need; for it is no new thing, that a man may have a good habit and gift, and yet not work, for the habit may be so bedrid and raked up in the ashes, that he acts not the very strongest grace sometimes in him, and so a man is much turned aside, and recovers not himself without some help him; as it is observed by Divines, had not Nathan come, (though he inferior to David) and blown up that spark of faith that lay in him, he had lien in that condition to his death, but God afterward put him to act his faith and repentance afresh, and so made new work of it, Psal. 51:10.

Now a second ground of this truth is taken from the power that faith only hath to mortify our corruptions. For sanctification stands chiefly in two things; In the mortification of corruption, and quickening our spirits to holy duties, and faith doth both these; whatever sinful corruption it be, that is in me, whether pride or wantonness, or whatever distemper it be, faith mortifies it, faith keeps us standing that we fall not, 2 Cor. 1:24. Heb. 11:30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, when they had been compassed about seven days; and it was by the blowing of Rams horns. These strong

walls of Jericho are but our strong holding corruptions, the high walls of our sinful lusts, which we are not able to scale, and we come and trail our weapons after us, call upon God for strength against them, but this is but the blowing of Rams horns; but now it is faith that roots out these corruptions effectually; faith put forth in these Ordinances, throws down these high Towers; And would you know how? Why by these means:

First, it puts forth a mighty power to blast all the objects upon which our corruptions are beat and set; while the object continues in the luster, they abide strong, but faith hath a power to take fuel from that fire, Heb. 11:24-27, where the Apostle describes the mighty power of a lively faith; these are the three objects of sin, the pleasures, the credits, and the profits of sin; Now faith blasted the honor of Pharaohs Court, so as he esteemed it not to be called the son of Pharaohs daughter, and faith made him look at the pleasures of sin, as a more unworthy condition, then the rebukes of God's children, he would rather be called a captive slave with God's people; it is more honorable to him to be scorned among God's people, then to be counted a Favorite in Pharaohs Court; and though in such a place, he might easily have feathered his nest with treasures, yet faith makes him see fellowship with God's people in their worst condition, is greater riches then all the treasures of the land of Egypt; though he might have many discouragements and fears of great men, yet by faith he feared not the fierceness of the King. Thus faith opens a man's eyes to see the happiness of God's children, and then the pairing of the nails, the rebukes and slaveries of God's people is greatly esteemed; Faith blasts all the strong objects of our sinful lusts, and therefore a man by faith escapes the pollution of the world, 2 Pet. 1:4, so that if a man be strong in his lusts, it is because either he hath

no faith, or his faith not active; and this is the reason why faith doth so wonderful sanctify, because it doth so strongly mortify.

Again secondly, Faith doth mortify our corruptions, by applying God's promises to our souls, for faith doth meditate upon the promises, and believes therein, and waits upon God for the accomplishment thereof; and thereby faith wonderfully kills corruption, and quickens the life of our sanctification, Deut. 30:6. God hath promised to circumcise our hearts, and hath said, there is no God like unto him, that subdues the iniquity of his people, Micah 7:18,19. He hath promised to pour clean water upon them, and to cleanse them from all their Idols, Ezek. 36:25,26. Now I pray you consider, doth God promise to a soul, faith begins to say, True, I have an heart of stone, but God hath said he will take it away; I have an unclean heart, but God hath said, he will cleanse it; my sins are too mighty for me, but hath not God said, there is none like unto him to subdue them? And so faith finds God making good his word, in all it believes on him for.

Thirdly, Yea many times faith works when we have no promise that we can think on to work upon, as was the case of the Syrophenician woman, though struck off from promises, yet she could lay hold of something, Mat. 15:25, and can then say, Lord help me; this is the nature of faith, when promises fail, then it can look for help from the mighty power of the Lord Jesus, for the subduing and mortifying of the strongest corruptions in us. But now whereas in moral virtues, one virtue as it grows in strength, so it will mortify the contrary vice, as liberality covetousness, &c. but it is not so in grace, it is not the strongest grace in a Christian man that can mortify the weakest corruption in him, if faith be asleep; there is not the weakest corruption in a Christian, but it will overturn the strongest grace, unless faith sets it awork, for constant experience shows, the people of God are

commonly overcome in their strongest graces, by their weakest corruptions. Peter was most bold, and boldness is opposite to shame and fear, and yet this weak corruption being but a little provoked by a weak girl, down falls the strong boldness and courage of Peter, into a fearful denial of his Master. Moses the meekest man upon the face of the earth, and yet what kept him out of Canaan, but that he once spake unadvisedly with his lips? To show you that the strongest Christian will be foiled in his strongest grace, by his weakest corruption, unless faith keep life in it, for in our strongest graces, we are most apt to rest upon ourselves, but faith ever makes us rest most in Christ: Job the most patient man, yet foiled with impatience, but he that had but so much faith as to see his unbelief, and to cry for help against it, he prospered mightily, Mat. 9:22, to 25. If faith be stirring, it will make the walls of Jericho to fall down, not the strongest devil in a man, but it will be subdued and over-mastered.

Thirdly, By faith we live the life of sanctification, because by faith we do lively perform all the holy duties we have in hand, it is faith that puts life into them all, and they are not holy unless faith put life into them, though otherwise they be the acts of saving graces; it is holiness that gives God his due, as righteousness gives man his due, so far as we give God his due, it is an holy action, and it is not our wisdom, and zeal, and humility, but it is only the faith of a Christian that makes him give God his due.

Now faith doth three things in this particular.

First, Faith depends upon God for assistance to do his duty, Isaiah 40, ult. John. 15:5, 2 Cor. 3:5, Phil. 4:13. Faith makes us depend and wait upon Christ, for assistance and strength to do every Christian duty, and faith acknowledgeth, that from him is our fruit found.

Secondly, It is by faith that we depend upon God's word for guidance, faith will see a warrant from the word for what it doth, Rom. 14, ult. Whatever is not of faith is sin; faith will have the word for a Lantern and guide to its way, Psal. 119:105.

Thirdly, Faith depends upon the mercy of God in Christ, for acceptance of its best duty: Nehem. 13:22, when he had taken most pains in reforming of evil, yet Remember me O my God for this, and spare me in thy great mercies. Col. 3:17. Believing in his name, it is accepted. Now thus to give God his due, is the very true nature and definition of holiness; now then since faith it is that alone makes us depend upon God's grace for assistance, and upon his word for guidance, and upon his mercy for acceptance; then know that without this, though in an holy duty all other graces are working, yet there will be no life in our best duties for want of faith: as to put one instance of difference between two Christian men, one man prays with much strength of zeal and humility, and is much enlarged, finds much assistance, and can press God with many gracious promises, and experiences of God's former dealing, and do it with such enlargement of heart, as it yields much comfort to all that hear him, and he is satisfied; Surely God hath accepted me, in regard of his assistance and enlargement. Take another man, and he wrestles much, but cannot get his heart broken, and what he doth, is cold and flat, and he goes away much discouraged, only it may be God helps him thus far, as to smite his breast, and to cry out, Now Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Now what faith God, how judgeth he in this case? Why, this man and his prayer, goes home more sanctified then the other; whence it will come to pass, that a man that is thus straitened, when he comes to pray again, he will be more enlarged, and the other man more straitened and foiled; and here is the only difference, the man that was

straitened, by faith he looks up to Christ for help, but it may be, found it not in that measure he desired, and if God now give him an heart to cry to him for mercy, and to accept his weak performances, that is true life of faith: but the other man going about a duty in strength of grace received, and is comforted therein, his faith is not so active in looking up to Christ for pardoning and healing, and God hath not his due, the grace and blood of Christ not their due; so that here was a work of sanctifying grace, but there wanted the life of faith in it, without which it is but a dead work.

Fourthly, the last act by which faith gives us to live the life of sanctification, and that is, It gives us to use all the holy Ordinances of God in a lively manner; The word profited not them that heard it, because it was not mixed with faith, Heb. 4:2, there is a mighty power in faith to put life into all the Ordinances; see how, three or four ways.

First, when faith is stirring, it longs and desires much after the strongest, purest, and liveliest Ministry, and every Ordinance in the greatest purity, and that is from sense of his own deadness, and hardness of heart, and of the many strong corruptions he hath to wrestle withal; and therefore faith would have the liveliest and purest Ordinance it can get, because it knows it stands in need of all; Covet after the best gifts, 1 Cor. 12, ult. and he means not only the best gifts in a man's self, but also in others: not but that he can, and desires to make good use of any gift God dispenses to him, but he would enjoy the best if he can, and therefore it is that the Church saith, Cant. 2:5. Stay me with Flagons, that is, not drops or cups, or bowls of wine, but Flagons; the soul would be filled with the holy Ghost, it hath no stay, unless it may be filled with strong and lively Ordinances.

Secondly, Faith though it strongly affect strongest abilities, yet faith comes to them, as if there were no life in them, as if they were all but empty

vessels and had no life in them, unless Christ be pleased to breath in them, and therefore it comes to Christ, and entreats him that he would prepare the Ministers heart, that so some life and strength may be dispensed from these lively Ordinances, or else it will be but a dead work. Isaiah 26:1. The strength of the City lies not in its own walls, not in the Chariots and Horsemen of Israel, though they be as strong as Elijah and Elisha were in their days; no, but salvation hath God set for walls and bulwarks, as to see it plain, 1 Chr. 17:13, to 18. Jehoshaphat had procured more than a million of soldiers, which one would think were enough to over-run the whole world, though it were all inhabited, yet notwithstanding saith he, chap. 20:12. O Lord there is in us no strength, neither do we know what to do, but our eyes are towards thee. Now therefore do but see the faith of a Christian, he would have millions of strength, and yet when he hath them, he looks at them all as empty creatures, unless God fight in them; so a Christian, he would have the strongest power of God in any gift of his servants, yet he comes to them as mere Conduit-pipes, therefore he hangs about Christ for assistance, and that puts life into the Ordinances; Faith looks for nothing from the Ordinances further then God breathes in them.

Thirdly, Faith looks at all the promises of God that he hath made to us in the word, Exod. 20:24, he hath promised that he will give his people a meeting, and that they shall never seek his face in vain; and that, Hear and your souls shall live: And now faith clasps about these, and helps itself much this way.

4. Faith applies the whole word, both threatening's, Commandments, and promises, as belonging to him, or desiring that it may be so, Psal. 119:66 and 49. Jon. 3:6-9, faith applies the whole word of God, and so puts life into every ordinance of God; the mighty power of faith looks for the mighty

power of God in all his holy Ordinances and dispensations, and so it puts life into our sanctification.

Now for application to all Christians that would live an holy life, let it be an use of direction to you, not so much to desire strength directly and earnestly in this or that grace, and then to think you shall be well, unless it be of the grace of faith, chiefly desire that; you shall find many a Christian that will say, Oh had I but an heart humble enough, I should be well: but haddest thou a heart humble enough, thy humility would not hold out, or else thou wouldest be proud of it, and thou wouldest trust upon thy humility too much. Another man saith, Could I be but zealous in prayer and preaching, that would serve the turn. Another man saith, Could I in the Sacrament but feel the power of Christ Jesus, I should trust God the better all my days; but nay that will not do it neither. Another man saith, Had I but patience I should do well, I am troubled with many crosses and I want patience; but patience would not serve thy turn. Job had patience, but it would not serve his turn; no grace will serve thy turn but faith, and therefore if thou wouldest grow strong in any grace, pray not so much for strength in humility or zeal, &c. as chiefly nourish thy faith, and set it awork in every business; so much faith, so much of every grace. Suppose thou see a tree bring forth good fruit, and some trees have sundry branches of several fruit, wouldest thou have any of the branches fruitful, thou must not think it enough to water that branch, but you must water the root well; so wouldest thou have humility and patience fruitful, and strengthened, take no thought so much for them, as apply all by faith in Christ; Let that be sought for, and then take no care for thy zeal and patience, and humility, there will be enough for every grace of God; take but thou care that faith

may live, and that exercised in all thou hast, and then care not for other graces, they will come in abundance upon thee.

And so secondly, it is a direction unto you that desire to live a holy life; there is nothing but faith that receives Christ and the spirit of grace, whereby you and your duties are accepted, only faith mortifies you, and puts life into your duties, and fetches life from every Ordinance; and therefore in the name of Christ live by faith in receiving Christ, in mortifying corruption, in exercising all holy duties, and in addressing yourselves to every holy Ordinance, so shall you live by faith, and keep an holy Sabbath to God, and live an holy life, and die an holy death; unless faith be stirring in every grace, the holy graces of God will be detained in much unrighteousness, and so you will be robbed of your peace, and God of his honor.

APPLICATION V. – RECEIVING THE LORD’S SUPPER

BEING NOW TO ADDRESS ourselves to the administration and receiving of the Lord's Supper, and there being special use of the life of faith, in that part of our Christian life of holiness before God; I shall now speak something to that subject, to wit, to show you, that by faith we live the life of sanctification in receiving the Lord's Supper. In this point faith hath three principal works or acts, and all of them strongly stirring and operative in preparing a Christian soul to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper.

First, faith purifies the heart, Acts 15:9. You have heard from John 1:12, that faith applies and receives Christ; and that faith works by love, Gal. 5:6. Now all these be active and stirring, and set the heart into a frame to feast with God, when we partake with him in that his holy Ordinance.

Now to speak of these in particular, how faith doth exercise itself, what life it puts forth for the setting of our hearts in a right frame before God in this Ordinance.

First, for purifying the heart: faith first purifies our hearts.

Secondly, it purifies our company.

Thirdly, it purifies also the Ordinance itself.

There are two or three special acts of faith, as it purifies our hearts to this Ordinance.

First, it is by faith that a Christian man keeps a continual watch over his heart and ways, not only the Sacrament day, but the week before, yea from Sermon to Sermon, and from one Ordinance to another: You see when men make account of a solemn feast for friends and neighbors, do you not see how the whole house is set a work to prepare rooms, furniture, and apparel, and all things suitable for such a feast, and you spend much time to prepare for such a business; so now we knowing and believing that we have such a solemnity to perform, do you think that a lively faith in Christ doth not look at the Supper of the Lord, as a far more solemn feast then any of our festivals be? Doth he not look at feasting with God, as a more solemn and weighty business, and which requires more preparation and addressment of the soul unto, then any, that any man can reach unto? Faith keeps the whole man, in a man's whole time, in a settled watch over his heart, that when such a time comes, he may not be hindered by any sinful failing. Take you a Christian man, though faithful, that lets down his watch over his heart and way, and he will soon be like the field of the sluggard, overgrown with many distempers; and which is worse, (mark what I say) when a man's watch is down, though he be overspread with these lusts, when he should come preparedly to the Sacrament, he knows not where he lost himself, but is so darkened, as it is a wonder to see how far he is to seek, when he comes to sit down with God in this holy Supper; It is an holy expression that of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 5:8. Be sober and watchful for your adversary the Devil seeks whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast in the faith: as if he should say, seeing the Devil is so watchful to do you what mischief he can,

do you resist him; how? Steadfast in the faith; this will make you sober and watchful, so that if you see any swerving in yourselves, here is matter of humbling, if any weakness, here is occasion for you to seek to God, for strength: Thus faith keeps the heart in a watchful frame, it can see, how it gets a living by faith; it is a wonder to see a Christian man, when his faith is not stirring, he looks at the Supper of the Lord but as a common thing, at least but as a common duty, and therefore are we so far to seek. It was a complaint the Apostle Jude, ver. 5:12, made of them that turn the grace of God into wantonness, they are spots in your feasts of charity, feeding themselves without fear: to show you it were a sin for a Christian, was he but at a civil feast, if he should feast without fear, the Apostle condemns it, as turning the grace of God into wantonness; implying that when a Christian takes occasion of most liberty, then he is most apt to let his heart loose; but now faith keeps the heart in an holy fear of God all that time, it keeps us watchful and attentive, and so keeps alive the grace of God in our hearts, and makes us fit to partake with the Lord in any Ordinance he calls us to. This is the first work of faith, as it purifies the heart, it watches over the whole frame of our hearts and ways, and takes some course daily to set the heart in order before God; as preparing us for such a solemn meeting, that God may see no iniquity in his people. Amos 3:1,2. Notable is that expression. Cant. 7:2, which is a description (as some of the best Interpreters take it) of the two Sacraments of the Church of the New Testament, viz. Baptism and the Lord's Supper: as in a heap of wheat much nourishment is to be had, yet it is more comely when set about with Lilies; implying that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when purely dispensed and set about with holy and pure white and humble Christians, yields plentiful nourishment, and such an one is fit to partake in that Ordinance.

2. Faith purifies the heart by judging itself of whatsoever impurity it finds in its self, especially of such sins as have been committed against the Lord Jesus Christ, and his grace; you heard it from Zach. 12:10, that we look upon Christ, whom we have pierced, by faith, and that makes us mourn bitterly for our sins against him. When therefore faith lets us see how much we have sinned against Christ, and his grace, and against every Ordinance of his, how weakly we have walked in the sense of such quick Ordinances, this brings the heart of a man to mourn unfeignedly for all the evils he hath done against Christ.

3. Faith, as it purifies the heart, hath this work, it comes to the Ordinance seeking the power of God, and the beauty and glory of God there, and so satisfying itself in finding him there, Psal. 63:1,2. O God thou art my God, that is the voice of faith, carely will I seek thee; My soul thirsteth after thee, this is only the work of faith; Then the soul thirsts after God in the beauty of the Sanctuary, as he hath sometime seen: if we come not to the Sacrament hungering and thirsting after the beauty of God there, faith hath not been set awork; whereas faith, that keeps the heart alive in acknowledgement of God to be our God, it makes us to long after the beauty of God and his glory, as we have sometimes seen it in the Sanctuary. Notable is that speech of the Church, Cant. 1:7. Show me O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flocks at noon; for why should I be as one veiled amongst the flocks of thy companions? The soul that cleaves to Christ, would see where he rests and where he dwells, for when I come to thy Ordinances, why should I be as one veiled, that I see no Christ, no life, nor glory there? Whereas other Christians have the veil taken away, I am as one singled out and left in darkness, and so I come to turn aside from Christ, as the word in the text reads it; for more than the soul sees and finds Christ in the

Ordinance, it is ever of the declining hand from Christ, the sight of Christ there knits us the more nearly to him, in conjugal affection, whereas if Christ be under a thick cloud and we see him not there, then we turn aside from him; you shall find your hearts closing the week following, much ensnared with sensual lusts, and if you were veiled in time of the Ordinance, your hearts will be declining after the Ordinance; show me therefore, saith the soul, where thou liest and quietest the hearts of thy flock, where thou keepest thy bed of love, and let me see it, For why should I be veiled? If I be veiled, I shall turn aside, and fall upon other lovers, I shall close with worldly contentment's, and sit loose from thee. Thus faith possessing us with this conclusion, that the Lord is our God, it makes us come to the Sacrament thirsting after Christ, that being refreshed with him there, we may keep fellowship with him ever after; Faith when it is lively, knows full well, the treasures of grace are to be found in the Sacrament, it knows that both Christ's body and blood is to be had there; there is bread to strengthen weak grace, and wine to quicken dull spirits; and therefore the spirit longs after partaking with him; faith it is, by which we feel our want of strength: and thus faith prepares us for a fit partaking in this Ordinance.

Secondly, But yet this is not all, for it is the nature of faith, not only to purify our own hearts, but to purify the hearts of our brethren, as much as in us lies; our Savior washed all the Disciples feet, John 13:5,8-14, and saith, If I wash you not, you have no part in me: to show you, that every Master of a family must be careful to wash the feet of all those he hath any part or portion in. As in the Law, they put away all leaven when they came to the Passover, which was a type of this Supper, 1 Cor. 5:7. Faith that purifies the heart, purifies the house also; he would have no wickedness found there, but by instruction, and commands, and admonition to his best endeavors, he

would reform whatever he sees amiss. It is true, a Christian can but reach to the outward man, but he will do what he can. What a wonder is it, to see how the faith of Paul wrought in this particular, for all the people that were with him in the ship? Acts 27:25,34, which shows you, that a man that doth believe, God hath a blessing for him and his company, he will stir them all up to be of a good mind, and to wait upon God for such a mercy; Paul, though but a sojourner in the ship, and a poor captive, though they would not take his counsel, yet because he had prayed for them, and God had answered him; Then brethren I believe it shall be so, and therefore be of a good mind and a good heart, and be fit to receive such a mercy; so is it in like sort, a Christian householder, or any that sojourns in a family, if he believes, there is this or that mercy to be found from God in that Sacrament; we should tell them, we believe there is such a mercy in store for you, and therefore be of good an honest hearts, and of a cheerful frame of spirit to receive it.

Thirdly, Faith is careful in an especial manner to purify the Ordinances themselves in some measure, for though it is not in us to purify them, yet faith makes them pure to me, Titus 1:15. Faith willingly desires that every Ordinance may be dispensed in purity, it desires the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. 2:2, and so of the Sacrament; It affects not those gaudy and theatrical shows the Popish Religion defiles the Sacrament with; and as it desires the simplicity of the Ordinances, so it desires, that no impurity in itself may make them worse: he desires that God would pardon the whole Congregation that communicates with him; if not pardon, yet so as that they might not defile, nor make the Sacrament of none effect, to them that desire to seek God; if any do come in the presumption of their hearts and wickedness of their lives, faith desires that the Ordinance might be

sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and desires that it might purify the Ordinance to us.

Secondly, Faith puts forth another act, and that is in applying virtue, and that it doth three ways.

First, this is the nature of faith, it applies the blessing there offered, faith there lays hold on Christ, and of all the promises of this life and of another; and the firmer hold of them, because it sees the promise there rooted and sealed, which is a privilege in that Ordinance above many other here rooted, for there God offers me Christ expressly, and he is the root of all the promises, 1 Cor. 11:24. Take, eat, and drink, this is my body, and this is my blood; Christ is the root of the promise, upon whom the promises grow, and from whom they flow; so that whatever cause I had before to believe, I believe it now the rather, because now I have the root of all the promises, and therefore Job speaks rightly, I know my Redeemer lives, Job 19:25. And what doth he infer from thence? Therefore you should have said, wherefore do we reprove him, seeing the root of the matter is in him? V. 26,27. And so shall a man rightly do in this case; if we dare lay hold on Christ dying for us, then our own hearts should not reprove us anymore for being unbelievers. I have no faith, will one say, no patience, nor humility; but if thou hast Christ, the root of all grace is in thee; nothing belongs to thee as thou art a Christian, but the root of it is in thee; He that hath given us his only Son, will not with him deny us anything, Rom. 8:34.

And as rooted, so there are all the promises sealed, Rom. 4:11. In the word, we hear and read the promise, but in the Sacrament, there it is sealed to us; and so we meet with strong consolation, and grounded assurance, that surely all the promises of God are ours, and therefore consider that it is not a vain show here offered; these are not empty and beggarly Rudiments, but

the sacred Ordinances of the eternal God; faith there receives the promise rooted, and sealed.

Secondly, As faith applies Christ, so in an especial manner, it feeds upon what is set before us; faith would discern what corruption is most strong, and what most weak, and it looks up to Christ for strong grace to heal these, and if any grace be weak, it will apply the salve to its particular sore, and it will swaddle it about with promises, and now all that was weak and out of frame before, by applying the water of the Sanctuary, all is healed; as in the Poole of Bethesda, all that could but step in, were healed, John 5:4, it shows you that Christ is our healing God; whatever disease they had, they were healed of it; It was Naaman's error to refuse to wash in Jordan, but there is more life in the Sacrament then in all those. If therefore God bring me thither, faith works and desires its blind understanding may be healed, and that all the distempers of the soul may be healed, and it receives Christ for this end, and faith, In case I be weak, here I have bread of life to feed on, John 6:35, and this makes the soul hunger after Christ for some special supply in one kind or other, and so we get our fainting hearts strengthened and quickened, and go away satisfied according to the desire of our hearts.

Thirdly, Faith as it applies, it hath this work in the Sacrament to receive Christ, not only as a Savior, but as a Prince, Acts 3:31, not only a Savior to deliver me from my sins and miseries, but a Prince and Governor to rule and order me, according to his will in my whole course; so that as faith receives Christ into my heart, so it resigns up my heart into the possession, and guidance, and rule, and government of the Lord Jesus, so as that now henceforward I yield myself to him as his Spouse, and now he shall rule in the midst of his enemies, and will forever take part with me against them.

Thirdly, Faith puts forth another work in a lively receiving the Sacrament, and that is, It works by love, Gal. 5:6, and the Sacrament profits not, unless mixed by love, Heb. 4:12, it works by love, love to our brethren, to the Lord, and to the Sacrament.

First, to my brethren, Be tender hearted one to another, Ephes. 4:31. Faith having received the testimony of pardon of sin, it hath a desire freely to pardon others, and not only doth it put forth itself in pardoning their failings, but it helps us to cleave to our brethren, We are one body, and one bread, saith faith in the Sacrament, 1 Cor. 10:17, faith makes us as members all of one body, and as grapes of one Cluster, we all partake of one Christ, and so cleave one to another.

Secondly, love to the Lord; to bless his name that hath bestowed such rich blessings upon us, Psal. 103:1,2. Many sins being forgiven us, we love much, Luke 7:47. Love fulfils the Commandments, and this manifests itself chiefly in all holy duties, 2 Cor. 5:14.

Besides, faith hath another work toward God, that having found God merciful to us in forgiving and healing our sins, and entertaining us at his table; then faith makes me to be of a craving nature: Faith takes the advantage of God, as subjects do with Princes; so Ester did, seeing the King free to her in one thing, she asked another, Ester 5:7-9. If a Prince come to sup with a subject, then what shall I do for thee? God looks for it, that we should put up some petition to him at such a time; Ester desires the King would come to her banquet, the second time, and then she puts up her intended petition, and then he became deeply incensed against Haman; so when we see God comes and sups with us; and refresheth us with pardon of sin, and healing our infirmities; if he thus please to give us a meeting, faith works by love, and will make an advantage of it, knowing God is a great

and a good God, he will give great gifts: God knows we have something to ask, if we could hit on it; Ask now, that as God hath been pleased to help us this day, that he will help us again this day seven-night, and not to hide his face from us, but to vouchsafe us a meeting; and when he doth so, be sure to ask enough; ask this or that mercy, for this or that child or brother, be sure to ask something that is worth the asking; ask no less than a Nations salvation, people, Towns, and Families; Open thy mouth wide, and he will fill it.

Thirdly, Love to the Sacrament: If God hath given us a meeting there, let us forever desire to come before the Lord again, because we have found him so rich in his bounty to us, Jer. 31:12-14. God would have us come more frequently and diligently, because we have found him there.

Use. All that hath been said, is but an use of the life of faith, only add this; Let it be an instruction to us, what to do when we come to the Sacrament, for faith after it hath put forth all these acts about one Sacrament, it will as strongly affect at another, as ever any before; for so soon as ever faith hath received any mercy from God, it is jealous of starting aside from God, it is never more ready to sit loose from God, nor to lose ourselves, then when God hath given us most mercies, we are apt then to depend on grace received, and so we lose ourselves presently; so Peter when he had received this Sacrament with Christ himself, and from his own hand, for want of standing upon his own watch, he and all the rest of the Disciples fell fearfully that night, and all forsook him, Mat. 26:40,41, and Peter denied and forswore him, ver. 74, a sign that faith is still of a watchful frame of spirit; Be sober and watch, steadfast in the faith; faith lets us see ourselves to be but empty shallow creatures: if we be now never so full of strength, we shall run it out before the next Sabbath, and therefore pray, Lord keep

this frame in us forever, pray for establishing in that grace, that we may never fall off from that grace and mercy we now find; and the next time we go, we fall short of what sometime we had: When David carried the Ark towards Jerusalem, 1 Chron. 13:11,12, he saw something was amiss, but he knew not what, but chap. 15:13, he tells the Levites it was for them to carry the Ark, for We have not sought God in due order, and therefore he advised them, whom it concerned to look better to it hereafter; faith is very watchful in this particular, if Uzza be smitten, it fears all is not well; it fears before God, and makes diligent search, and saith, Either I stand not upon my watch, or judged not myself, and sought not to God to purify my heart and the Ordinances, or did not apply the promises as rooted and sealed, or I have been wanting in love some way or other, something is amiss, and then it will look to it better afterwards, and this is the work that faith makes, in receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And therefore to apply it to them that want faith, it will be a dead work that you do, if you come without faith, or not with a lively faith; if it be dulled and benumbed, if not quick and stirring in you, it will be but a dead work. And therefore let such as want faith, get it, and pray for a believing heart: and God's own servants, pray you for a lively faith, and stir up your faith against the Sacrament, and learn to know and discern what you are to do; set your faith a work, and that in such sort, as to bring forth a lively work in the Sacrament; and therefore if your hearts have not forecast for this Feast, though it come but once a month, shame yourselves before God for it; and if you come, not knowing your particular wants, judge yourselves for it, or else faith will be dead in your souls, and you will find it but a dead Sacrament; and when you see how much you are out of the way, long after Christ, that you may see him face to face, representing himself lively to you in pardoning your sin, and

supplying you with all that your souls stand in need of, and pray for your families, and for your Congregations, and see all in good order, and if anything hath been neglected, labor with God to pardon the failings on your part, and that what is wanting in you may be supplied in him, that though you seek him not as you ought, yet that he would heal all; and when you come, be careful to believe the promises more firmly, because there you receive the root of them, and make account Christ is there sealed to you, and therefore apply him to your particular necessities, and then cleave together as molded into one loaf, and take advantage of the love and favor of God to you, spy out what use you may make of his love, and if he refuse to give you a meeting, set faith awork to examine what is amiss, if he meet you, then still keep a watch over your hearts, for Satan will be most busy to meet you, as soon as ever you come from banqueting with God, he will desire to winnow you as chaff, and will do what he can to overturn all; and though you be never so much comforted this morning, you will find a loss of Christ before the day come to an end, if Satan may have his will, only it is our faith by which we live.

APPLICATION VI. – USE OF BAPTISM.

WE NOW COME TO show you, that we are to live a life of sanctification by faith in the use of our Baptism; therefore for opening this point, let me show you, what be the principal exercises and acts of faith about our Baptism, by which we live an holy and a new life.

Five principal acts there be, lively acts and fruits which faith putteth forth about the use of our Baptism, which are of much use in carrying an end a sanctified course of life all our days.

First, Faith searches to know all the holy will and grace of God, which he reveals and offers to us in our baptism; the Apostle Peter, when he speaks of the believing Jews, who though they had not seen Christ, yet believed and rejoiced in him, they prophesied of him; see how faith works upon it, 1 Pet. 1:8-11. They verily believing by the power of the holy Ghost, what themselves had foretold, he tells you they searched, and inquired diligently what it meant; Wherein you may discern this truth, expressly held forth unto you, they did search and inquire, what, and in what manner, and to whom that grace should be dispensed and fulfilled; the words are

emphatical in the Original, They did search narrowly, and hunt, and try out what themselves had taught concerning Christ; they indeed never saw Christ, nor the riches of that grace which Christ was to pour out abundantly, in the days of the New Testament, yet they search to whom that grace shall be accomplished, now in the mystery of the Ordinances, there is the like reason of both; so doth faith in a true living Christian, it diligently searches, and hunts after all the riches of the grace of Christ, which in the mystery of Baptism is brought unto us; this is the nature of a lively spirit of faith, 1 Cor. 2:10. It will search out the deep things of God, that we might know the things that are given us of God, ver. 12. When faith is lively in the soul, it hears of no mystery of Religion, or Ordinance, but it will search to know the deep things of God contained in them, as believing that all these things nearly concern us, and behooves us to know, that we may have our parts therein, with the rest of our brethren; yea, I suppose I may truly say, that never any found any saving benefit from any Ordinance, till he had first searched into it, or at least if not searched into it before, it will make him search as soon as ever he hath received any benefit by it; See it plain from the Bereans, they received the word with all readiness, it was faith that made them so receive it, Acts 17:11,12. Faith receives the truth and goodness of all the promises and Ordinances; now they searched the Scriptures daily, and therefore many of them believed; see how faith compasses about the work of searching; when faith receives a benefit by any Ordinance, it searches diligently, to know the nature of such an Ordinance, it is ever diving into it, and examining narrowly what is to be found in it; faith sets them awork to search, and searching makes them believe more strongly and more abundantly then before; they believed before upon the word taught, but now much more, seeing it is confirmed to

them, Prov. 4:5. Many a man will ask whether ever he received benefit by the Sacrament of Baptism, or no: Truly if thou hast, then faith hath set thee on work, to search to find out the mystery of it; and if a man never received benefit by his searching, he cannot say that ever he received saving benefit from his baptism. A man indeed may receive benefit by the word and Sacrament, but then he must search to find out the worth of them; but he cannot say that ever he received benefit from his Baptism, unless he search what it is that God offers him in it, and what duties God calls for of him in regard of it; and therefore if a man live by faith in the use of his Baptism, then you search what it is, that in your Baptism is offered to you, what the holy will of God doth teach you, and what part you have therein, or else we cannot (for ought I can discern) be assured that ever we had any benefit from our Baptism; if we never searched after any sin to this day, we never lived by faith in the use of our Baptism.

Secondly, Another act that faith puts forth, is, That faith doth believe the truth of all that grace God there offers, when it hath searched it out, then it believes the truth and goodness, of all the holy will and grace of God therein offered, though it doth not forthwith take all as its own, but faith searches it out, not only to teach it to others, as Ministers do, for they may search what godly men have spoken of it, and what the Scriptures say to it; but that is not sufficient to the life of faith, but if the life of faith set me at work, it sets me at work, to search it for mine own sake; What is it that God speaks to me in it? Take it, and know it for thy good; and so it helps me to believe what God reveals to be his will; It was want of faith in Naaman the Assyrian, that when the Prophet bids him go and wash in Jordan, he turns away in displeasure, and saith, May I not as well go home and wash there? 2 King. 5:12, it was a voice of unbelief, he did not believe he should wash

and be clean, by washing in Jordan; but his servants possessed him better, and so he tried, and found it as the Prophet had said, and then he walked in the sense of such a washing all his days after; But to show you, that if a man believes not what God offers to him in his Baptism, he goes away without any benefit; see it in the unbelieving Jews, they saw nothing in the Manna, but light food; but now faith believes the weight, and power, and goodness, of all that God holds forth, and faith will search and find it out. And faith finds God there, principally offering two things.

First, a sight of the sinful uncleanness of our natures, from our Mothers womb; else, why should there be such precious cleansing means for us? Not Sope and Niter, but the blood and spirit of the Son of God, more effectual than anything in the world; we are born in the gore blood of sinful defilements, and therefore God hath provided the blood of Christ, to wash and cleanse us from our Mothers womb, Col. 2:11,12, so that Christ, by his blood and Spirit, cleanses us from the sinful nature of our flesh. This is held out to us, when either we ourselves are baptized, or when we see others baptized, we see what we are from our Cradle, guilty of sin and wrath from the womb, and stand in need of the blood and Spirit of Christ, to wash us from our sins, John. 3:3, without which we are so defiled, as that we are not fit to be members of God's Church. All that nature can reach to us, is to see the Nobility of my birth, the honest civility of my Parents, &c. but faith sees his Father was a Moabite, and his Mother an Ammonite, born in sin, and this he lays hold on, and takes it home for his good, and walks in the sense thereof, and sees a need of a better birth than this.

A second thing that God holds out to us in Baptism, and that faith lays hold on, is, That God there holds out, and offers to us, admission into his family; this is the sum of all, after he shows us what we are by nature, then

he tells us what we are by grace, admitted into the Family of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, Mat. 28:19, admitted into the government, guidance, and Family of the Trinity; as when the name of one is called upon us, it is because that either we are adopted to be children, or married to them; Let my name be called upon these Lads, Gen. 48:15,16, and so Isaiah 4:1. Let thy name be called upon us: To show you, that as the husband his name is called upon the wife, when she is admitted into his Family; so we by this Ordinance are admitted into the protection and provision of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost. That look as a child is adopted into another man's Family, it hath the privilege of such a Fathers guidance, protection, and provision; so a child admitted into the name of God, is admitted to be a Spouse unto God, and God will train him up to be a yoke fellow for himself: So in both the Sacraments, God offers himself to be a Father to us, and an husband, and see the eye of faith in such a case; Put case a woman in this Congregation should by the Minister be put into the hand of such a man, is she not now his wife? And is she not confident of it all her days? And is she not willing to live and spend her time with him? And therefore allows him conjugal affections, which otherwise she would abhor to do; Now what marriage like unto this? What a Minister doth in the Sacrament, is as verily confirmed by God, and much more, then in the other case, for it is a more immediate Ordinance of God, for God to set the Minister to admit a child into his Family, and to make me a little Spouse unto himself, in that he gives me his son to be my husband, he more effectually doth it by the Minister in the Sacraments then the wife can be given into the Ministers hand.

Now therefore hath not a Christian man cause to believe in such a case for himself, and for his children? I was but once given in marriage to such a man, and I believe he is my husband as long as I live well: and I was given

to Christ, and with my consent, I thank God. Then I have reason to believe that this is no delusion, when men and women in marriage are in good earnest, God ratifies it in heaven; so if the Minister in Baptism, admit thee into God's Family, and in the Lord's Supper thou give thy consent, and God there shows his consent in giving thee his Son, thou hast great reason than to believe it, thou wouldest believe it, if thou wert married to a man: God is more real in this business, then in thy marriage to a mortal creature; so that now God will have me called by his name, and my child is his child, and for my own part, I know my consent for myself, and for my child is of no small force; if my child be given to God under age, and God be content to stay to see whether it will yield its consent afterwards, you may somewhat demure for your child, because you will see what it will do, but for your own part you have given your consent to what God hath done for you in Baptism, and you desire it may forever stand good in heaven; if you consent to it, and say Amen to it, then the marriage is confirmed between thee and the Lord thy God, and thou mayest believe it, and faith will, and hath reason to believe it. And if likewise thou come to the Lord's Supper, and there renew thy Covenant and consent, and desire further assurance of the business, thou mayest again receive him, and when thou so doest, thou makest good that which thy Parents did for thee in thy Baptism, and therefore thou hast reason to believe thou art admitted into God's Family.

Now from this latter, our admission into the Family of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, two fruits flow and spring forth.

First, Fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection.

Secondly, The fruits of that fellowship; We are buried with Christ by Baptism, Rom. 6:3-6. And in his Resurrection, from whence these four fruits flow, which is the second thing.

First, Justification by his death, remission of sin, that is, Justification, Acts 22:16, Acts 2:38.

Secondly, Sanctification, Acts 2:38. You shall receive the promise of the Holy Ghost; and we are sanctified by the washing of water through the word, Eph. 5:26. So that therein we have the blood of Christ justifying us, and the spirit of Christ sanctifying us.

Thirdly, From this fellowship with Christ, we have also partnership with the afflictions of Christ; for our Savior calls his afflictions, his baptism, Luke 12:50. Mat. 20:23. Meaning with the same afflictions; so that when we come to be washed in Baptism, we profess that we give up ourselves to yield to all the afflictions God calls us to, and God there offers us fellowship with Christ in them; and in our greatest afflictions we shall not sink, but are only buried in them, and shall come out of them again, as out of our Baptism, and it is but to teach us obedience by the things we suffer, and they shall do us good; that will be the fruit of all the afflictions we meet with.

Fourthly, We have in our Baptism sealed up to us, preservation to salvation, 1 Pet. 3:1. As the Ark saved Noah, so Baptism saves our souls, and are pledges of the salvation of our souls, and the resurrection of our bodies, 1 Cor. 15:29. To what end are we baptized, but that as we rise again out of the water of Baptism, so our souls should rise to newness of life, and our bodies to the glorious estate of the resurrection of the just.

Thirdly, Faith hath this act about our Baptism, it prepares all our hearts, to be fit to receive all these benefits, and to make use of all that grace, that is here offered to us: Faith prepares; How? It observes that the benefit of Baptism is received by faith and repentance; John preached the Baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38. This is the only use and end

of Baptism, so that faith discerning this, sees we have just cause to repent, that all our sins may be done away. Faith in Baptism seeing the sinful frame of our natures, humbles its self for the sins of its kind, and for that above all others, so it is changed or metamorphosed by the renewing of the mind, Rom. 12:2, whereas before, you had a mind full of self-seeking, could mind nothing but yourselves, now you are changed by the renewing of your mind, you mind now not yourselves, but the Lord Jesus Christ, and depend not on yourselves, but upon him; put off your old mind, and are renewed in the spirit of your mind; this is a true work of faith as it fits you for Baptism.

Again, it hath another work, it sees that faith is required, Acts 8:36,37. If thou believest, thou mayest be baptized: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God; If thou believest there is no salvation but in Christ, whether thou feelst the comfort of it, yea or no, if thou believest there it is to be had, thou mayest be baptized, wait therefore upon every Ordinance, that thou mayest find Christ; Behold the blood of the Covenant, Exod. 24:8. To show you, that it is the duty of Christians, whenever the blood of the Covenant is sprinkled, they are to look at it, and by so doing find salvation, Isaiah 45:22, so faith ever sees the water of baptism, or the blood of the Covenant sprinkled in any Ordinance, faith waits there for salvation to be dispensed, faith beholds Christ, and we give our consent, and then wait upon God for the comfort of it, which is sealed in the end to the heart, and so it goes away satisfied.

Fourthly, Faith hath yet another work, and that is, it endeavors fruitfully, in the performance of all the duties the Sacrament requires, so put forth an holy fruitfulness, walking in the life and light of its baptism; it will put forth that life which it there receives, for as we live by faith, so faith lives by Christ, and Christ in the word and Sacraments, and in every Ordinance, and

faith puts that life forth in our conversation, and that is the true nature of the life of faith.

Now because that the life we receive from baptism, is death unto sin, and newness of life, and member-like union with our brethren, hence it is, that faith puts forth a mortified, crucified frame of spirit in our whole life; and by the same baptism it is, that we are not only dead to sin, but justified from sin, and so more confirmed in our justification, and more quick and strong in our mortification and newness of life. And from hence also it comes that we cleave to our brethren in brotherly love, 1 Cor. 12:13, so that from our baptism, the people of God cleave to their brethren, the rather because by one Spirit, they are baptized into one body; and this faith searcheth out for our good, Ephes. 4:34, and the Apostle makes use of our baptism to this purpose; a faithful soul works brotherly love out of its baptism, and faith not only believes this, but makes this operative, to cause us to do what is required on our parts; it believes what is to be believed, it doth and suffers, what is to be done and suffered, and the more for our baptism sake.

Finally in the last place, we live the life of faith in baptism, by presenting and offering our children unto baptism, that they may partake together with ourselves, in the like benefit we ourselves have done; we offer up our children in baptism, for our own benefit, and for theirs; our Savior notes it for a work of faith in the friends of the Palsy man, Mar. 2:3-5, to show you, it is a fruit of faith to present them to Christ, and to receive benefit from Christ for them; we believe such benefit is there to be had for them, and therefore we make hard shift to bring them thither; and see what a fruit this faith hath, Arise, faith our Savior, take up thy bed, and walk: Thus faith offers them to God to be nursed up by him, and we believe for them, that there is that in Christ for them which they stand in need of, and therefore

we believe in their behalf, that God will be gracious to them, for his Covenants sake. And faith doth not only bring them to God, and present them before him, but this it doth seriously and solemnly; we many times have much Courtly complement in Baptism, and stand more upon the outward carriage of things, then upon the serious solemn Act of it; but faith looks at the spiritual work that is there to be done. Faith doth two things, in such a case.

1. It renews the Parents Covenant, both to its self, and to its child, because faith believes the Covenant is made to the Parent and his child, Gen. 17:7, and therefore Abraham in that respect looks up to God, Oh that Ishmael might live in thy sight; the promise was made to him and to his seed, Acts 2:38, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call; and God hath promised to bless David and his house, 1 Sam. 7:27. The soul thinks itself unworthy of such a mercy, but sure God hath promised it, let it therefore be established forever, let all that ever I bring unto thee live in thy sight.

2. Faith hath another work, it brings these children unto Baptism, that the Covenant may be sealed to them there, that they may be made God's adopted ones, and Spouses there; the faith of Parent doth not leave the child here, because he hath betrothed it unto God, but entreats God not to leave his child to its choice, but that he would bow it to consent in due time, and the child can give its consent many times sooner then we think it can; John the Baptist in his Mothers womb, Luke 1:44, but every child is not so lively to be so soon conceived in the womb of the Church, as in the womb of its Mother, yet as soon as it can choose good, and refuse evil, it may look after Christ, even then when it knows not what Christ is; but however, to be sure, the Parent hath a care to train up his child, to the service of that God, to whom by his Covenant it is born, and into whose family by Baptism it is

admitted; and God takes it as a whorish part in his people, The children whom thou hast born unto me, thou hast sacrificed unto Baal, Ezek. 16:20. Thou hast offered thy children unto me in Circumcision, and then trained them up to serve Idols; so God will look at it, as a shameful whoredom, for the sons of men to bring their children to God in baptism, and then train them up to serve the Devil, and the world, and their own lusts; and yet this is the whoredom of most Parents, that are willing enough to bring their children to God in Baptism, and when they have done, to run away from God; Faith knows, that by the Covenant children are born to God, and by Baptism admitted into his family, and that there is nothing wanting but the child's consent, when he comes to years of discretion; and therefore he so trains it up, as that it may not fail of its consent in due time. And look as you see parents, when they put their children into a good family, are you not wont to say to them, Now that you leave my house, see that you do your Master faithful service, please him, and you shall please me, but if you run from him, look for no countenance from me? And shall you not much more say so to your children, when they are admitted into God's family, now they are fellow-Citizens with the Saints and Angels of God? And now as they have been given to God, so tell them, as ever they mean to find favor from you, so see that they please God, look that they depend upon God for his grace; thus faith labors to clothe every man with consent, when he is bidden to the marriage of the Son, Mat. 22.

Use 1. Though the whole point be but an Use, yet we may further apply it; and it will be a just reproof unto such as when they come to offer their children in Baptism, they never consider what they have in hand, come only to take the rites of the Church, and what the Laws of the Kingdom require, put God off with mere complements, but no more regard renouncing the

Devil and the world, then if we had never made any mention of it; we say we believe the Articles, and we will have our child baptized in this faith, but we consider nothing, but that there the child may have its name given it, and there is all we mind: but to search and look what God requires of us in regard of it, that we never look after; and this is not only a just check to all carnal Parents, but of many a good Christian, that many times may live a good measure of a sanctified life, and yet come and ask, What benefit had you by your Baptism? To this day many a good heart cannot tell; and what a shame is this, that God should give us but two such lively Ordinances as the two Sacraments, wherein are contained all the rites of the Law, and yet to us they should be such light things!

Use 2. Let it be a word of direction and instruction to us all, that such as yet never learned to live by faith in the use of Baptism, consider now what God sets before you in it; that there God sets before you the uncleanness of your nature, and think you that Christ will bestow his blood and Spirit in vain? Labor to see that therein you are admitted into God's family, you and your children, that there God offers you pardon for sin, death to sin, fellowship with Christ in all your afflictions, preservation to salvation, and resurrection of body, and all this sealed up to you; labor then to know how you may get good hearts and new spirits. And when you bring your children unto Baptism, make not an empty Ceremony of it, but present your children to God, and offer them to become little spouses unto him, and renew your consent for yourselves and for your children, and learn them to live, not to Satan or this world, but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the like may I say for the Lord's Supper, set the same faith awork about it, examine what God offers you, and be sensible, that even after justification and sanctification, you still bring sinful bodies and souls into

God's presence, and God offers it to your sight; and therefore behold the blood of the Covenant, and receive there whole Christ, give your consent there to God, that as God there offers Christ to you, so you may say Amen to it, give free consent for yourselves, that it may forever be ratified to you, and walk as become the Spouses of Christ, as those that are washed from dead works, and teach your children to depend upon him, and live as those that are one body with your brethren that partake with you, and then may you go home and believe it verily and really done, believe that you are married to the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore keep loyal fellowship with him, that the blessing of Christ and Abraham may come upon you and yours.

APPLICATION VII. – FAITH BY THE WORD.

WE NOW COME TO speak of living the life of Sanctification by faith in the reading of the word of God.

In reading of the word, it is by faith that we live the life of sanctification. To read the word, and to meditate thereon, is a daily part of a Christian holy life; Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and that meditates therein day and night; that is, in some part of the word; A man cannot hear it every day, but he may read it most days, and if not read, yet he may meditate upon it in his journeys; and Kings and Princes who have most business, and can least spare time, if they be faithful in their calling, yet they are commanded to read in the word all the days of their lives, Deut. 17:19. And that so he might learn to fear the Lord his God, and not to exalt himself above his brethren. Now if Kings whose heads and hands are most full of business, continually employed from morning to night, Exod. 18. If they be to read in the word all the days of their lives, how much more other Christians, whose employments though great, and places honorable, yet fall short of the places and honor of Princes? And therefore since this is a daily

work of sanctification, and because there is no lively holiness but in faith, let us therefore now see how we may set our faith awork, whether we read or meditate on the word, that we may not have a dead work of our reading.

Now for clearing and opening this point, remember and conceive thus much; That all that you read in the Scripture is either a word of Commandment, or Threatening, or Promise, or Story and Doctrine to be delivered, and faith strongly exerciseth itself in all these, and it puts forth several acts about them all, and in some jointly.

First, for the Commandments, faith believes the commands, Psal. 119:66. I have believed thy Commandments. Now faith believing the Commandment doth set itself awork in three or four several acts about it. First, it allows and believes the Commandment to be holy, just, and good, yea even then when it is most cross to our natures, Rom. 7:12,16. When I do that which I hate, I consent to the Law that it is good: He doth not justify his actions against the Law, but justifies the Law against his sin, takes part with the word of God against his corruption; even then when Paul is carried away to do that which is sinful, yet then he consents to the Law more then to his sin; yea (which is wonderful in this case) faith doth not only approve it as pure and good, but likewise, that it is the best course, howsoever sometimes we do otherwise; therefore David speaks of the Law of Judgments and Commandments as more to be desired then gold, as sweeter then the honey or the honey comb, Psal. 19:10,11. And by keeping them there is great reward. See how faith looks at the Law of Commandments, which God hath given to men judiciously, to order their lives by; there is more sweetness and profit in obedience to the Commandment then in anything; Honey not so sweet, gold not so profitable as the Commandments be. And here are two acts of faith wrapped up together: The one is, that faith

doth highly prize the Commandments, looks at them not only as good, but as the best, most profitable and pleasurable.

And then secondly, it doth wisely apply them to ourselves, as most behoovefull every way for us to do; thus faith looks at God's Commandments as great things, the observing and keeping of them, as bringing more profit then gold; so by consequence the transgression of the Commandments brings great evil. How shall I do this great evil and sin against God? Gen. 39:9. And is it a small thing that you should weary God? Isaiah 7:13, so that my sin against God or his Prophets, is no small thing. Faith looks at Commandments as of great consequence, of great worth in themselves, and of great use to us, and looks at the transgression of them, as the greatest evil, whether against God or ourselves; whereas on the contrary it is the nature of unbelief to sleight the Commandments, to look at them as no great matter, and as things not concerning us, at least not in any special manner: Hosea 8:12. I have showed them the great things of my Law, but they counted them as a strange thing; as if they had no cause to look at them; but what hath a stranger to do with me, or I with him? It is Cain's spirit to say, Am I my brothers Keeper? He did not think it belonged to him to take notice of his brother, and he is the first and eldest son of unbelief the Scripture makes mention of, (and yet to whom belongs the keeping of younger brethren, if not to the elder brother?) Now this argues the unbelief of a man's spirit; yea, see yet a further instance, and in some respect a worse, considering the men that did it, Mat. 27:4. The leaders of the people, there comes to them a poor wretched man in the anguish of his soul, and cries out he had sinned in betraying innocent blood, What is that to us, say they? See thou to it: As if the anguishes of troubled souls were nothing to a Minister; as if it were nothing to save him from despair; as if nothing for

men that had hired him, and set him awork, and yet as if it nothing concerned them, they yet sleight it and say, Look thou to it. This is the frame of every unbelieving heart to sleight the Commandments either small to themselves, or great to others, and not concerning him; how unwilling we are to believe, if faith be not stirring in the word, we either read or hear: But, saith faith, this Commandment is to thee, and to thee. Let everyone that reads a Commandment say, This is for me, and it is holy, just, and good, a great matter, and merely concerns me, and behooves me much to look to it.

Secondly, Hence it comes to pass that faith puts forth another work or act, and that is, faith receives all the commands of God, concerning all things, and bows his heart to every cross-way of God's Commandments, Psal. 119:128. I esteem thy Commandments in all things to be most right, and hate every false way. This universal obedience springs from applying the Commandments, and looking at them as of great weight and comfort and profit to me; and therefore I conceive every Commandment to be most right, and hate every false way, this is the ground of that illimited obedience.

The Law of faith looks at all the Commandments, conceiving all things to be most right, and more useful and profitable then gold or honey, the Commandment is most just and good, and hath respect unto all occasions. And herein faith makes a believer differ from any unbeliever, for no unbeliever, but if he like some things, he dislikes something, and must be excused in it, as Herod: We would divide with God, and would be excused in this Zoar, and Is it not a little one? Let him be but born-with in this one thing; but faith looks at all the Commandments, meaning all things to be holy, just, and good; and if he be carried away at any time, it is his grief, and he bears witness against himself, that he did that which was not good.

Thirdly, Faith when it reads Commandments, it yields blindfold obedience to them all; faith will discern the ways of God in them, and yield blindfold obedience to them, though indeed a man never sees better, then when a man can deny himself, and give single obedience; Abraham went out by faith, when he had God's Commandment for it, not knowing whither he went, Heb. 11:8. This is a right work of faith, for an old man, then about seventy five years old, to leave a fair estate in his own Country, and to go he knew not whither, he reasoned not with flesh and blood, but faith carried him blindfold to yield to what God required, though it was to his great loss, he fore-casts no danger that might befall him in his way, but he goes on believing; and so Paul, Behold I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, Acts 20:22,23. The Spirit hath said unto me, Go, and I find my conscience bound to go, not knowing what should befall him, save only that the holy Ghost witnessed that bonds and afflictions must abide him; then I pass not at all, so that I may but fulfill my course with joy: See how he goes on with a blindfold obedience, he knows much misery will attend him there, yet he passeth not at all, but he denies all the comforts of this life, for what he should do and suffer for God, come of it what will, he knows it is God's way, and then he disputes no further about it.

And fourthly, it is the nature of faith to make every Commandment easy and welcome to us; The word that I command thee this day, is not far from thee, but is near thee, even in thy heart, and in thy mouth, and this is the word of faith which we preach, Romans 10:8. Faith lays them up in the heart, Psal. 40:8. And so the heart looks at it, as an easy yoke, a delightsome, and a welcome burden; yea, and which is wonderful, you would think it implied a contradiction, the same faith which a Christian takes a Commandment as most easy and welcome, yet when it comes to be

done, it looks at it as most difficult to be done, and therefore depends upon God for assistance and help to do it, yea, and not only as difficult, but impossible of and from himself. Psal. 143:10. Teach me to do thy will; why, you would think it was easy for David to do; but though the Commandments were never so easy, Yet, make me to go in the path of thy Commandments, for thy Law is my delight, Psalm 119:35. Now this is a principle in nature, Things are never burthensome to a man but when they are beyond his strength. A man takes no delight in a business that is too weighty, and too strong for him. A man can easily carry a Bushel of grain, when he cannot carry a Quarter, that is too heavy for him; yea, even the Law of God is a yoke that neither we nor our Fathers were ever able to bear. How then comes it to be such an easy and a welcome yoke? Why, faith makes it very pleasing to our spirits, and though it be not able of itself to perform them, yet it looks to God for help, and then goes about it with much ease and freedom, Isaiah 26:12. O Lord to us thou wilt ordain peace, for thou hast wrought all our works for us; that is it that makes it easy and welcome, and so we find delight in it. Thus you see what work faith makes when it reads Commandments.

Secondly, when we deal with threatening's, faith puts forth another work. You say, what hath a Christian man that lives by faith to do with threatening's, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; and the threatening's are but branches of the curse. What use then can a believing Christian make of the threatening's? I answer in two things.

First, Though there be no condemnation to them that are in Christ, yet there are many afflictions to them that are in Christ Jesus, which many times we bring upon ourselves by our disobedience to God's will; Though there be no eternal condemnation, yet there are many temporal afflictions.

But secondly, I answer; Though condemnation belongs not to God's children, yet the threatening's of condemnation are directed even to God's children, though the curse be not ours, yet the threatening's of the curse, are threatening's of condemnation, and belong to believers as well as to unbelievers, and as truly, though not so much, and that it is so, read Rom. 8:13. If you walk after the flesh, you shall die; this threatening is to God's own people, and yet see a more pregnant place; Except you be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 18:3. Now to bar a man out of the kingdom of Heaven, is a grievous threatening, it is no less, then to cast a man into hell; and therefore say not, Here is a threatening for such and such wicked men to take heed to; but know this, though condemnation belongs not to thee, but the threatening doth, and the affliction belonging thereto will certainly befall thee. Eli was a good man, and yet the threatening of God took hold on him, and his house; and David though a godly man, yet the sword never departed from his house; so that the threatening's belong to God's people, and we must so account them; else we shall read the word in vain, when we read threatening's. And therefore faith, when it reads threatening's, looks at them, not only as just and good, for so it doth, though they be grievous and bitter, 2 King. 10:19. 1 Sam. 3:18, but also this it doth, after the acknowledgement of them to be just and good, it humbles a man's soul before God, for his own sin, and for the sins of other men, against whom such judgments are threatened, whether sins past or present, 2 King 22:18,19, by which Scripture you may see, that a good man, when he reads threatening's against disobedience, it makes his heart to melt, and it is faith that makes a man do so, Jonah 3:4.

Thirdly, Faith puts forth another act whereby it puts life into the threatening's, it makes men more watchful against sin for the time to come; for if we see God so displeased at sin, that he thus threatens it with such fearful judgments, faith thereupon stirs us up to much watchfulness; famous is that for this purpose, in Job. 31:16,23, if he had intercepted any poor man's desire, some heavy judgment would have befallen him, but he durst not do it; Why? For the destruction of God was fearful to me, and from his highness I could not have escaped: Destruction from God was a terror; Why Job, dost thou stand in fear of destruction? Is there any destruction to such as thou art? Yea, saith Job, The destruction of God was a terror to me; he durst not hinder any poor man's comfort or profit; if any of you should do so, were it not a fearful sin in you? It would root out all your increase; Why, though from the poor man he might escape, yet he could not escape from God's highness, and you know the Apostle gives a charge, 1 Thes. 4:6,7. Let no man defraud or go beyond his brother, for God is an avenger of all such things. Let no man therefore seek his own, but everyone, one another's good; whatever the men be, be they good or bad, hinder them not; the destruction of God ought to be a terror to every believing soul.

Fourthly, Faith hath another work about threatening's, it works much strength in a man's soul, against all the threatening's and terrors of men; and therefore Job that stood in such awe of God, that he durst not hurt any poor man, he saith, ver. 34. Did a multitude make me afraid, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, or went not out of my doors? No, the fear of God did awe his heart, and therefore he feared not them that could kill the body, Luke 12:4,5, this makes a man bold and courageous; Princes took counsel against me, but I stood in awe of thy word, Psal. 119:23.

Fifthly, Faith in reading the threatening's, quickens a man's care to walk before God in all holy duties, with all holy fear and reverence; when he comes to holy duties, he comes in an holy reverent manner, because he knows with whom he hath to do; Heb. 12:28,29, after the whole description of the life of faith, in the 11th and 12th Chapters, he then desires grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, For our God is a consuming fire; he comes before God in any duty, in an awful reverent manner, not in a base timorousness, but in all awful and humble submission of ourselves before him.

Thirdly, when faith comes to read promises, as soon as it hears a promise, first, it lays hold of Christ, before it offer to take hold of the promise, it longs more after Christ, then the promise, and lays hold first on him, and then on the promise in him; A man is but of a dead faith, if he lays hold of the promise, before he lay hold on Christ, and it will be but dead, when it should be most quick and comfortable, because he laid faster hold of the promise, then on Christ in the promise; David was in great distress, Psalm 130:1-3, and doth he lay hold on the promise first? No, but Let Israel trust in the Lord, for with the Lord is mercy, and plenteous redemption: See how faith works, here is the promise, With God is pardon, he lays hold on that, but there is somebody to be first served, faith waits for the Lord, first it lays hold on Christ, redeeming him from all his sins, and then he lays hold of the promise of pardon of sin. Lay not you hold on your redemption by the promise, but first seek it in the fountain, there where it is laid up for thee, and then it will be a living promise; else it will be but a dead promise, and will lie dead in your hearts, and therefore look up to him that he may be yours, renew your interest in him, and then you shall have life in the promise.

Secondly, Faith working upon the promises waits for it long, though it tarry long; The vision will speak in due time, and meanwhile, The just shall live by faith, Hab. 2:3,4, this is the nature of faith, He that believes makes not hast, Isaiah 28:16.

Thirdly, Faith doth likewise stay more upon the promise, and upon God in the promise, then upon any means that it can use in the accomplishment thereof. Abraham when he had a promise of seed, he rested not his own, or his wives body, but being strengthened in faith, he gave glory to God, Rom. 4:19-21.

Fourthly, Faith purifies the heart, for a promise, and by a promise, faith purifies the heart by reason of a promise, and by virtue thereof, we desire that God would give us his Christ, and in him the promise; and therefore seeing we have such promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7:1. 2 Pet. 1:4. God hath promised to subdue our iniquities, and to give us clean hearts, and that we may partake in these promises, we set ourselves against these pollutions.

Fifthly, It is the nature of faith to rejoice in all the promises it receives, and rests in them; Abraham rejoiced to see my day, Joh. 8:56. Psal. 119:50. It is my comfort in my affliction for thy word hath quickened me, Heb. 11:13, they were glad they had a promise to rest on, though they had nothing else.

Sixthly, Faith in the promise doth encourage and embolden a man to undertake any duty, or to undergo any evil in the strength of a promise: Sea a place for both, Heb. 11:33-35, marvelous difficult things they overcame by faith, they overcame Giants, as David did Goliath, he trusting in the name of the Lord of Hosts, was confident God would close him in his hands; wonderfully doth faith work, be the duty never so desperate, and so

doth it undergo any evil, ver. 35. Women and others were tortured, and would not be delivered to avoid torture, because by faith they looked for a better Resurrection, they knew of something that would make amends of all that hardship they underwent.

Now there is one portion of Scripture more, and that is, Story and Doctrine, matter of contemplation; things to be known, as the Creation of the world, of the providence of man's fall, of men's examples, good or bad. And now what life doth faith put into our hearts, when we read these?

First, it gives us to understand them very clearly, not only believe that they are true, but we understand plainly the meaning of them; By faith we understand the world was made, Heb. 11:3, and Faith is the evidence of things not seen: by faith Abraham saw Christ's day; we know such a thing was so, and understand it in some good measure, far beyond what else we could have attained unto.

Secondly, if faith read the works or decrees of God, then it bows to a sanctifying of God in our hearts, that is, the more to rejoice in God, and to trust, fear, honor, and worship him; Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive honor and praise; it humbles the creature, and puts honor upon God, Rev. 4:11. Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? Jer. 10:6,7. This is the nature of faith, when it reads a description of God, and his works or attributes, it humbles itself before God, and magnifies him.

Thirdly, If faith read of men's doings, if good, it applies and follows them, if evil, it avoids them; it applies the one, and is weaned from the other; All these are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we should take heed we be not such and such, 1 Cor. 10:5, he looks at them, as just discouragements, from meddling with such wicked practices, whether in good or bad men; evil men do according to their kind,

and good men are drawn to it: and when we read of the ways of good men, then Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1,2. Thus have you seen the mighty power of a lively faith in the use it gives us to make in reading and meditating on the word.

Use 1. It might be a just reproof of a Doctrine taken up by some Ministers; That in the days of the Gospel, men are not to apply the threatening's to the consciences of God's people, yea some say, not so much as to wicked men. But now consider, Is there any part of the word, which I either read or hear, which faith hath not a work in? It is true, curses belong not to them that are in Christ, but the application of them belongs to them, to keep them from condemnation, Have you not heard that the hearts of God's people which were holy; have melted with the applying of the threatening of God? But you say, they lived in the days of the Old Testament: But did not Christ's Disciples live under the New, and yet the threatening's take hold of them and doth not the Apostle threaten vengeance to them that defraud their brethren? And therefore see how much they are mistaken, that will not have the threatening applied.

Use 2. It is a sign of trial, to know whether I live by faith, in reading the word or not, and see a true discerning of the ground, of our reading profitably or unprofitably; if you live by faith, you will make use of your faith, and your faith sets your hearts awork in whatever you read, be it more or less. If therefore thou comest and reads the word, and sees no great matter in it, neither in Commandments, threatening's nor promises, or if thou seest something in them, yet if thou lookest not at them as concerning thee, or if thou apply some Commandments, and not othersome, and not willingly give blindfold obedience to them all, then thou readest Commandments in vain; if thou readest threatening's, and thy heart be not

affected nor afraid, thou readest that word in vain; if thou readest promises, and takes not hold of Christ, and waits not for him, and stays not more upon him, then upon the promise, thy faith was dead at that time; or if thou readest Story, and understandest little of God, &c. then thy heart was asleep.

Use 3. It may serve to stir up every soul, when you go about to read the word; I beseech you, if you would not read the word in vain, then read it in faith, it will not profit you else; and therefore, whenever you go about to read, lift up your hearts to Heaven, that God would give you a faithful heart, to look at all the word as nearly concerning you. Labor so to read, as that you may suck life from it, and so may you, whenever you read, say, it is a sweet Ordinance; and I know not a godly man, but he takes this Ordinance for his duty, to read the Word daily; there is no man that hears with profit, but he makes conscience of reading; be sure therefore whenever you read, that you pass it not over, till your faith hath helped you to make some profitable use of it.

APPLICATION VIII. – FAITH IN PRAYER.

WE NOW COME TO speak of living the life of sanctification by faith in prayer. It is by faith that we put up any sanctified and lively prayer unto God. The life that we live in this world in our prayers, is a life of faith: and indeed herein faith is in an especial manner required, James 1:5,6. Let him ask in faith; Though God be most liberal to bestow his blessings on us without grudging, yet unless we ask in faith, we must not think to receive it; as if he should say, Our best prayers will be but dead works, unless faith be active and stirring in them, The prayer of faith shall save the sick, James 5:15,16, shall save not only his body from sickness, but his soul from sin; not that every faithful prayer doth forthwith obtain deliverance from sickness, and salvation from sin, unless there be some faith in them that are prayed for, though what God hath promised in this kind, he is able to give, yet he will see some faith working before he grant it.

Now because faith is of such principal use to put life into our prayers, see how faith doth act it self by so doing.

There be two principal acts of faith, which it puts forth in all our faithful prayers that are accepted of God.

First, it is faith that stirs up holy watchfulness in our hearts unto prayers, and this the holy Ghost requires in all sorts of Christians, Eph. 6:18. Pray always with all manner of prayers and supplication, watching thereunto with all perseverance: Watch with all constancy and assiduity, shaking off all drowsiness of flesh and spirit; he calls not so much (though that may be part of his meaning) for constancy in prayer as for watchfulness in prayer, and that as well before, and in prayer, as afterward. And as watchfulness unto prayer is required, so watchfulness in prayer, Col. 4:2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; and they are both put together, 1 Pet. 4:7. The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer; So our Savior calls upon his Disciples, Mat. 26:41. Watch and pray. Their hearts began to be heavy, and their bodies to be drowsy, and they had much ado to keep from sleeping, when there was most need of praying. Therefore watch and pray that ye fall not into temptation.

Now because this is a duty so necessary, and so little spoken to, therefore I intend to speak something of this watchfulness unto prayer.

There is a threefold watchfulness, which faith stirs up in a man unto prayer, in prayer, and after prayer; and a faithful heart is watchful in all these.

First before prayer, faith puts forth a threefold watchfulness. First this watchfulness is requisite, and is exercised about observing and gathering up fit matter for petition and thanksgiving in our daily occasions; if he be watchful, he is ever attentive all the day long unto such occasions, as do furnish him with fit matter, and arguments, and motives to come before God with; and faith sets him awork so to do, faith observes what our daily

corruptions are, how soon this or that passion is stirred up, what vanities in our minds, what uncircumcision in our lips, how barren and unfruitful in good conference to help ourselves and others, and it gathers these up against the next opportunity we have to come before God; it observes any kind of judgment or affliction God tries us with; it observes what favors and mercies we receive from God daily, and so makes them fit matter for his daily prayers: And especially these he culls out against the time of more solemn humiliation. Job tells you what he was wont to do, when his heart was in its best frame, though then distempered, Job 3:8. Let them that curse the day, curse this night, and prepare to stir up mourning: The Original word is strong, Stir up Leviathan; Huge mourning's, heaps upon heaps, great Behemoth mourning's; Let them pocket up this, and lay it aside in readiness that they may remember the misery of this day or night. See therefore what a watchful heart will do, it will take up matter from any occasion offered to stir up mourning. In that he spake of laying up matter of cursing, that was his weakness, but of supplication and thanksgiving, that is a Christians duty; look what an impatient heart will do for cursing, that will a patient heart do for blessing; great mercies for great days, and great evils for great days of humiliation. As a man that hath a building to rear up, he prepares matter, wood, and stone for it; so a Christian prepares materials for his prayers. Prayers and praises resemble an edifice or building, Psal. 22:3. Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Jerusalem. Now a man inhabits nothing but an house; if therefore God inhabit praises, it is a sign that it is a way to raise up an house to encompass God about with, such is the nature of prayer; A man that hath a prayer to make, he hath an house to build for God, Exod. 15:1. I will prepare an habitation for him. When therefore a Christian is to come before God in prayer, he considers what

matter he hath stored up against such a time, that he may rear up a building for the most High to dwell in. And he not only prepares fit matter, but likewise observes what order is best to dispose these in, prepares fit arguments from his own necessity and God's glory, and this he doth against solemn times: Job 23,4. He could not come before God, he was so full of terror without, and anguish within, that he could not have liberty to pray: But O that I had but a little breathing time; what would he do then? I would order my cause before him, and I would fill my mouth with arguments: He would have his case in readiness to set before God, he would not come abruptly, and inconsiderately, but have his matter in some order, and if his memory would not serve, he would pray to God to rank his business for him; for indeed except God build for us, our building is but in vain: but he would lay them in fit order, as they did their sacrifices, joint by joint; whatever the holy Ghost hath given him pattern for in the word, faith will set watchfulness awork to consider of it, to prepare matter from it, against our next coming before God.

Secondly, Faith and watchfulness keeps the heart in a praying frame; a man may have much good matter, and in good order, and yet an heart very unfit, but faith sets watchfulness awork to keep the heart in a praying frame.

And a threefold grace watchfulness hath a special respect unto in this particular.

First purity, both with God and man, Psal. 6:18. If I regard iniquity, if I squint aside at any sin, God will not hear me. A man must lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting, 1 Tim. 2:8. This purity of heart keeps the life free from guile; Keep a conscience void of offense before God and man. Sin will harden the heart, Heb. 3:12,13.

It makes us walk respectively towards all men, to give every man his due, and so shall we offer to God an acceptable service: remember if thou hast anything against any man, or any man anything against thee, first go and be reconciled unto them, and then come and offer thy gift; implying, that if a man do walk in wrath, and emulation, and discord in any kind, he must clear that score first, else the heart is not in case to pray; in special wise, look to thy conversation in thine own house, 1 Pet. 3:7. If thou consider not the weakest part, thy heart is not fit to pray, and therefore this is the watchfulness which faith stirs up the heart unto. A man that hath a petition to put up to the King in the evening, he would keep himself from offending him all the day; so in this case God would have us keep our hearts in a praying frame, free from any disturbance of any kind, for if any corruption be stirring, it will hinder our prayers.

Secondly, Besides it keeps our hearts in a praying frame, by maintaining in our hearts a sensibleness of those things of which we make the materials of our prayers; for a man may have these, and yet come off very heavily in prayer, for want of being sensible of those things. It is true, if a man keep himself in a pure frame, he will keep himself sensible, for it is the deceitfulness of sin that hardens, Heb. 3:12. Keep thy heart innocent, and thou wilt be sensible. David while he complains of corruption in his heart, cannot put up a word of petition, Psal. 73. But afterward he rises up to some sense, then he falls to prayer, ver. 12, then he begins to look up, and can pray to God to guide him by his counsel, and then receive him to glory; and then it is good for him to draw nigh to God: but he rises not up to matter of conference with God, till he hath brought his heart to a sensible discerning of its own corruption, and then is the heart in a praying frame fit to confer

with God: So 2 Sam. 24:10. David's heart smote him, and then he looks up to God for pardon, 2 Sam. 7:18, 1 Chron. 29:10.

Thirdly, A praying frame brings with it a reverend fear of the holy presence of God, it puts him into a child-like awful disposition, Psal. 5:7. In thy fear will I worship towards thy holy Temple; looking at God, as a God of mercy, and withal of dreadful Majesty; he comes therefore before him in a child-like reverence, his very mercies are fearful, Exod. 15:11. His Majesty fearful, his presence holy and glorious, and therefore he is the more to be feared, Psal. 130:4. And this is to keep the heart in a praying frame before the Lord.

Thirdly then there is another act of watchfulness, and that is watchfulness to prayer before you come to it, to cut off those impediments that would hinder us from prayer, especially that would hinder prayer from rising to any height: It is a speech given to carnal men, and I would it rested there; Psal. 14:4. O ye workers of iniquity, why do ye eat up my people as men eat bread? It shows you that men are so eaten up with their business that there is no calling upon God, What is the matter? He follows his business so close, that he hath no leisure to pray. Rich men eat up poor men's estates by oppression; and even Christian men, if they be not the more watchful, will be so eaten up with their business as they have no leisure to feed on the Lord. Thus faith would offer up unto God a reasonable sacrifice, Rom. 12:2. He would speak such things, and to such grounds and ends, as that God may see we understand what we take in hand; Take heed therefore that you be not hardened through the deceitfulness of any sin, and put not off this duty, by the necessity of any business whatsoever.

But now secondly, faith makes us watchful in prayer; continue in prayer, and watch therein, Col. 4:2. A Christian man is watchful in prayer; how?

First, The faith of a Christian when it is working, and lively, it makes a man watch unto the matter of his prayer, that it be according to God's will; he would not drop forth anything unadvisedly, he is careful that it be all according to God's will, John 4:15. And so for the manner, he is careful that it be put up in the spirit, Eph. 6:18, praying in the holy Ghost, Jude 20, so that in the holy Ghost we are to pray for the manner.

Now in the holy Ghost; what is that? That is, in a spirit of humility fervency, and constancy;

1. In humility, O Lord I am less than the least of all thy faithfulness, Gen. 32:10. Gen. 18:27. Thus in a spirit of humility, the soul doth acknowledge our own baseness and vileness.

2. Fervency, fervent prayer, Acts 5:12, that is, prayer without ceasing; the same word is translated earnest, Luke 22:44. Rom. 8:26. The spirit helps our infirmities with sighs and groans that cannot be expressed. Exod. 14:15. Why criest thou unto me? And crying implies earnestness. Now fervency stands in two things; In earnestness of the affection, and strength of persuasion; earnestness of affection, Why criest thou? And so strength of persuasion; he makes choice of such arguments as are most fit to persuade, as from God's former gracious dealing, and so pleads the Covenant; Exod. 32:10. Moses would not let God alone, Remember the Covenant thou hast made with thy servants, and the great works thou hast wrought in redeeming them, will not the Egyptians blaspheme thy name if thou destroy them now? Now this bows the heart of a man to some fervency in prayer, it binds God as it were with his Covenant, and his promise, and his glory, with cords of the people's misery, and sense of the enemies insolency, and so muffles him (as we may say with reverence) as with a gown or cloak, that he cannot strike as he would; so as now he cannot see iniquity in his people,

he is so compassed about with his nature and property, and Covenant, that he hath no liberty to strike; and now this prevents wandering in our prayers, No man stirs up himself to take hold of thee; this puts away the leadeness of our prayers, and gives them wings.

Thirdly, And so for constancy, Pray always and be not weary, Luke 18:1. God will let us know, that he will be over-wrestled, if we be assiduous, and will not be beaten out, as the Syrophenician woman would not.

Now thirdly, another part of watchfulness is after prayer; and after prayer, it waits upon God for what we have prayed, and then is acting and endeavoring, first, to use all lawful means for the obtaining of them; I say, it waits upon God for an answer, to see how God pours in the fruit of our prayers unto us, they listen what news from heaven daily, Psal. 50:3. Hab. 2:1. I will stand upon my watchtower, and hear what the Lord will say unto me; he had made a strong prayer against the Babylonians, and he wonders that God should suffer such wretches to oppress men better than themselves, but saith he, I will stand upon my watchtower, and see what God will answer me.

Secondly, besides watchfulness excites and stirs up a man to use all lawful means, for the accomplishment of such requests. Ezra had spent the whole ninth Chapter, in supplication for the Church, and then some came to him, and said, Arise, the matter belongs to thee, there is hope it may be done; So Joshua, when he had fasted and prayed, Jos. 7:10-16, then Arise, Israel hath committed an execrable sin; See who it is, and let justice be executed; he would not have him to continue in prayer, as to think to over-wrestle it that way; no, but arise and be doing, do what you can to help it, and then wait upon God for a blessing.

Now for a second act of faith, and that is, As it stirs up watchfulness about prayer, so faith doth also help a man to believe in the Lord for acceptance, both of our persons and prayers, and both, in our weakest and worst estates, and upon the safest and surest ground; this is a stirring active work of faith, the true Apotelesma of the sacrifice of prayer, Psal. 66, ult. Psal. 4:3, Psal. 55:17. God turns not our prayers from him, nor his mercy from us, but our person and prayers are accepted, and so accepted, as that God both hears what we say, and will likewise do it, John 5:14,15. Mark. 11:24. God will grant us all necessary expedient things, for this life and a better; but in case the matter be such, as in some respect God sees it not meet for us, yet know, that God will have respect to the grounds and ends of our prayers, and that is the chief thing: Deut. 3:23,26. Moses prayed that he might go over Jordan, and see that good Land; now it was a thing God saw was not meet to give him, but though he would not give him that, yet he had respect to the ground and end of his prayer, and so God gave him sight, that he saw and discerned it plainly; so God considered the weight of his desire, and though he grant not the letter of the conclusion of our prayers, yet he can direct us a better way to be satisfied. It stood not with God's purpose, that Moses should go over into that Land, he standing as a type; but his petition being reasonable, God answers the grounds and end thereof; and so in all other our petitions if reasonable, Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, and he was heard, Heb. 5:7, his desire was, to submit to God's will, and he was heard in the ground and end of this prayer. Thus faith believes when we are in a poor case to pray, Psal. 34:6. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; it was then a hard time with David, he was fain to counterfeit himself a mad man; he made a very poor shift, and therefore calls himself a poor man; and yet, I trusted in the Lord, and he

delivered me; so that faith will help a man in very poor takings: and this faith will do, not upon presumption, but upon safe and sure grounds; for,

First, Faith builds upon the nature of God, and he is a God hearing prayer, and therefore shall all flesh come to him; and faith remembers, that this is a royal style of God's prerogative, and thereupon the creature clasps about such attributes of God, as make him fit to hear prayers, as his wisdom, his Almighty power, his rich grace, his jealousy for his honor, and faithfulness in his Covenant, and in special his love to us, John 16:26,27.

Thirdly, Faith hath respect to the name and intercession of Christ, John 16:23, and the intercession of Christ wonderfully avails in this particular, Rom. 8:34, first, he appears before God for us, and stands for us, he will be seen on the Bench, and will visit the cause, Christ stands and appears, Heb. 9:24, yea, and prays for us by the intercession of his blood, Heb. 12:24, yea, and I deny not, but Christ in regard of his divine Majesty, may constantly express his own will to the Father, John 17:24, in the many gracious conferences of the Trinity, together; and so gets an answer to our prayers, many times when we little expect it.

Thirdly, Faith hath a third ground to rest upon, and that is, the intercession of the Spirit, Rom. 8:28. Psal. 10:17. Faith thereby puts life, and warmth, and strength into our prayers; and yet this is one of the weakest arguments faith hath, for many a Christian when he looks at his spiritual enlargements, and rests there, he will smart for it; It is true, faith rests more upon prayer, then upon the weapons of the mighty; Moses prayer did more good against the Amalekites, then the whole Army, Exod. 17:11, and so far faith encourageth us to make us the more to trust upon Christ, but faith dares not bottom itself upon its prayer.

First, because our greatest enlargements are but imperfections, and therefore faith must have something to trust upon that is perfect.

But secondly, Suppose they were more perfect and stronger than they be, yet faith looks at such weaknesses in our best performances, as stands in need of mercy rather to pardon and cover, than to look for acceptance, Neh. 13:22.

Now for application, first, against all such as are not watchful to prayer, or come not with a spirit of faith, to such a sacred Ordinance; I do not so much stand wondering at carnal men, if they neither pray morning nor evening, for how should they call on him, on whom they have not believed? But to look to Christ for grace and mercy, this is not in their hearts to do, and therefore it is no wonder if they pray not; and yet to you I say, as ever you think to find mercy at the hand of God, so get a spirit of faith and prayer.

But yet secondly, This casts shame upon the people of God, professors of the faith, and of the life of faith; how many of them, even some ancient godly men, that in very prayer will fall fast asleep, sometime the hand lifted up, but the heart fast asleep? Is not this a profaning of the name of God? Can we be accepted in such a case? Now therefore take this word home with you, Cursed be he that brings a lame sacrifice to God, and hath a better in his flock, Mal. 1:14, these will be God's fatherly curses, and though it be not in wrath, yet you should know what a Father's frowns be, if you present him with such drowsy work; and therefore I charge you in the Lord, as you would be known to be Christians, shake off drowsiness in this duty.

And this may reprove another sort, that have left off to pray, save only when the Spirit moves them; never take care to prepare the heart for such a work as this is; neither prepare matter, nor keep the heart in a praying frame.

And therefore for a second Use; Let it be an exhortation to every Christian soul, that desires to live by faith; in whatsoever you live by faith, be sure you be not without the life of faith in your prayers: Some men cry down Prayer; but is it not the end of Preaching, that you may learn to pray? Let faith therefore live in them, else they will be but dead prayers; we discourage not any man from reading a prayer, only this we desire, that you may live in your prayers, and so live in God's sight forever. Go home therefore, and call to remembrance what you have heard, let it be your care to observe and lay up daily some fit matters for your prayers, and lay up the chiefest of these against the times of your greatest mourning's, and thanksgivings; Lay them not up for a day or two before, but from day today; Lay up the bulky passages of God's ways, and your own, that you may have them in readiness against special occasions, and then keep your heart in a praying frame, pure from wronging God or your brethren or neighbors, and be sensible of what you come before God for, and keep your hearts in a very reverent and holy awe of God, and pray for what is according to God's will for matter, and according to the Spirit for manner, and stand upon your watch-Tower, to see what God will answer, and use the means to obtain your desires, and come with confidence that your persons and prayers are accepted, and when you are in the lowest case, and make the poorest shifts, then look up to God in the name of Christ, and then shall you find your prayers not drowsy and dull, but such life in them, as will put a life in your callings, and in all the duties that ever you perform, and it will be matter of much comfort and refreshment to you.

APPLICATION IX. – LIFE OF CONSOLATION.

HAVING GONE THROUGH THE principal works of the life of sanctification; We come now to speak of the third part of our spiritual life, which is the life of consolation. And by faith it is that we live comfortably in this present world. Now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord, 1 Thess. 3:7-9. What doth the life of a Christians justification depend upon other men's standing fast? Or in case of our life of sanctification, if other men fall, must we fall too? Might not Paul live that life, though the Thessalonians shrink from the grace of God, and decay in their first love? God forbid.

The life of sanctification stands not upon the standing fast of his hearers, but he speaks of the life of the joy and comfort of the spirit and soul of himself, if they shall stand fast in the purity and practice of that Doctrine they had received from him, that would be the life of his comfort, as you may see in the verse following, We were comforted in all our afflictions by your faith; your standing fast comforts us in all our afflictions; life is not life, if it be overwhelmed with discouragements: Their steadfastness in the

faith did breed joy in the Apostle, and that joy was his life. Now then to show you, that as consolation is the life of our spirits, so it is by faith, that we live this life in this world. Rom. 5:1,2. Being justified by faith we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: By faith we have the peace of our justification, and thereby we have access to God in the estate of grace wherein we stand, and by the same faith do we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; that is the work of faith, first to justify us, and then to pacify us, then to enlarge us to joy and rejoicing in the Lord; 1 Pet. 1:8. Whom though you have not seen, you do love, and believing in him you rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. So that you see the point is plain, a most heavenly argument.

Now for the opening hereof, let me show you how it comes to pass, that faith in Christ doth work this consolation in believers.

There are two principal works by which faith brings us on to consolation, and maintains it in us.

First, Faith prepares us matter of joy.

Secondly, It applies that matter to our hearts, and exhibits just occasion of consolation to us.

For the first, three matters there be of joy, which faith prepares for us to chew upon, and to comfort ourselves in, and in them a man cannot rejoice without faith.

The first and principal thing which faith doth lay hold on, as matter of joy, is fellowship with Christ, and under this is all the rest wrapped up. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, Eph. 3:17. And by him we have access to the Father, and by saying we trust in him, we make him our God, Psal. 90:1,2, and by faith it is also that we receive the promise of the Spirit, Gal. 3:14. So that by faith it is, that we do lay hold upon the Son, by the Son, on the

Father, and on both by the Spirit: For faith distrusts our own natural good parts, and all the blessings of this life, and all the Ordinances, and whatsoever might deceive us with false joys, it carries us directly to Christ Jesus, and fastens all our hope upon him, and so have we access to the Father, and are filled with the holy Spirit, and all these are matter of our joy; Yet a man may have all these, and yet live uncomfortably, but yet here is the matter of joy, faith gives us the blessed Trinity to dwell in our hearts, and so makes up our joy.

First, the Father he is called the God of all consolation, 2 Cor. 1, and he speaks of both the Father and the Son, 2 Thess. 2:16, a place well worthy observation, Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, give us everlasting consolation; where he sets forth both the Father and the Son, as those that give us everlasting consolation, and so my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Savior, Luke 1:46,47, speak of both the Father and the Son: And so likewise doth the holy Ghost, it is his proper style to be called the Comforter, John 14:16. And he shall abide with you forever. John 16:22. I will see you again, and your joy shall be full, and it, shall no man take from you: He means he would visit them by his Spirit, and therefore it is called joy in the holy Ghost, Rom. 14:17. So that herein stands the matter of our everlasting joy. By faith we lay hold on Christ, and in Christ we have access to the Father, and by faith we receive both Father, Son, and holy Ghost, to dwell in us; and thus it prepares us matter of joy.

Secondly, Faith brings us on to fellowship with the means of grace, it will not rest, but if it be possible, it will bring us under the joyful sound of God's Ordinances, wherein it may enjoy this Fellowship with the Father, Son, and holy Ghost: Faith brings us on to make use of the Ordinance more than else

we should do; so as like new born babes we desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. 2:2, and we are new born, when faith is fashioned in us; And David speaking of this confidence in God, saith, Though war should rise up against me, yet in this would I be confident, Psal. 27:3, and see what follows; One thing I desire, yea and I will desire it, That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. This faith doth, and by so doing, prepares matter for our consideration, and consolation; Psal. 89:15,16. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; that is, the sound of the Gospel; They shall walk in the light of thy countenance; in thee shall they rejoice all the day long. There is the joyful condition of a Christian in the enjoyment of the Ordinances, they can every day make a holy day of it, as it were. Psal. 119:111. Thy testimonies are mine heritage, they are the rejoicing of my heart, ver. 162. I rejoice in them as one that findeth great spoils; He never came to an Ordinance, but as a soldier to the spoil, after a great battle, as he having had a battle with his corruptions that fight against his soul. Now he comes to see what God will say to him, and he will make himself a saver, and get a booty out of every Commandment, promise, or threatening he hears: Thus faith comes to divide spoils. It is true, sometimes men come and find spoils in the Ordinances, that never battelled with their corruptions before, for sometimes God is found of them that seek him not, and so many a man that never struck stroke gets spoils: They come and wonder at the presence of God is there, and cry out, God is among them of a truth, 1 Cor. 14:25,26. Thus a man that lives under the joyful sound of the Ordinances, he hath ever matter of as much joy, as a Soldier after victory; Isaiah 12:3. With joy shall they draw waters out of the wells of salvation; and what are those

wells of salvation? Are they not the Ordinances of God from whence we draw consolation, and edification, and a supply for all our particular needs.

Thirdly, Faith puts forth another notable work in preparing us matter of joy, and that is purity of heart, without which there is no spiritual joy to be hoped for. The Sun-shine of God's favor will not shine upon a dunghill soul, it will shine upon the garden only, where the seeds of his grace are sown. The Kingdom of God is first righteousness, then peace, and then joy in the holy Ghost, Rom. 14:17. The heart must be purified by faith to believe in Christ, and from thence springs joy in the holy Ghost, Acts 15:9. Faith purifies the heart; the heart being pure, is a fit subject for joy; This is our rejoicing, that in simplicity and godly purity, we have had our conversation among you, 2 Corinth. 1:12. This is matter of exceeding comfort in the midst of all discouragements. All the ways of wisdom are peace, and all her paths pleasantness, Prov. 3:17. By faith we walk in the paths of God's grace. Now faith therefore that purifies the heart, keeps the heart in a frame fit for joy: But if a man defile his heart and way; then restore to me the joys of thy salvation, Psal. 51:8. A man will thereby break the staff of his joy, so that he shall not feel the supportance of his comfort strengthened in him. God's Spirit being grieved, (as grieved it will be, if we defile ourselves by any sinful lust) it will grieve our spirits; but if God's Spirit be not grieved, then are we near to spiritual consolation; but if God's Spirit be grieved, then our spirits cannot be comforted; if a man wittingly and willingly live in any sin, he cannot have joy. God is truly good to such as are of a clean heart; You cannot see the Sun shine clear in troubled waters, all spiritual consolation dwells in a clean heart: thus faith prepares matter of joy for us.

But now if you think this is enough for a man's spiritual joy, that now he may live comfortably all his days; I think no man that knows what spiritual

joys mean, but knows that a Christian may have truly fellowship with the Trinity, and may have liberty to enjoy the purity of God's Ordinances, and be of an honest heart, and walk before God in the simplicity of his soul; and yet experience knows it to be but over-true, that a man may enjoy all these, and yet be dead-hearted to all spiritual consolation, and therefore there is more goes to this, else it were not possible a Christian should lead a comfortable life. He doubts not of his fellowship with the Trinity, nor doubts he of the joyful sound of the Gospel, nor can he deny, but in some measure of purity, and singleness of heart, he hath walked before God, yet he neither sees nor feels any comfort in these; faith therefore doth something more, when it works us to spiritual consolation.

And therefore secondly, that we may rejoice in the Lord always, Phil. 4:4. Faith doth not only prepare us matter of joy, but having prepared it, it applies it and helps us to make use of it to our consolation; faith is of an applying nature; now let me show you how faith bestirs itself about these three matters, it hath prepared for our consolation.

First, For fellowship with the Trinity, which is the chief and principal matter of joy, faith hath this work which wheresoever it works, it sends not away the soul without some due consolation, at least supports the heart in such sort as that it over-wrestles all difficulties; though it have not always largeness of consolation, yet it never wants so much as swallows up all outward discouragements. As soon as it makes us to remember the Trinity, it applies fellowship with the Trinity by putting us in mind of what we have received from it. See how this remembering of God quiets the heart in ill hours, and quickens our dead spirits, Isaiah 51:12,13. Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of man that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker? See the ground of this people's discouragements; God sets forth

himself as the Comforter of his people; why then shouldst thou be afraid of the face of the oppressor? I am he that comforts thee; What is the reason the people of God receive no comfort, but are every day afraid of man? What is the matter? Why, thou hast forgotten the Lord thy Maker, and hast feared because of the fury of the evil ones, as if he should have said, if that by faith we would endeavor remembrance of our fellowship with God, and that he the Father of mercies hath given us everlasting consolation: Did but we remember that he hath given us his Spirit to be our Comforter, this would quiet our hearts all the day long: Faith will say, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thy hand, O King; but if not, yet know, that we will not serve thy gods, Dan. 3:17. Faith brings God to our remembrance in our worst hours, and quiets us much in all the discouragements that darken our hearts; not such a remembrance that only thinks on God, for that may deceive a man, Psal. 77:3. David thought on God and was troubled; not every remembrance of God will comfort the soul; but when I speak of remembrance, I speak not only of remembering God, when the heart is overwhelmed, but faith keeps a daily remembrance of God even from time to time. Transient remembrances of God bring but small joys; if gained at any time, they are soon gone; but faith remembers God not only in some sudden plunges, as it will do much then, as David had good experience, 1 Sam. 30:6, when the people spake of stoning him, he thought upon God and was comforted and strengthened; It will help much even then; but much more will it help, if a man in his daily constant course remember God, it will quiet his heart in all changes of sorrow; My people have gone astray from mountain to hill, from one refuge to another, these have forgotten their resting place, Jer. 50:6. They might have found rest in me, had they repaired to me; When the Dove comes to the Ark, there is rest for her, but while she

flutters here and there, she finds no resting place: Men that come daily and duly to God, and remember him, they find a resting place in God. You will say, How shall we daily thus remember God?

I answer; Faith wonderfully helps us in this kind by giving us daily to seek God and his face; and that makes us remember him, Psal. 105:3,4. Their hearts shall rejoice that seek God. When a man daily seeks the face of God for pardon of sin and peace of conscience, the heart of such a one shall daily rejoice.

Secondly, Daily to remember the Lord, is to wait upon him, and that brings continual rejoicing, Isaiah 25:9. In that day it shall be said, Loe, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us, we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation. Psal. 35:20,21. Our soul waiteth on the Lord, our heart rejoiceth, because we have trusted in him: It is from our trust, that we have waited on him, and from waiting, we rejoice in him, especially when God gives us to wait on him with meekness and patience, without frowardness, Isaiah 29:19. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord; They shall not only rejoice in him, but grow up in rejoicing.

Thirdly, The remembrance of God will put us in mind what God is, what he hath done for us, and what he will daily do for us, it will help us to know God, and to judge rightly of God, and this will cause matter of exceeding joy. A man may have fellowship with God, and yet not remember what he hath done for him; Considers not what he is now about, nor what he will do for us, and so the heart is much dismayed, Psal. 77:6. I call to mind my songs in the night; time had been, God had given him such comfort, that he had made Psalms of praise in the night; Now therefore call to mind, that God hath given you also his holy Spirit, as both Himself and his Son for you, and have not you then cause to rejoice? And so this remembrance of

him will put you in mind what he hath done for you: God afflicts you, and imbitters both your inward and outward man; why, know He chastens every son whom he receiveth, Prov. 3:11,12, but shall not the consolations of God be more to you, then all the evil that can befall you; these are but pledges to you, that God delights in your souls, If you were without chastisements, you were bastards, and no sons; yea, and consider what he means to do, will not this work for your good at the length? Prov. 3:28, and doth not faith help up to see, that The mercies of the Lord are from everlasting to everlasting, to them that fear him, and think upon his Commandments, Psal. 103:17, so as you cannot point your finger at such a time, in which you can say, there was no mercy in such a providence of God; for could you say so, then the mercy of the Lord was not from everlasting to everlasting, but you see, there is no time excluded, God remembers us in our lost and low estate, Psal. 136:6, as well in our greatest discouragements, as in greatest enlargements, and therefore faith works joy in us.

Fourthly, A man then remembers God, when he prizeth God, and fellowship with him, for many times we are straitened in our own bowels, because we prize him not at his worth; Are the consolations of God a light thing to you? Job 15:11, they should countervail all our discouragements; Is it a light thing for you to have God for your Father, Christ for your elder brother? Am not I better to thee, saith Elkanah to Hannah, 1 Sam. 1:7,8, then ten sons? And is not the immortal God, the Father of mercies, and God of all consolations, better to thee, then anything else thou canst meet with? It is not possible but that faith in such a case, should bid defiance to all discouragements we can meet with; and though it may please God for a while, to suspend the brightness of his countenance, yet faith will minister such cause of consolation, as will overwhelm all the discouragements that

we meet with, and therefore it is but from want of exercise of faith, that a man wants comfort.

Now for a second act of faith, there is matter enough for joy, by reason of living under the sound of the Gospel; though such may rejoice in God, all the day long, yet faith puts forth two acts about this.

First, it doth feed upon the word, and that makes to rejoice in the word.

And secondly, it lays up the word in remembrance for us, that we shall not forget it: read Jer. 15:16. I did eat thy word, and it was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; which shows you, that a man may live under the sound of the word, and yet it breed no joy in his soul, because he doth not eat it; if a man be drowsy at it, and apply it not when he is gone, and make it his own, it is no marvel if he have no comfort in it; but when he applies it, and mixes it with faith, and feeds upon it, it will be the rejoicing of his heart. And so faith remembers, and lays it up for us; when you have seen how it concerns you in this and that condition, then it is further required, that you lay it up in your heart. A man may for a while have much comfort in the word, and yet when time of trial comes, be much to seek, unless he have laid it up in his heart; this the Apostle complains of, Heb. 12:5. You have forgotten the word of consolation; implying, that it is not enough to hear the word, and to feed upon it, and to apply the word, but we must have the word to dwell plentifully in us, Col. 3:16. Faith will often whet and chew upon the word: thus faith by applying the word and Ordinances, works joy in the hearts of God's people.

Another matter of joy was, purity of heart, and a man may have this, and yet want the comfort of it through a double defect which faith supplies.

First, a man may walk innocently, and yet search not, nor discern the purity of his own walking, he hath not cast a reflected eye upon it, and

cannot rejoice in it, because his conscience bears him not witness of it; therefore Paul joins them together, 2 Cor. 1:12, in that the conscience did bear him witness, that was the joy and rejoicing of his heart: so that a man had need, not only walk sincerely, but be careful to observe it duly, that his conscience may witness to it: It is notable counsel that, Gal. 6:4. Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another; Though my way be sincere, yet if I take not a survey of it, my heart may be uncomfortable for all that; neither will it satisfy me, that other men have a good opinion of me, for men may be deceived in me, we must prove ourselves, and measure ourselves, by the rule of the word, and then conscience will speak to our comfort; The Point is not, what weaknesses we have in us; but what we allow not of, and labor to have subdued; if conscience bear us witness, we may have comfort.

Secondly, A man may walk free from defilement in any wicked course, and yet want the comfort of it, because he is not so fruitful in his course as he had need to be; therefore faith will not only make us pure, but make us fruitful, and keep us in a fruitful and growing frame, in case I commit a sin, or be backward to any Christian duty, the staff it may be stands at my door, and I am unwilling to pray or confer, &c. not that I dare commit any gross sin, but I detain some good duty; then it is not possible but thou shouldst want comfort, for when the Spirit of God hath not free passage, it recoils back again sad and discouraged; whereas, did you grow in fruitfulness the Spirit of God would rejoice in you. And thus you see how by faith, we live a life of consolation in this world.

Now for a word of application; first, unto them that want faith; if you want lively faith, you want lively consolation; it is not possible you should rejoice in the Lord, especially, not always, for where no life of faith, no life

of consolation; There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God, Isaiah 57, ult. The joy of a hypocrite is but for a moment, Job 20:5. Though Joseph's brethren had their sacks full of corn, and their money in their sacks mouths, yet they were all afraid, the old man afraid, every mothers child of them afraid; and what was the matter? Why, they doubted they had not the favor of Joseph, and they knew that they must thither again; and they feared, as they had cause, his displeasure would be their ruin: So may I say to you, though you have never so many of the comforts of this life, yet so long as Joseph is displeased, Christ not pacified, God not our Father, Christ not our Savior, the holy Ghost not our Comforter, there would be but cold comfort in our hearts, though you had never so many such light sparks as these; yet, This shall you have at my hands, ye shall lie down in sorrow, Isaiah 50, ult.

Now therefore in the second place, consider the reason why Christian men are many times so uncomfortable; Why, (as you heard) you may have God to be yours, live under the joyful sound of the Gospel, walk in purity of heart and life, and yet be most uncomfortable; and why is it, but because Christians do not improve their faith, to make use of their fellowship with God, and his Ordinances, and the purity of their own walking's: and therefore as ever you would live and die comfortably, so remember God daily, and seek his face daily, and wait daily upon him; remember what he is, what he hath done, what he still doth, and will do for you, and learn to know God, and to prize him better, and be careful to keep your hearts unspotted, and prove and examine what you do, and see that what you do is approvable and acceptable in the sight of God, and be sure you grow fruitful in goodness, and take all advantages to employ your spiritual gifts you have, and then your joy shall spring and flourish, and you shall forever walk comfortably in the presence of the Lord.

APPLICATION X. – OUR OUTWARD & TEMPORAL LIFE

HAVING DONE WITH SHOWING how we live the inward and spiritual life of grace by faith; We are now to speak of living by faith in our outward and temporal life: now our outward and temporal life is twofold, which we live in the flesh. It is either a civil, or a natural life, for both these lives we live, and they are different the one from the other: Civil life is that whereby we live, as members of this or that City, or Town, or Commonwealth, in this or that particular vocation and calling.

Natural life I call that, by which we do live this bodily life, I mean, by which we live a life of sense, by which we eat and drink, by which we go through all conditions, from our birth to our grave, by which we live, and move, and have our being. And now both these a justified person lives by faith; To begin with the former.

A true believing Christian, a justified person, he lives in his vocation by his faith.

Not only my spiritual life, but even my Civil life in this world, all the life I live, is by the faith of the Son of God: he exempts no life from the agency

of his faith, whether he live as a Christian man, or as a member of this or that Church, or Commonwealth, he doth it all by the faith of the Son of God.

Now for opening this point, let me show you what are those several acts of faith which it puts forth about our occasions, and vocations, that so we may live in God's sight therein.

First, Faith draws the heart of a Christian to live in some warrantable calling; as soon as ever a man begins to look towards God, and the ways of his grace, he will not rest, till he find out some warrantable Calling and employment: An instance you have in the Prodigal son, that after he had received and spent his portion in vanity, and when being pinched, he came home to himself, and coming home to his Father, the very next thing after confession and repentance of his sin, the very next petition he makes, is, Make me one of thy hired servants; next after desire of pardon of sin, then put me into some calling, though it be but of an hired servant, wherein he may bring in God any service; A Christian would no sooner have his sin pardoned, then his estate to be settled in some good calling, though not as a mercenary slave, but he would offer it up to God as a freewill Offering, he would have his condition and heart settled in God's peace, but his life settled in a good calling, though it be but of a day-laborer, yet make me as one that may do thee some service; Paul makes it a matter of great thankfulness to God, that he had given him ability, and put him in place where he might do him service, 1 Tim. 1:12. And in the Law, they were counted unclean beasts that did not divide the hoof into two, Lev. 11:3, therefore the Camel, though he chewed the cud, yet because he did not divide the hoof, he was counted unclean; and God by the Beasts, did signify to us sundry sorts of men, who were clean, who not, as you may see in

Peters Vision, in Acts 10. It shows you then, that it is only a clean person, that walks with a divided hoof, that sets one foot in his general, and the other in his particular calling; he strikes with both, he serves both God and man, else he is an unclean beast, if he have no calling but a general, or if no calling but a particular, he is an unclean creature; But now as soon as ever faith purifies the heart, it makes us clean creatures, Acts 15:9, and our callings do not interfere one upon another, but both go an end evenly together, he drives both these plows at once; As God hath called every man, so let him walk, 1 Cor. 7:19,20. This is the clean work of faith, he would have some employment to fill the head and hand with.

Now more particularly, faith doth warily observe the warrantableness of its calling.

Three things doth faith find in a particular calling.

First, It hath a care that it be a warrantable calling, wherein we may not only aim at our own, but at the public good, that is a warrantable calling, Seek not every man his own things, but every man the good of his brother, 1 Cor. 10:24. Phil. 2:4. Seek one another's welfare; faith works all by love, Gal. 5:6. And therefore it will not think it hath a comfortable calling, unless it will not only serve his own turn, but the turn of other men. Bees will not suffer drones among them, but if they lay up anything, it shall be for them that cannot work; he would see that his calling should tend to public good.

Secondly, Another thing to make a calling warrantable, is, when God gives a man gifts for it, that he is acquainted with the mystery of it, and hath gifts of body and mind suitable to it: Prov. 16:20. He that understands a matter shall find good; He that understands his business wisely. God leads him on to that calling, 1 Cor. 7:17. To show you that when God hath called me to a place, he hath given me some gifts fit for that place, especially, if

the place be suitable and fitted to me and my best gifts; for God would not have a man to receive five Talents, and gain but two, he would have his best gifts improved to the best advantage.

Thirdly, That which makes a calling warrantable, is, when it is attained unto by warrantable and direct means, when a man enterprises not a calling, but in the use of such means as he may see God's providence leading him to it: so Amos manifests his calling against the High Priest, Amos 7:14,15. The Lord took me, and said unto me, Go, feed my people: So he had a warrant for it, God's hand led him to it in God's Ordinance, and therein he comforted himself, whereas another man that hath taken up such a calling without warrant from God, he deals ingenuously, Zach. 13:5, and leaves it; to show you that a man ought to attend upon his own warrantable calling. Now faith that hath respect unto the word of God for all its ways, he would see his calling aiming at the public good, he would see gifts for it, and an open door for his entrance into it, he would not come unto it by deceit and undermining of others, but he would see the providence and ordinance of God leading him unto it, the counsel of friends, and encouragement of neighbors; this is the first work of faith.

2. Another work of faith, about a man's vocation and calling, when faith hath made choice of a warrantable calling, then he depends upon God for the quickening, and sharpening of his gifts in that calling, and yet depends not upon his gifts for the going through his calling, but upon God that gave him those gifts, yea he depends on God for the use of them in his calling; faith saith not, Give me such a calling and turn me loose to it; but faith looks up to heaven for skill and ability, though strong and able, yet it looks at all its abilities but as a dead work, as like braided wares in a shop, as such as will be lost and rust, unless God refresh and renew breath in them. And

then if God do breathe in his gifts, he depends not upon them for the acting his work, but upon God's blessing in the use of his gifts; though he have never so much skill and strength, he looks at it as a dead work, unless God breathe in him; and he looks not at his gifts as breathed only on by God, as able to do the work, unless also he be followed by God's blessing. Blessed be the Lord my strength, that teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, Psal. 44:1. He had been trained up to skill that way, yet he rests only in God's teaching of him, Psal. 18:32-34. It is the Lord that girds me with strength; he puts strength into his hands, so that a Bow of steel is broken with my arms; And therefore it was that when he went against Goliath, though he had before found good success in his combats with the Lyon and the Bear, yet he saith not, I have made my part good enough with them, and so shall I do with this man; no, but this is the voice of faith; The Lord my God that delivered me out of their hands, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine; He that gave me strength and skill at that time, he is the same, his hand is not shortened: And then what is this Philistine more than one of them? 1 Sam. 17:37. And so when he comes in Goliath's presence, and looks in his face, he tells him he comes to him in the name of the Lord of Hosts; and he comes not only in the Lord's name, but he looks up to him for skill and strength to help; and therefore saith ver. 40. The Lord will close thee in my hands; so that by his own strength shall no flesh prevail; it is in vain, saith faith, to rise early, and go to bed late, but it is God that gives his beloved rest, Psal. 127:1-3. Prov. 3:5,6. The strongest Christian is never more foiled, then when he goes forth in strength of gifts received, and his own dexterity.

Thirdly, We live by faith in our vocations, in that faith, in serving God, serves men, and in serving men, serves God: The Apostle sweetly describes

it in the calling of servants, Eph. 6:5-8. Not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart with good will, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; Not so much man, or only man, but chiefly the Lord; so that this is the work of every Christian man in his calling, even then when he serves man, he serves the Lord; he doth the work set before him, and he doth it sincerely, and faithfully, so as he may give account for it; and he doth it heavenly and spiritually; He uses the world as if he used it not, 1 Cor. 7:31. This is not the thing his heart is set upon, he looks for greater matters then these things can reach him, he doth not so much look at the world as at heaven. And therefore that which follows upon this, he doth it all comfortably, though he meet with little encouragements from man, though the more faithful service he doth, the less he is accepted; whereas an unbelieving heart would be discontented, that he can find no acceptance, but all he doth is taken in the worst part; but now if faith be working and stirring, he will say, I pass very little to be judged by you, or by man's judgment, 1 Cor. 4:3. I pass little what you say, or what you do, God knows what I have done, and so his spirit is satisfied, Thess. 2:6. We were tender over you, as a Nurse over her child; We wrought not for wages, nor for the praise of you, if so, we had not been the servants of Christ. A man therefore that serves Christ in serving of men, he doth his work sincerely as in God's presence, and as one that hath an heavenly business in hand, and therefore comfortably as knowing God approves of his way and work.

Fourthly, Another act of faith about a man's vocation is this; It encourageth a man in his calling to the most homeliest, and difficultest, and most dangerous things his calling can lead and expose himself to; if faith apprehend this or that to be the way of my calling, it encourages me to it,

though it be never so homely, and difficult, and dangerous. Take you a carnal proud heart, and if his calling lead him to some homely business, he can by no means embrace it, such homely employments a carnal heart knows not how to submit unto; but now faith having put us into a calling, if it require some homely employment, it encourageth us to it, he considers, It is my calling, and therefore he goes about it freely, and though never so homely, he doth it as a work of his calling, Luke 15:19. Make me one of thy hired servants: A man of his rank and breeding was not wonted to hired servile work, but the same faith that made him desirous to be in a calling, made him stoop to any work his calling led him to; there is no work too hard or too homely for him, for faith is conscious, that it hath done most base drudgery for Satan. No lust of pride, or what else so insolent, but our base hearts could be content to serve the Devil and nature in it, and therefore what drudgery can be too homely for me to do for God? Phil. 2:5,7. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, he made himself of no reputation; he stood not upon it, that he was born of God, and equal to the most High, but he made himself a servant, and of no reputation, and so to serve God, and save men; and when his Father called him to it, he stooped to a very low employment, rose up from Supper, and girded himself with a Towell, and washed his Disciples feet, John 13. They thought it was a service too homely for him to do, but he tells them, that even they ought thus to serve one another. So faith is ready to embrace any homely service his calling leads him to, which a carnal heart would blush to be seen in; a faithful heart is never squeamish in this case, for repentance will make a man revenge himself upon himself, in respect of the many homely services he hath done for Satan, and so faith encourageth us to the most difficult and homely businesses. Ezra 10:4. It is a great thing thou art now about, yet

arise and be doing, for the matter belongs to thee: Yea, and though sometimes the work be more dangerous, yet if a man be called to it, faith dares not shrink; It was an hard point that Herod was put upon, either now he must be profane, or discover his hypocrisy; now therefore John dischargeth his conscience, and though it was dangerous for him to be so plain, yet faith encourageth him to it; if it appear to be his Calling, faith doth not pick and choose, as carnal reason will do.

Fifthly, Another act of faith, by which a Christian man lives in his vocation, is, That faith casts all the failings and burdens of his calling upon the Lord; that is the proper work of faith, it rolls and casts upon him.

Now there are three sorts of burdens that befall a man in his calling.

1. Care about the success of it; and for this faith casts its care upon God, 1 Pet. 5:7, Pro. 16:3. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established, Psal. 55:22,24. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will deliver thee; saith will commend that wholly to God.

2. A second burden, is fear of danger that may befall us therein from the hand of man. Luke 13:31,32. Some bids Christ go out of the Country, for Herod will kill him; what saith Christ to that? Go tell that fox I must work today and tomorrow, &c. He casts that upon God and his calling, God hath set me a time, and while that time lasts, my calling will bear me out, and when that time is out, then I shall be perfect.

3. Another burden, is the burden of injuries, which befalls a man in his calling. I have not hastened that evil day, Lord thou knowest; he had not wronged himself nor others in his calling, and therefore all the injuries that befall him in his calling, he desires the Lord to take it into his hands.

Sixthly, Faith hath another act about a man's vocation, and that is, it takes all successes that befall him in his calling with moderation, he equally bears

good and evil successes as God shall dispense them to him. Faith frames the heart to moderation, be they good or evil, it rests satisfied in God's gracious dispensation; I have learned in what estate soever I am, therewith to be content, Phil. 4:11,12. This he had learned to do, if God prosper him, he had learned not to be puffed up, and if he should be exposed to want, he could do it without murmuring. It is the same act of unbelief, that makes a man murmur in crosses, which puffs him up in prosperity; now faith is like a poise, it keeps the heart in an equal frame, whether matters fall out well or ill, faith takes them much what alike, faith moderates the frame of a man's spirit on both sides.

Seventhly, The last work which faith puts forth about a man's calling, is this, faith with boldness resigns up his calling into the hands of God or man; whenever God calls a man to lay down his calling, when his work is finished, herein the sons of God far exceed the sons of men; another man when his calling comes to be removed from him, he is much ashamed, and much afraid, but if a Christian man be to forgo his calling, he lays it down with comfort and boldness, in the sight of God and man.

First, In the sight of God, 2 Tim. 4:7. I have fought the fight, I have kept the faith, and finished my course, and therefore, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God according to his righteous word and promise will give him, as a reward for his sincere and faithful walking; he looks up to God, and resigns up his calling into his hand; he tells Timothy, the day of his departure is at hand; and now, this is matter of strong consolation to him; faith believing, that God put him into his calling, and hath been helpful to him hitherto, and now grown nigh to the period of his calling, here was his comfort, that he had not thrown himself out of his work; but God calls him to leave it, and so he leaves it, in the same hand

from whom he received it. A man that in his calling hath sought himself, and never looked farther then himself, he never comes to lay down his calling, but he thinks it is to his utter undoing: a Swine that never did good office to his owner, till he comes to lie on the hurdle, he then cries out; but a Sheep, who hath many times before yielded profit, though you take him and cut his throat, yet he is as a Lamb dumb before the shearer; so a carnal man, that never served any man but himself, call him to distress in it, and he murmurs and cries out at it; but take you a Christian man, that is wonted to serve God in serving of men, when he hath been faithful and useful in his calling, he never lays it down but with some measure of freedom and boldness of spirit; as it was with the three Princes in the furnace, they would live and die in God's service, and therefore God marvelously assisted them in their worst hours; the soul knows whom it hath lived upon: This is the life of faith in the upshot of a man's calling, he lays it down in confidence of God's acceptance: and for man, he hath this boldness in his dealings with men, he boldly challenges all the fons of men, of any injury done to them, and he freely offers them restitution and recompense, if any such there should be: It was the comfort of Samuel when he was grown old, and the people were earnest for a King, 1 Sam. 12:3, he saith unto them; Behold, here am I before you this day, bear witness against me this day, Whose Ox or Ass have I taken? &c. he makes an open challenge to them all, and they answered, Thou hast done us no wrong. This is the comfort of a Christian, when he comes to lay down his calling, he cannot only with comfort look God in the face, but all the sons of men. There is never a Christian that lives by faith in his calling, but he is able to challenge all the world for any wrong done to them, We have wronged and defrauded no man, Acts 20:26. 2 Cor. 12. We have done most there, where we are least accepted, that is the

happiness of a Christian, those who have been the most weary of him, have had the least cause.

Use 1. From hence you see a just reproof of the infidelity found in them that live without a calling, they either want faith, or the exercise of saith; if thou beest a man that lives without a calling, though thou hast two thousands to spend, yet if thou hast no calling, tending to public good, thou art an unclean beast; if men walk without a cloven hoof, they are unclean: and hast thou a Calling, and art never so diligent in it, it is but dead work, if thou want faith. It likewise reproveth such Christians, as consider not what gifts they have for this and that calling; he pleads for himself, his wife and children, further then himself he respects no calling; and this is want of faith in a Christians calling: or if men rest in the strength of their own gifts, for the performing of their callings, and will serve God in some things, and themselves and theirs in other some, or if we can tell how to be eye-servants, it is but a dead work, for want of faith; or if thou lose thyself, and thy heart is carnal, and not heavenly minded, though mayest have faith, but that is but a dead work. And if thou cast not all thy care and burden upon God, thou wilt be very dead when ill successes fall out; but had we faith, it would support us in our worst successes; and if better successes come, if faith be wanting, our vain heart will be lifted up; and if Christians be confounded before God and men, when they are to resign up their callings, it is a sign that either they have no faith, or it puts not forth life and courage into them, and if it so fall out, know that the root of it springs from an unbelieving heart.

Use 2. It is an Use of instruction to every Christian soul that desires to walk by faith in his calling, If thou wouldst live a lively life, and have thy soul and body to prosper in thy calling, labor then to get into a good calling,

and therein live to the good of others; take up no calling, but that thou hast understanding in, and never take it unless thou mayest have it by lawful and just means, and when thou hast it, serve God in thy calling, and do it with cheerfulness, and faithfulness, and an heavenly mind; and in difficulties and dangers, cast thy cares and fears upon God, and see if he will not bear them for thee; and frame thy heart to this heavenly moderation in all successes to sanctify God's name; and if the hour and power of darkness come, that thou beest to resign up thy calling, let it be enough that conscience may witness to thee, that thou hast not sought thyself, nor this world, but hast wrought the Lord's works; thou mayest then have comfort in it, both before God and men.

Use 3. It is a word of consolation to every such soul, as hath been acquainted with this life of faith in his calling, Be thy calling never so mean and homely, and never so hardly accepted, yet, if thou hast lived by faith in thy calling, it was a lively work in the sight of God, and so it will be rewarded when thy change shall come; Many a Christian is apt to be discouraged and dismayed if crosses befall him in his calling, but be not afraid, let this cheer up thy spirit, that what ever thy calling was, yet thou camest into it honestly, and hast lived in it faithfully, your course was lively and spiritual, and therefore you may with courage look up for recompense from Christ.

APPLICATION XI. – MANS CIVIL LIFE

BEFORE I MAKE AN end of the doctrine of living by faith, in a man's Civil life or vocation; there is something more to be handled concerning that Argument, for a man's particular calling: there fall out sundry successes wherein he stands need of the life of faith, and without which his heart will be dead in the midst of such successes as he meets with.

The successes that befall a man in his Civil life, are either prosperous according to his hearts desire, or averse and cross, and are of themselves apt to discourage him; one of these two befalls every man, and both of them, sooner or later every godly man: sometimes good and comfortable successes, and sometime cross and averse passages, such as would weary a man out, were he not supported by a life of faith; Now then to begin with the first; that,

The life a godly man lives in his prosperity, is a life of faith.

For so the Apostle saith, and he speaks it universally, he speaks of all the life he lives, it is all a life of faith in this world; Since therefore a great part of a man's life is taken up with prosperous successes, whether he be of

greater or lesser estate, he lives therein by faith in the Son of God; see it proved, and cleared to you; you have this spoken to, and taught to a great congregation of many thousand Soldiers by a flourishing Prince, and that was Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 20:20. Hear ye me O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, believe the Lord, and you shall be established; Believe his Prophets, and ye shall prosper; even then, when they knew not what to do, yet believe the Prophets, and you shall prosper. Now for opening this point, let me show forth some acts which faith doth put forth about a prosperous estate, by which a Christian lives in the sight of God prosperously. Four acts there be which faith puts forth in the receiving and enjoying of prosperity.

First, Faith seeks to receive and enjoy an estate of prosperity, not so much by any Legal right, as by an heavenly, not so much by a Legal title, as by an Evangelical; we live not prosperously in our estates by faith, unless we claim it, and receive and hold it by some Evangelical right; faith doth not content itself in a legal right, such a right as the Laws of men can give us, though it will have that right also, yet it rests not there; no, nor secondly, it rests not in any Legal right given it by the Law of God; He that laboreth shall be filled with bread, and the Legal promise is, that The faithful shall abound in blessings, and He that is of a liberal hand shall wax rich; and all these are legal rights, such as God's Law gives us to our prosperous estate in this world. Besides, there is a Law of Nature that gives a man a Legal right, as unto the first born, a double portion; a threefold Law, the Law of Nature, the positive Law of Nations, and the Law of Moses; these all give us right to the blessings we enjoy; But the life of faith rests not in any of these Legal titles; Why? Because faith is sensible, that a Pagan or Infidel may enjoy the blessings of the world by these titles; by the Law of Nature, as the first born, he may have right to a double portion, and by the Laws of the

Country, by his just and honest bargains, and by the Moral Law of God, allowing these blessings to the sons of men. Infidels may have as good a title as any of these be; faith dares not rest there, not but that many a godly man never looks further, but the more shame is for him; many a Christian that believes and rests on Christ for his justification, and sanctification, yet in respect of his outward estate, he many times lives like an Infidel, he imagines not that he should lay hold on these by faith in Christ, but in such a case, a Christian walks unanswerably, and lives not by his faith; but faith looks for an Evangelical right, a Christian man looks for a Christian right to his civil blessings. Believe the Prophets, and you shall prosper, he looks for prosperity from his faith. Now there is a threefold title by which faith challenges his temporal blessings in this world. First, a right of promise, he challenges the Inheritance by virtue of the promise, Gal. 3:18. If the Inheritance were by the works of the law, it were not by promise, But God gave it to Abraham by promise; where he shows you, that Abraham rested not in that he had the Inheritance by any Legal right, but God gave it him by promise, the promise was given to him, and to his seed, Rom. 4:13, that is, not to his carnal seed, as the Apostle himself expounds it, ver. 16, but to them that believe in Jesus Christ, as Abraham did, and to all that are heirs of Abraham's faith. This is the first work of faith about a man's temporal estate in this world; he rests not in any legal rights or titles, for then he should not have it by promise, and that would take off the comfort of the spiritualness of it. This is that which is spoken of marriage, and of the liberal use of the creatures, Every creature of God is good, and He hath made them to be received with thanksgiving, of such as believe and know the truth, 1 Tim. 4:3. So that God having made the Lord Jesus Christ, the heir of the world,

he hath given us right to our inheritance, by giving us Christ, for, If we be sons by faith in Christ, we are also heirs, Rom. 8:16,17.

But secondly, this is not all, for faith lays hold on this promise of inheritance, as ratified to him in the death of Christ; for this promise of Inheritance, is a part of the Covenant or Testament God in Christ made with his people; now the Testament is of no force, till the Testator be dead, Heb. 9:15,19, but when he is dead, then it is of force; so then by the death of Christ it comes to pass, that we receive the promise of Inheritance; faith lays hold of the promise of God, as a Legacy of the New Testament, bequeathed to them therein, and confirmed by the death of the Testator. Christ having made a Covenant with us, he gives the Inheritance of the world to such as believe on him.

And thirdly, Faith hath another consideration, in receiving its temporal estate, and that is higher than all these, and that is the grace of God; It was from the grace, and free love of God, that Christ was given us, the original grant was the grace of God, not any legal right or work of ours; we confess we are by nature children of wrath, and so have dis-inherited ourselves of our natural right; and in respect of our civil right, we confess we have deserved that both us and our whole estates should come to confusion; and also in regard of our many failings against the moral Law, it might have been just with God to have cursed us every way, and to have stripped us naked of all. Faith therefore receives and enjoys all merely from the free grace of God. Gen. 33:5. These are the sheep and cattle (saith a faithful soul) that God of his grace hath given to his servant: This is the tenure by which Jacob held his estate, he came over Jordan but with a staff, but God hath now blessed him, and given him two bands, plenty of all sorts of provision; but these are the blessings not of my deserts, but gifts of God's

own free grace. Thus you see the first work of faith, (and it is a main one) how a Christian lives in prosperity by his faith.

Now of the second act of faith; and that is this, as faith receives and enjoys all by an Evangelical title, then as soon as ever he hath received a good estate, or sees it likely to come in upon him, then as he is very trustful to God, so he is very distrustful to himself; he distrusts his readiness to be carried away with his outward estate. It is the nature of faith to dead a man to himself; it therefore lives by the Son of God; hence it is, that faith when it sees temporal blessings come rolling in upon him, it distrusts its own firmness, it fears lest it should be carried away with the world, when it comes in upon him. This was lively expressed in the holy man Agur, Prov. 30:9,10. Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient; Why not riches? Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord. Full, why is it not lawful for a man to be full? Yes, for the blessings of this world are the inheritance of God's people; but lest I be full of myself; when I am full of the world; so taken up with the world that his heart should surfeit on it, he feared lest he should be full of pride, and vain-glory, and covetousness, and luxury, and such sensuality as should keep him from hungering after God, or so observing of him as it were meet he should do, lest I should begin to be more careless of spiritual duties, less awful of God, and less attending upon him then heretofore; and therefore give me not riches, lest I be full, and begin to look big on it: as the Moon, when full, it gets furthest off from the Sun; so when my estate is full, I am afraid lest I should then stand furthest off from the Sun of righteousness, and from my brethren; When Jeshurun waxed fat, she forgot God, Deut. 32:15,16. And therefore this holy and good man desires but a mean, lest it should be the worse for him; and it was the jealousy of faith, in respect of which Moses

bids them, Deut. 8:10, to 18. When they come into the good Land, and find houses and orchards, and vineyards, and gold, and silver, which they labored not for, to beware lest then they should forget the Lord their God: Faith is fearful of forgetting God then, when he is most abundantly mindful of us: We are never more apt to forget God, then when he most prospers us. And the holy Apostle Jude taxeth it as a vice in the unbelieving Apostate teachers, who were likely to turn the grace of God into wantonness, that in their feasts they did feed themselves without fear; Without fear? What should one fear at a Feast, where is none but friends? Yes, fear your own false, proud, and luxurious hearts, lest you should then forget God, and wax wanton against God, lest there be intemperancy, and excess, unthankfulness, and unfruitfulness; which shows you that a Christian man, though he trust upon God, yet he distrusts himself, and he prays if riches increase, that grace may increase, and so receives and enjoys all these blessings with a reverent fear.

A third act which faith puts forth about a man's temporal estate, is, The more God blesseth a man with a fair estate, the more doth faith quicken him to fear and serve God, and enlarges him thereunto; as God enlargeth our estates, so faith enlargeth our service to him, to be more faithful and fruitful unto him in the use of all the blessings he bestows upon us. See a pregnant example of this in Job; The blessed God gives this testimony of faithful Job, and that to Satan's face, Hast thou not considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth that fears God, and eschews evil? Job 1:8-10. He wrongs not any person, doth good to all, the fatherless, and the widows bless him; What faith the Devil? And I pray you observe his answer, he cannot but bear witness to this truth; Doth Job serve thee for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, so as everything he doth prospers?

The Devil himself will confess that if God give a man prosperity more than other men, it is but reasonable that he should serve God more than other men; seeing God doth so much for him, he were an ungrateful wretch, if having all these blessings multiplied upon him, he should not serve God more than other men; he is well paid for his service, and therefore a shame for him if he should not do it. Now then, doth not a man make himself worse, then the Devil would think any man to be, if the more a man hath, the more he will excuse himself in less serving of God? That we cannot come to such duties, because we have Oxen and Farms? Would not the Devil say, A shame of all such men, whom God hath given so much to, and they yet serve him less than other men that have much less? The Devils faith reacheth thus far, he thinks it reasonable, if Job gain so well by the bargain, that he should serve God more and better than other men.

Now that it is a man's faith that doth thus enlarge a man's heart to the honor and service of God, by how much the more God hath honored him in this world; you may gather it from the testimony of the holy Ghost, 1 John 5:4. This is our victory that overcomes the world, even our faith; What is it to overcome the world? A sign there was some skirmishing between the world and a Christian, and in conclusion faith overcame the world, and led it bound unto its service as a captive slave; and you see it is faith, that helps a man to overcome the world, and then the greater estate my faith overcomes, the greater service God shall have from it; faith will turn all my great estate to some good advantage to them with whom I have to deal: If a man have the dexterity to manage a great estate, and to overcome it, then the more a man hath, the more good service will he do to Church and Common-wealth, to children and poor kindred and strangers; and it is faith that thus subdues the world to obedience of the will of God and the service

of our brethren; faith carries the world pinioned and shackled that it stirs no further, then that we may do God and men service with it. Take you any man that wants faith, and the world will overcome him, yea, or any grace but faith; those that had received illumination as the stony soil had done, the cross world soon damps them, and the prospering world chokes the thorny soil; the world will choke any grace that is in an hypocrite, and any grace in a godly man, if he want faith, it will choke his zeal, and his patience, and his courage; and hence it is, that you see so many godly men warping in the world, in respect of the faithfulness of their dealing; and though the world cannot root grace wholly out, because the seed of God keeps possession for God, yet it will so choke it, that though they were truly godly when they were poor, yet when they get estates, they have a do to preserve themselves from losing their affections to their brethren and their ordinances. It is only faith, and the life of faith that chokes the world, for the world will choke any grace else.

There be three things in faith that overcome and choke the world.

1. Humility; Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, and the rich brother in that he is brought low, James 1:9,10. And he speaks there of a godly rich man. Carnal rich men have no cause of rejoicing, James 5:1, but these men may rejoice when they are brought low. A man may rejoice in that he hath such an estate as humbles him, he looks at riches but as a fading flower, a vanishing commodity, and as snares too, if they be not the better looked to, and therefore he is the more humble, this chokes the world exceedingly; the world chokes a man, when he grows more proud by it, but faith makes him grows more humble, because God hath put all this into his hand, he saith, Lord what am I, or what hast thou seen in me, that thou shouldest do all this for me? Gen. 32:10, 2 Sam. 7:18.

2. Faith makes a man, as more humble in himself, so less confident in the world, the world is crucified to him, and he to the world; he looks at the world as that which will neither make him nor his happy, he thinks not himself the more blessed for these things, and he will tell his children, Look not upon these things, here are great houses, and great flocks, and great portions for you, but these will not make you happy: Job had never comforted himself because his estate was great, doubtless he had rejoiced in God's goodness, that had given him that estate, but he professes he had never rejoiced because his estate was great, Job 31:24,25, see both these put together, 1 Tim. 6:17,18.

3. Another act of faith by which it chokes the world, is, That the more a man receives of the world, the more fruitful he is, and the better he employs it to the obtaining of a larger inheritance in another world; it not only makes a man the more humble in himself, but makes him more forward and ready to every good duty in his place, both to works of piety and charity, 1 Tim. 6:16-19. Ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, laying hold on eternal life: See how faith wheels the world about. And this a man doth when he lays aside his trust in his riches, and grows more fruitful in good works by them. To see riches well got, and well employed, prevails much with God to enrich them with spiritual gifts. Our Savior gives the same counsel to rich men, Luke 16:9. Make you friends with your estates, that when this world, and your estates and lives should fail you, they may receive you into everlasting habitations; see what benefit the prayers of a poor Christian may be to you: and so when you lay out your estates for the enjoyment of a conscionable Ministry, you shall reap everlasting life, Gal. 6:6-8. As a man would not want faithful friends to help him at the Throne of

grace, so let him be sowing his temporal estate to spiritual ends; but saith our Savior, if you be unfaithful in this, and lay not out your riches to your own and other men's good, who will betrust you with true treasure, that is, with saving grace? But if you bestow them with an honest and a good heart, and willing to employ them any way to the glory of God, you might lay up for yourselves a sure foundation; not that a man that hath lived all his days and done no good, and then at his death give all to a Monastery, or such kind of uses, to maintain a generation of idle persons to live without a calling: but if while a man hath opportunity, he lay them out upon pious occasions, it is wonder to see how God blesseth such a man.

4. Now a fourth and last act is this, As it overcomes the world, so it makes a man's heart freely sit loose from the world, if he may not enjoy it with the liberty of God's Ordinances; faith helps a man to carry an end his estate in such a manner, as rather to lose his estate, then not to enjoy God's Ordinances; that estate he cannot enjoy but with the loss of God's Ordinances he sits loose from; this is evident in the example of the good Priests and Levites, 2 Chron. 11:14. They left their possessions, and went up to Jerusalem, for Jeroboam had cast them off; Why, but might they not then have lived on their possessions? You will say, it may be the King had cast them out of their possessions also: But the Text saith not so; and I do not find to my remembrance, that ever the Prophets do blame the Kings, for thrusting the Priests out of their Cities and Suburbs: only I read, they cast out some women that were widows, that had some fair estate left them, Mic. 2:8,9. And they had sometimes said to the Seers, that they should not see, and the Kingdom was threatened for it, it should be to them as the bowing of a wall; but they never complain for that they were cast out of their possessions, only they might not execute their office, if they would not

worship the golden Calves; but they then leave their possessions, they are not so wedded to their estates, but if they may not enjoy the liberty of their ministration, they leave their possessions, and go elsewhere, and many of the people of God went up to Jerusalem after them. It is like enough they might sell their possessions, they might put them off to some of their own Tribe, but it is sure they left them, because they prized the dispensation of their Callings above their estates; and this the Apostle acknowledges in the Jews, Heb. 10:34. Who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; they rejoice in having their whole estates made a prey to other men, for a good conscience sake; he will carry his possession with great loss any whither, rather than for maintenance sake, to live unwarrantably anywhere.

Use 1. It reproveth such Christian men as have and hold not their temporal estate by faith. Some there are it may be that have not so much as a legal title, against the law of Nature undermine their elder brethren; some against the Law of Nations, by forestalling of Markets; some by oppression and deceit, against the Law of God; but know that such things will do you no good, if you thus get and keep your estates; and you are so far from living by faith, that you have not so much as a Civil right to them; and therefore all the estate you have so gotten, is a dead and lifeless estate, and will all waste and consume away, if you have no better than an illegal title, you are far from an Evangelical.

But further it reproveth Christian men, that rest themselves satisfied in a Legal title, if your estates came by friends, or you increased it by just and honest bargains, or by liberal expense of it, and now you are full; why, there is no harm of being full of the world, only here is your sin, you rest satisfied in the legal title, and you bless yourselves in it; but consider what I say, a Turk, or Jew, or Pagan, may say as much as that comes to for their estates,

and then, what difference will you make between them and you, in respect of your outward estates?

Use 2. It is a sign of trial, whether a Christian lives by faith in his outward estate, yea, or no. Consider how you hold your estates, if you have no more but a Legal right, you cannot say, you live a prosperous life by faith; if thou thinkest thou canst wield enough of thyself, and if the more thou hast, the less free thou art for holy duties, then thou livest not by faith; if you grow more proud and joyful, because your estate is waxen great, and if your hearts be so glued to our estates, that you would rather part with a good conscience, and God's Ordinances, then your estates, let Ordinances go, you must live in the world; then you cannot live by faith, and never think then to prosper spiritually.

Use 3. Let me therefore in the fear of God exhort you whom God hath blessed with any good successes in this world, learn to live by faith in your prosperity, be careful to see your souls wrapped up in the sure mercies of God's everlasting Covenant, and rest not till thou seest, the more thou hast, the more thou distrustest thine own heart, and grow the more humble, and fruitful, and abundant in every good work: make you friends of your estates, and lay up a sure foundation for yourselves, that you may lay hold of eternal life.

APPLICATION XII. – EXERCISES, CROSSES, & AFFLICTIONS.

HAVING HEARD HOW A just man lives the life of prosperity by his faith; It now remains to speak of that part of living by faith which consists in exercises, crosses and afflictions.

A just man in all his afflictions lives by his faith.

This is the very scope for which it first pleased the holy Ghost to deliver this great Oracle of our faith, Hab. 2:4, the people of God were then grievously oppressed by the Babylonians, and lay under the heavy yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Prophet expostulates with God for them; God tells him the Vision is appointed, but the time is not yet; But how shall they do in the mean time? Why, they that are proud will murmur, but, The just shall live by his faith; as if he should say, the just man in all his afflictions and discouragements shall live by his faith. So that this is one, and a special part of the meaning of this Text: in his saddest and worst times he shall live by his faith.

For further clearing of this Point, let me show you what lively acts faith puts forth, to support us with spiritual life in the midst of afflictions God

tries us with in our particular calling. Faith exerciseth itself about our afflictions, both first, before they come, Secondly, when we live in and under them, and Thirdly, after we are delivered out of, and freed from them. First, faith before afflictions, hath a double work.

First, before afflictions come, it is the nature of faith to foresee and fear them. Prov. 22:3. A prudent man foresees an evil, and hides himself, and Job 3:25. That which I feared is come upon me; he did aforehand fear such a storm, as did in the end fall upon his head on every side; it was not such a distrusting fear, as discouraged him in his calling, and distempered his fear, but such an heavenly fear, as made him keep himself and family in good order; a waking fear: and thus far to fear, was a good preparative for the affliction he afterwards met with; whereas on the contrary, a proud man, Thy judgments are far above out of his sight, Psal. 10:5,6, as for his enemies he puffs at them; he tramples upon them in his conceit, and thinks himself untouchable; but faith, that is of an humble frame, it despises no enemy, it swells not at them, he is not so bold as to presume to say, he shall never be moved, he knows it is no unwonted thing for God to pour out his servants from vessel to vessel, that they may be more sweet and savory in spirit.

Secondly, Faith shrouds and hides a man before afflictions do come.

And he hides himself, first, in God. Psal. 57:1. Under the shadow of thy wing will I put my refuge, until this calamity be overpast; he hides himself in the protection of the Lord, and so is kept safe and warm under the wing of God, till the calamity be over-past. Isaiah 26:20. Come my people, and hide thyself for a little moment till this calamity be overpast; as if he would tell them, a small time of seeking God, would many times prevail with God for the protection of his people in their greatest and worst evils; shut the

door, be private, and secret with God, acquaint him with thy matters, repair to him by prayer, and trust upon him; Psal. 112:7. He is not afraid of any evil tidings, his heart is fixed, he trusteth in the Lord, and then whatsoever can befall him, it shall be no evil to him.

Secondly, he is careful to hide himself in the innocence of his own heart and conscience: though you would think these white robes of innocence should make a man more obvious to danger, yet there is much security and peace in them; under this our Savior was hid; The Prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me, John 14:13, no sin in him, neither against God nor Caesar; and because we are not able to say, but that in many things we sin all, and God may see just occasion why to afflict us, yet faith will reckon with God aforehand for all the failings it may be guilty of, and renews its repentance before God, and then sin pardoned, is sin covered, Psal. 32:1, and where God once covers sin, there is no more remembrance of it for evil.

Thirdly, Faith hides a man likewise in the use of lawful means for escaping a danger: so Moses Parents, by faith seeing something in him, (likely to be more than ordinary) they took a course to prevent the evil that else might have fallen upon him, and Moses himself when he came to age, he forsook Egypt, and so escaped the danger that else would have befallen him, Heb. 11:27, this is the proper work of faith before an affliction comes.

2. Now faith puts forth another act, in and under an affliction; in or under affliction, faith, First, looks at God's hand; Secondly, at our own hearts; Thirdly, at the afflictions themselves; Fourthly, at the instruments: and faith is very active and lively about all these.

First, under affliction, it looks at God's hand, and it sees God as the author of them, as the moderator of them, and as the deliverer out of them.

First, as the author of them, The Lord gives, and he takes away, Job. 1:21, it is from the Lord that any of the sons of men are afflicted; not that God was the author of the sin of the Chaldeans or Sabaeans, but God's providence ordered the means for to afflict Job; and faith quarrels not with the Chaldeans or Sabaeans, nor with Satan, but blesseth the name of the Lord.

So secondly, Faith sees God moderating all our afflictions, Psal. 31:16. My times are in thy hands, both my comfortable and averse times, they are both in God's hand, and all the measures, and times, and seasons, both of affliction and prosperity are in thy hands; and that is no small help of faith, when it lets us see that the hairs of our head are numbered, men may gather together many bitter ingredients, but God mixes the cup, and out of his hand we receive it.

And so thirdly, from him we look for deliverance out of affliction: whatever our own means be, yet from his hand we look for deliverance, 2 Chr. 20:12. We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee, and yet then Jehoshaphat had great means to help himself, he had a matter of 1,200,000, able fighting men, enough to over-run a whole world, and yet he thought in him was no strength, as valiant as he was, but his eyes were towards God: this is the nature of faith, it looks at God as the only means of deliverance out of affliction, Hosea 6:1.

Secondly, in affliction, as faith looks at God, so it looks into itself, it makes a man look into his own heart, and there it finds two things.

First, justly deserving whatever the Lord is pleased to try him with, and as much needing whatever affliction befalls us. Neh. 9:33. Thou art righteous in all that is come upon us, but we have dealt wickedly: God indeed had given them a reviving, but they had not served God with joyfulness and

gladness of heart, and therefore God made them servants in other Lands, therefore, thou art just in all that is come upon us. I will therefore bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, Micah 7:9. I have done foolishly, but I will offend no more, Job 34:31,32. Teach thou me, and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more; he will now refrain from such evils, as wherein God had been offended, if the way wherein I walk be a way of iniquity, let me see it, that I may do so no more.

And as it looks at himself as deserving them, so needful for him: If need be, we are in heaviness, 1 Pet. 1:6, we never meet with a cross but according to our necessity, were it not that necessity requires we should not be shifted from vessel to vessel, we should grow unsavory.

Secondly, Faith opens our eyes to see and behold the unprofitableness and unquietness of our hearts in all afflictions; it is a kindly work of faith to discover to a man his unprofitableness and unquietness, how apt he is to murmur, and to be impatient, and to contest with God's providence, and to quarrel with instruments. And this the heart sees by faith, Jer. 31:18. Thou hast corrected me, and I was as an untamed Heifer; Untamed and wanton, flinging and throwing here and there; So David confesseth the unquietness of his heart, Psal. 43:5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Faith expostulates with itself about it, and therefore it helps a man to look up to heaven for renewed conversion, and so makes us lie more quietly under God's hand then else we should do.

Thirdly, In and under affliction; faith looks at the afflictions themselves that are cast upon us, and it espies sundry things in them, which exceedingly help a Christian in them. For first this is the nature of faith, it helps a man to see all his afflictions that befall him, as fruits of God's love, and that is a transcendent supernatural work of faith, wherein it exceeds the

constancy of all Heathens, and Christians too, that want faith; it looks at them as fruits of God's Fatherly love, Heb. 12:6. Whom the Lord chastens he loves; he dispenseth it out of his love; Psal. 119:75. I know that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me; and faithful are the wounds of a lover, Prov. 27:6. God out of his faithful care towards us to keep us sweet and savory, and to preserve us spotless, and to enable us to hold forth his glory before the sons of men, that he might make his promise good to their inward and outward man. And that faith doth thus look at afflictions as the gracious gifts of God's love, read Phil. 1:29. To you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer his sake: Faith will discern what a rich gift it is to suffer for the name of Christ, when it considers that God might have left us in such a case, as wherein we might have put the like afflictions upon others; and what an uncomfortable condition had that been, to think that we should have been instruments of affliction to others? And now therefore he having kept us from that, and rather done us this honor, that we should suffer for him, it shows you that it is a precious gift, wherein he makes a broad difference, not only between godly and wicked men, but between godly and godly men. God will not lead them by the way of the Philistines at first, but afterward when he hath led them through many other exercises, they must come to hard war, before they shall enjoy the promised Land: yea, (which is wonderful in this case) faith not only looks at affliction, as a gift of God's grace, and a fruit of God's love, but even those very afflictions, wherein God is most heartily displeased, and strikes with incurable blows, and handles us as a man handles his enemy; faith looks at them as a special ground of God's love; and herein faith exceeds it self: read for this purpose, Jer. 30:13-17, the words are very weighty. Thy bruise is incurable, thy wound is grievous, there is none to plead thy cause, that thou mightest be

bound up, all thy lovers have forsaken thee: And you would think this were a fearful case; Yea, why criest thou, (saith God) unto me? As if it were a bootless thing in such a case; but read on, ver. 16,17. Therefore they that devour thee, shall be devoured, and all thy adversaries shall go into Captivity, and I will restore health unto thee, and heal thee of thy wound, because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion whom no man seeks after. Consider here the mighty power of a lively faith, in the lowest estate of affliction, if faith be stirring and active, for the question is of a living faith, it looks at afflictions, as a just hand of God, and as justly deserving them; yea though he deal with us as a man deals with an enemy, strike deadly, when there is no healing medicine to help thee, yet faith even then sees God more offended with our adversaries than with ourselves, as most commonly, the more churlish the Physic is, the more certain and safe the cure; So that faith looks at afflictions as gifts of God's grace, even then when they are the wounds of an enemy, and that he will heal with his own hand most graciously, by how much the more the stroke is deadly.

Secondly, Faith doth likewise see afflictions as common to us with the Lord Jesus Christ; which is a ground of much supportance to the soul, Isaiah 63:9. In all our afflictions he was afflicted, and we drink of the same cup that he drunk of, Matth. 20:23. From whence it comes to pass that we having this fellowship with Christ, and he with us in our afflictions, this will follow, that only our bonds and cords are burnt up, and taken away, those very evils are consumed, and we set at liberty; this is the true fruit that springs from Christ's fellowship and presence with us in our afflictions. This is sweetly expressed in the example of Daniel's Companions, Dan. 3:24-26. Did not we cast in three men bound into the Furnace? But behold four walking in the midst of the Furnace, and the form of the fourth is like

the Son of God; And so there was not any smell of fire about them. Though generally it be conceived, the act of fire was suspended for the present, yet it was not so wholly suspended, but that it burnt and consumed their bonds and fetters and shackles; This faith only beholds, that when a man comes to trial, there is no evil befalls him, nothing burnt up but the dross and distemper of his soul, all the chains of darkness, all his carnal fears and doubts and unruly passions, they will so consume the bonds wherein we were formerly entangled, as that we shall be set at liberty, and this by reason of Christ's presence with us in our afflictions: this faith only sees, flesh and blood discerns it not, but it would cry out, Oh utterly undone, credit and friends, and Sabbaths, and Ordinances lost, why now it is utterly undone, so many miseries come upon me, and so many blessings of God at once consumed, it will think it an hot burning affliction, but faith sees that nothing is consumed but the corruptions of God's people, the strong chains of darkness of all their lusts are consumed, and themselves set at liberty.

Thirdly, Faith sees afflictions as fountains, and mothers, and increasers of grace and glory: Job 23:10. I shall come out like gold, more pure, and precious, and solid, and compact than ever before; the Son himself learned obedience by the thing he suffered, Heb. 5:8, and 12:11. It brings forth the quiet fruit of righteousness; we can now come off with righteous duties more quietly and freely then ever before; It also mortifies sin, and makes us more solid and pure, so it also increases our glory, they are nothing to the glory that shall be revealed, 2 Cor. 4:17, they are but for a moment, and they cause to us a far more exceeding weight and crown of glory. I account them not worth the talking of, in comparison of the great reward which in conclusion they will crown the hearts of God's people with: They are but

light at the worst, and but short at the longest. Now faith beholding this, it is no marvel though it put life into us in our worst hours.

Fourthly, In and under affliction, faith looks at the instruments and causers of it; Faith is a very vigilant grace, and looks exactly on every hand, 1 Pet. 5:8,9. What help doth faith yield when it espies out the instruments of our afflictions? Very much. According as the nature and estates of the persons be, faith works about them. It sees, some may do this out of very ignorance, thinking they do God good service, and faith prays for such, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do, Luke 23:34. And so Stephen prayed in the like case, Acts 7:60, when the stones flew about his ears and dashed his brains out, Yet Father forgive them, they know not what they do; so that faith breaks not forth in a passion, and cries for fire to consume them from heaven, (though sometime it do) but if it see they do it of ignorance, faith would be loath either himself or others should lose by his affliction. Faith that hath had much forgiven itself, it can pray heartily for them that have done much mischief to them, conceiving them to do it of ignorance.

But in case the adversaries be more malicious, and know well enough what they do, then faith puts forth a double act about them.

First, it complains of them, and such complaints are never in vain, Psal. 10:13-15, and Psal. 69. Many bitter complaints the good man makes against such men, but it is in case they offend of malicious wickedness.

Secondly, Faith will plead its own innocence against all its adversaries, Psal. 7:3,4, he will acknowledge that he hath done much evil in God's sight, but if against them he hath done any wrong, then let the enemy persecute him and take him. Thus you see what lively acts faith puts forth under and in afflictions.

Thirdly, Faith is not without its work when an affliction is past, Psal. 125:4. And then first it doth pay God all the vows and promises it hath made to him in affliction. It magnifies the wonderful goodness of God, that hath led him through fire and water, and brought him to a resting place, Psal. 66:10 to 13,14,15. Thou O God hast proved and tried us, &c. I will therefore pay thee all my vows, &c. He will now burn up all his green and raw lusts, and consecrate himself and his best endeavors to the more abundant service of the Lord.

Secondly, As faith pays vows and promises made in affliction, so it yields unto God, more pure, and innocent, and gracious service than ever before; walks before God more solidly and purely, Rev. 7:14,17. These come out of great tribulations, and therefore now they are pure, and more innocent and blameless then ever before.

Use 1. It is first a direction and instruction to all the servants of God in all the afflictions that may befall them in this world; All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and we must through many afflictions enter into the Kingdom of heaven. And therefore it will be a vain thing for men to think to escape scot-free from afflictions, and yet live a godly and an holy life; it never fell out otherwise, but as sure as thou art sprinkled with the water of Baptism, so sure thou shalt be drenched in affliction, Mat. 20:23. If thou belongest to God, he hath predestinated thee to be like unto the Image of his Son, Rom. 8:29. Learn therefore to live in thy afflictions by faith. This is the counsel of the holy Ghost here in the text, and which though I should never speak word to you more, would be forever remembered, That a just man lives in his affliction by faith; remember what you have heard, consider your afflictions afore-hand, puff not at your adversaries; that is for proud men to do; faithful men will say, that which

they feared is come upon them. And because God will have his children scoured by very homely instruments, a faithful Soul despiseth no creature, but makes account God may make any creature an instrument of affliction to him; and though he be free from any distracting fear, yet that it may look the wind in the face, he is careful to hide himself under the shadow of God's wing, and walk in innocence of heart and life, that the Prince of this world may find nothing in him; it makes diligent search, and approves the heart to God, and leaves no failing in the sight of God. Job had dishonored God somewhat by murmuring and impatience, but God therefore schools Job, and brings him down before him; and then he saith, Behold I have sinned, and therefore abhors himself in dust and ashes, Job 42:6-9. So that you see when God's people have humbled themselves before God for their failings, see then how God bears witness of their integrity, to the face of their adversaries. And so for lawful means; faith can tell as well how to use lawful means to get from them, as with patience to hear them. Faith also looks at God's hand sending, moderating, and delivering us from our afflictions. It helps us to look at our own hearts as deserving and standing in need of all these, and as apt to be unquiet and unprofitable under them, and looks up unto him for converting grace, that we may not be so. And then faith looks at the afflictions themselves, and sees God dispense them out of his fatherly love to us, and out of his faithfulness that hath not made us persecutors of others; let this therefore be never wanting, and then what ever the affliction is, the issue will be comfortable. Look at your afflictions as common to you with the Lord Jesus Christ, and know that nothing will be consumed, but the stubble of your own lusts, and then you will walk at more liberty: and when faith is set awork, you fall not into a passion or rage with your adversaries, but if they do it of ignorance, you pray for them, and

pity them; and if you know they maliciously fight against God and his servants, you have just cause to complain of them, and you may plead your own innocence against them: and whensoever God shall let you see deliverance, be sure you remember all your vows and promises you made to God, and pay them, and be careful to come better out of affliction than you went in; what proud, impatient, and covetous when you went in, and come so out? God forbid, desire God rather never to leave you, till you get some good by the afflictions you undergo.

Now if you thus live by faith in your afflictions, see what benefit will come by it.

1. It will wonderfully quiet your hearts in all changes. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, Isaiah 26:3, peace, peace, all kinds of peace, variety, and constant, continued peace, changes of peace for him, whose heart is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

2. It humbles a man's soul, and makes him take in good part whatsoever befalls him from the hand of God, Micah 9. Levite. 26:41.

3. It will graciously reform us, Judge. 10:5,6.

4. It will marvelously enlarge our consolation: Count it all joy when you fall into manifold temptations, Jam. 1:2, faith will bring forth patience, and that will yield you much joy. Let a man taste of salt water in the sea, and it will be brackish and unsavory, but let it be sublimated by the Sun, and taken up into the Clouds, and then it is sweet and fresh; so is it in this case, look at your afflictions as they run along by the sea shore of this world, take them as deserts for my sin, and they are salt and unsavory; but by faith look at them, as coming out of God's hand in his special favor, and then they will breed you much joy and consolation.

Use 2. It is for consolation and encouragement to the people of God in ill hours, Learn to get precious faith: though you be men of great estates and great friends, yet you will find affliction so seizing upon you, that notwithstanding all this, you will not be able to bear it. As therefore you would live comfortably in ill hours, so live not a life of sense and reason, and carnal wisdom, for then you will be uncomfortable if you want faith, what ever you have else; and therefore get faith, and then neither your own nor other men's hearts need to faint, for the tribulations that lie upon you, Ephes. 3:13, when a man hath taken a due estimate of afflictions, as you have heard, he need not faint under neither his own nor other men's afflictions.

Three things there be which will much trouble a man in affliction, and faith helps them all.

The first is a guilty conscience, which will much faint the heart under afflictions, as it did to Joseph's brethren, Gen. 42:21. Now faith purifies the heart, Acts 15:9, and so it quiets the heart from the evil of an accusing conscience.

Secondly, darkness is fearful to a man, if he be alone, but now faith will not leave a man's soul in darkness, it will show the soul a warrant for its way, Rom. 14:5, and when a man sees the light of the word warranting him his way, then he is not afraid, a man will be more afraid of shadows in the night, then of armed men in the day. See therefore the light of the word clearing your way, Psa. 119:105, and you will ever find light of consolation, when you find light of sanctification.

A third thing that disquiets a man's spirit, is unruly passions and lusts, as pride, covetousness, unbelief, and the like, they will fret and gall exceedingly; and therefore faith to prevent the disquietness of the soul, it

will mortify and abate all a man's passions, and cleanse him from fears and doubts, from wrath and impatiency, and from whatsoever would disquiet us; when we serve not our own ends, but God's, seek not our own honor and pleasure, when these things are taken away, then the heart is quiet. So that faith making the heart of a man pure, it comforts him in all changes, that may befall either himself or others, so that we faint not for the tribulations that befall ourselves or other men, and all this from the life of faith.

FINIS.