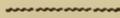


sometimes? be sure then of the total. So it is with Jesus himself, Heb. ii. 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."

The last mountain to be thrashed away is death, and ye shall beat that small too, 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

After all, it is a mighty wonder, worm Jacob thrashing the mountains. But the thrashing worm is shod from heaven, and so fitted to thrash. Three things this thrashing instrument is shod with. (1.) A word of command, calling to the work. (2.) A word of promise, securing the success. (3.) The use of means of Heaven's appointment for reaching the end. If any of these be wanting, there will be no thrashing the mountains away: a plain instance we have in the rationalists of the age laying aside the doctrine of a crucified Christ, and substituting in the room thereof the dry and sapless doctrines of heathenism; which God will never countenance to renew the hearts or reform the lives of any, as being contrary to the appointment of Heaven for that purpose. But worm Jacob, influenced by the command of God, excited by the promise of success, and using the proper means, "shall thrash the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff."



THE CASE OF PETITIONERS AT THE COURT OF HEAVEN CONSIDERED; OR, THE NECESSITY OF PRAYING ALWAYS, AND NOT FAINTING.

Two Sermons preached, on a sacramental occasion, at Maxton, July 15 and 16, 1727.

LUKE xviii. 1.

And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

THE time of this life is the time of trial; only in the life to come is full ease to be expected. Now is the warfare, and partial

victories: the complete victory comes not till death. If we must have our portion of goods in hand presently, and cannot wait, we will soon be through it, and have nothing when we need most. If we mind for heaven then, we must be resolute, set a stiff heart to a stay brae, and hold forward whatever storms blow in our face, as we see in the words of the text. Wherein we have,

1. The Lord's insisting to teach his disciples, "And he spake a parable unto them," &c. That the relative *them* refers to his disciples, appears by the continued connexion of these words with the discourse from chap. xvii. 22. And he changes in it his manner of teaching, making a practical improvement, in a parable, of what he had before taught them in plain style. (Gr.) "Now he spake also a parable unto them," to impress the lesson the more lively, both on their minds, memories, and affections."

2. The new lesson he taught them, "That men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" that there would be a necessity of their praying always, and not fainting. The discourse whence it is inferred, among other things, bears, (1.) That their comforts should be less than they were then, ver. 22, "And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it." (2.) Their temptations more, ver. 23, "And they shall say to you, See here, or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them." (3.) That the world would be long in deep security, and they long in deep distress, so that they might be in hazard of giving it over; see vers. 26—33. (4.) That the Lord would come to them at length, and make all right: but when or where, they are not to know.

Now, to direct them how to carry in such a difficult situation, he speaks the following parable; the scope and sum of which comes to this, "That men ought always to pray, and not to faint." So he tells them, (1.) The course they must hold, blow the wind as it will: they must "always pray;" not that they must be always on their knees, but they must keep a habitual course of praying. (2.) What they must beware of; they must "not faint." The word signifies a succumbing or yielding under the pressure of evils or hardships, as one sinking under a burden, or giving over by reason of the badness of the way, Eph. iii. 13, and is well rendered fainting; for the apostle explains it by being loosened, Gal. vi. 9, because in fainting or swooning the nerves are loosened, relaxed, or unbended, and so activity is gone. So whatever hardships are met with, we must not be so outwearied with them as to give over. (3.) The necessity of this; men ought or must needs always pray, and not faint. If we give over, we are gone; if we faint, and break off our course, all is lost.

DOCTRINE. Our Lord Jesus Christ has kindly intimated to all that have business at the court of heaven the necessity of so managing themselves that they still hang on there, and not faint, whatever entertainment they meet with during the dependence of their process.

In this doctrine there are three heads to be considered.

I. Our Lord's kind intimation of this way of his Father's court.

II. The way of the court of heaven, in trusting petitioners with some hardships during the dependence of their process.

III. The duty of the petitioners, to hang on and not faint whatever they meet with.

IV. Apply.

I. The *first* thing to be considered, is, our Lord's kind intimation of this way of his Father's court. And here we would shew, 1. The import of Christ's making this intimation to petitioners there; and, 2. The weight and moment of this intimation.

First, I shall shew the import of Christ's making this intimation to petitioners at his Father's court.

1. The darkness that is naturally on the minds of poor sinners, with respect to heaven's management about them. We may say, as Jer. v. 4, "Surely these are poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God." The obscurest shepherd from the remotest corner, would know more of the king's court, if he had business there, than the wisest mortals naturally know of the way of the court of heaven. Dark clouds are about the sovereign manager to us: "His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." Even Job, that had been a long hanger-on about the court of heaven, knew little of the way of it, and behoved to have a new lesson of it, Job xxxviii. 1, 2, "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

2. Christ's good-will to the sinner's business going right there: Exod. xxviii. 29, "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." He shews it by his concern for their right managing it: he knows they are unacquainted with the manner of the court of heaven, and so are in hazard of marring their own business; and therefore he is concerned to set them on the road to get a good answer. The poor soul that is sometimes at the brink of groaning and giving it over, is moved to start back from that precipice, and

groan and look up again. Whence is that, but from Christ's secret making of this intimation to them by his Spirit? Rom. viii. 26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

3. That our Lord sees sinners are in hazard of fainting from the entertainment they may meet with during the dependence of their process, Heb. xii. 3. He knows their frame, the hastiness of their spirits, John vii. 6, how apt they are to take delays for denials, and be discouraged with what is designed only for their trial. Therefore he opens and forewarns them of the manner of the court, Is. xxviii. 16, "He that believeth shall not make haste."

4. That they that shall hang on, and not faint, shall certainly come speed at length. Luke xviii. 6, 7, 8, "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." It is not possible that the soul, continuing resolute to go to no other door, but hanging on at his door, to make its grave there, if it be not let in, can be shut out always, John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Wilful faith, that will be forward in face of "killing" and "slaying," Job xiii. 15, will get all its will at length, Matth. xv. 28, "Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Secondly, The weight and moment of this intimation. This will appear, if it is considered in a fourfold light.

1. Jesus Christ, who makes it, has experienced it in his own case. The man Christ, the head of the church, had the most important business at the court of heaven that ever came before it; viz., for through-bearing in a work on which his Father's glory, and the salvation of an elect world depended. And he was often in prayer: he spent a whole night in it, Luke vi. 12. But see his experience of this manner of the court, Psal. xxii. 1, 2, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent." And lxix. 1—3, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God." Now, if this was the manner with the great Petitioner, how can we expect it should fare otherwise with us? Nay, God, in his dealing with Christ the Head,

set down a pattern to be followed thereafter in his dealing with the members, Rom. viii. 29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." Compare ver. 28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

2. He is the great Prophet of heaven, whose office it is to reveal the manner of the court to poor sinners. He is fitted for it, as being on all the secrets of it, which the most favourite angel cannot dive into, John i. 18. Therefore we may be very sure this is the manner of the court; and that those who will manage their business at it otherwise will be sure to mar it.

3. He is the only Intercessor there, the Father's Secretary, the Solicitor for poor sinners there. There is never a petition received at the throne of grace, but what is presented by him; nor graciously granted there, but through his intercession, Rev. viii. 3, 4; nor an answer graciously returned, or an order issued out for the sinner's relief, but it comes through his hand, John v. 22, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Who then can doubt of the necessity by him intimated? and who must not see the kind aspect that the intercessor's hinting this to the petitioners has on their business?

4. He is himself the hearer of prayer. The angels are called to worship him, Heb. i. 6. Stephen, in his most serious moments, when he was nearest heaven, prays to him, Acts vii. 59; a plain evidence that he is true God, the Father's equal, the Supreme, the most high God: for it is written, Deut. x. 20, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." Compare Matth. iv. 10, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Psal. lxxxiii. 18, "That men may know, that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth." And the Scripture condemns serving those that are not by nature gods, Gal. iv. 8. Therefore Christ is God by nature, true God, necessarily existent, independent, God of himself, though not a Son of himself: but the divine essence being eternally and necessarily communicated from the Father to the Son, the Father's communicating it, and the Son's receiving it, are equally glorious. Since then he is the hearer of prayer that makes this intimation, it is equivalent to a promise that prayers so managed shall certainly come speed at length; as appears from Is. xlv. 19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain."

II. The *Second* thing to be considered, is, The way of the court of heaven, in trysting petitioners with some hardships, during the de-

pendence of their process. Here I shall give you, 1. A swatch of that way; and, 2. Some reasons of that way, whereby to account for it in a suitableness to the divine perfections.

First, A swatch of that way in a few particulars. Though the Lord sometimes gives his people very quick dispatch, (Is. lxxv. 24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear"); yet it is very usual to try them another way.

1. Oft-times there is deep silence from the throne, Matth. xv. 23; and that even when the petitioner is crying with the greatest earnestness, and crying incessantly, Psal. xxii. 1, 2, and is at the point of being overwhelmed for want of help, Psal. cxliii. 7; yet no voice to be perceived, no motion appearing towards the petitioner's relief.

2. Oft-times they get a very angry-like answer. The woman of Canaan got a couple of them, one on the back of another, Matth. xv. 24, 26, "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.—It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." It is very ordinary for Heaven's petitioners to hear some Sinai thunders when they are on Mount Zion; to come in a low and heavy case to the throne, and to go away laid lower than they came. So going with their petitions to the throne of grace, they are teased there to purpose, and many a foul ply of their heart and life is opened out to them, and they come back with a breast full of convictions, Judges x. 10—14.

3. Many a time, at the sight of the King on the throne, they falter, and their speech fails, that they cannot get words to tell what they would be at, Psal. lxxvii. 3, 4. Hence many broken sentences in their petitions, which yet are understood well enough in heaven, the blanks being filled up with groans, Psal. vi. 3; Rom. viii. 26, 27.

4. Disappointed expectations are a piece of very ordinary entertainment there, Jer. viii. 15, "We looked for peace, but no good came: and for a time of health, and behold trouble." Hope may be raised, and yet be deferred, till it make a sick heart. These disappointments may meet the petitioner over and over again; Cant. iii. 1, 2, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not." If ye ask how long the course of them may last? I know of no term fixed for them but one, and that one is enough for faith, Psal. ix. 18, "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation

of the poor shall not perish for ever." And if ye go to another door than the Lord's, the course of your disappointments will have no end.

5. Many a time, looking for an answer, providence drives a course apparently just contrary to the granting of their petition; so is fulfilled that Psal. lxxv. 5, "By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation." And it may be so stunning, as to require much faith not to take that for the final answer, as if God had said, speak no more to me of that matter: and yet the wheel of providence may be but fetching a compass to come to the point desired. Thus the sunk spirits of the Israelites were raised in hope, Exod. iv. 31, "And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." But the very first thing that comes after that, chap. v., is, that they are in a worse condition than ever, their bondage is more intolerable; which made Moses' faith stagger; vers. 22, 23, "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? for since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered the people at all.

6. *Lastly*, Oft-times the Lord, instead of easing the petitioner, lays new burdens on him, Jer. viii. 15, "We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble." Instead of curing the old wound, there are new ones given. So that sometimes the waters come in on every side, and compass the poor soul: and yet the Lord, though he see it meet to give the sinner such a gliff, may have no mind he should drown for all that; Psal. cxvi. 3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." Ver. 6, "The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me:" and lxxxviii. 17, "They came round about me daily like water, they compassed me about together." So it was in Job's case.

USE 1. Whosoever of you would manage your business successfully at the court of heaven, on this occasion, put on resoluteness to hang on about the Lord's hand, and not to faint, till ye get it to a happy issue. And,

1st, Lay the great business of salvation close to heart, let it be your main business; the securing of your saving interest in Christ, now when you have this solemn occasion of both the word of the covenant, and the seal of the covenant together; not knowing if

ever ye may have such a favourable occasion again. Time goes away, death is hastening on, it is dangerous to delay. If ye be indifferent in the business, ye will never hang on.

2dly, Lay it down for a conclusion, ye must have Christ, or ye perish. Pinching need makes men importunate: if ye feel not that, ye will soon weary, and never bring the matter to a good issue, John vi. 67, 68, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." The sinner will hang on at Christ's door when he sees all others shut against him.

3dly, Embrace Christ in the great promise of the gospel, believing the promise; taking a dead gripe of it, never to part. It is held out to you, and every one of you, Heb. iv. 1, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." It is the report from heaven to be believed, Is. liii. 1. Without faith there is no eviting of fainting, Psal. xxvii 13, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

4thly, Take an eternal farewell of the vain world, and deceitful lusts; resolving, that, come what will, ye will hang by Christ in the promise, if ye should die there; saying with Job, chap. xiii. 15, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." None come aright to Christ but they that come resolutely.

Lastly, Be not hasty, but resolve to wait in expectation, setting no time to the Lord's comforting you, Is. xxviii. 16,—“He that believeth, shall not make haste.” Micah. vii. 9, “I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.” If all thy life long should pass uncomforted, peace and comfort in the end is well worth waiting on.

Use 2. Be not surprised, nor offended at the way of God, though in your addresses to the throne ye meet with apparent harsh entertainment. They have seemed to themselves to be boasted away, who taking the buffet, have got the bit too by waiting on, like the woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 21,—28. The importunity of faith, that is, a continued trust in the promise, and an incessant use of the means, will prevail.

Secondly, I shall give you some reasons of that way, whereby to account for it in a suitableness to the divine perfections.

1. This way is taken with petitioners in the court of heaven; for thereby God is glorified, and his attributes more illustrated than otherwise they would be. In this view of it, Paul welcomes it in

his own case, though it was hard to sense, 2 Cor. xii. 9, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." God treating his people thus, displays his wisdom, in guiding the broken vessel safely through many rocks and shelves to land without splitting; that afterwards they are made to say, None else but he could have done it, Is. ix. 6, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor;" his power, in supporting them under a pressure that otherwise they would sink under, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: but we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead;" his grace, mercy, and goodness, in seasonable interposings thereof when their foot is ready to slip, Pal. xciv. 18, "When I said, My foot slippeth: thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." 2 Cor. xii. 9, forecited.

2. Hereby the state of petitioners is tried, and a plain difference constituted between hypocrites and the sincere, Matt. xxiv. 13, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." God's petitioners in the gross are like Gideon's army, Judges vii. far more than are to be trusted. So God brings them down to these waters of trial; and there is a heap of them that must have a fill presently, or they faint, cannot go forward; so they are set on, like the men that bowed down on their knees to drink, Job xxvii. 10, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Others are disposed to endure hardness, without fainting, like the men that lapped; and they are kept as meet to have their petitions granted at length, Luke xviii. 7, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

3. Hereby the graces of believing petitioners are tried, both as to the reality and strength of them; particularly their faith and patience, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. James i. 12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Our Lord takes great pleasure in the faith and patience of his people,

and therefore he puts them sorely to it in these points, like the woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. that they may have occasion to exert themselves vigorously. Sometimes they meet with such a shock that they are foundered in them: anon there is a secret breathing, and they get to their feet again, and act more vigorously than before, like a giant refreshed with wine, Jonah ii. 4, "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Hereby they have a double benefit; they see the reality of their faith and patience better than in a calm, and the strength of them more than they could have expected, and withal that they are other things than efforts of natural abilities, no more to be their product, than roses of the desert: Rom. v. 3, 4, 5, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

4. Hereby believers are humbled, and taught that they hold of free grace. The exalting of grace is the great design of the whole contrivance of the gospel. Therefore faith is made the turning point in it, the hinge of it as to us; Rom. iv. 16, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. Therefore this method is used in the dispensation of Heaven's favours according to it, Deut. viii. 2, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or not." They that buy with their money must be served presently; but beggars must be content to wait on. There are powerful remains of a legal spirit in the best, kything in requiring supply for their needs, with little sense of their unworthieness; and in a disposition to fret, if they be not quickly answered. It takes much hewing to bring down these; to empty the man of himself, and to let him see that God is no debtor to him for any thing, great or small.

5. This way is taken for honour of the word, Psal. cxxxviii. 2, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." There are many letters of God's name, but this Bible is the capital letter of it: and there is not one dispensation of providence, that magnifies the Bible more than this. It is even the thing that bears the head above, and keeps the heart from fainting, in this case, Rom. xv. 4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." This treatment at the court of heaven

sends the petitioner to the records, which gladden his heart, finding that it has been the ancient way of the court; and in a desert way it is no small comfort to the traveller, to find a track, and the print of some one's feet before him. It makes him mark narrowly, and greedily catch at a word; and to discover a treasure, where many a time, when he went over it before, he saw nothing.

6. *Lastly*, It is taken to make them long to be home. God's children are in this world, young heirs that are abroad out of their Father's country: they send their letters, and draw their bills on their Father: and while they are speedily answered, at every turn, they live at ease in the strange country, and are not solicitous to be home: but their Father cures them of that, letting them at length write over and over again, without an answer; and ceasing to answer their bills: and then they long to be home.

III. The third thing to be considered, is, The duty of the petitioners to hang on, and not to faint, whatever they meet with. We may view it in these things following.

1. They must never lift their process from the court of heaven, John vi. 67, 68,—“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” It was Saul's ruin, that when God answered him not, when he went to a witch; and the unbelieving Israelites when they heard of the giants of Canaan, that they would be back to Egypt again, Numb. xiv. 4; and it is the ruin of many, when they find not the sweet in religion that they expected, to go back to the world and their lusts, that will answer them, they think, sooner. But whatever be your sore, ye should protest that it shall run for you, till the Lord put forth his own healing hand, and that ye will not go to another for a cure, Lam. iii. 49, 50, “Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission: till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.”

2. They must never give over praying, but “pray always.” They that will pray about the time of a communion, and afterwards leave it off by degrees, will lose all their pains, and prove themselves to be hypocrites, Job xxvii. 10, “Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?” And Satan sometimes plies distressed souls to give up with it, as what they may see they will do no good with, for that God will not hear them. But that is a deceit of hell which ye must never yield to; no not though God should continue to answer you not a word; nay not though your attempting to pray, should seem to serve for nothing but to set a-raging against you; for it is God's command, that “men pray always.” There is less ill in mismanaging prayer than in giving it over altogether; for that is tamely to yield your-

selves to Satan's will. And though ye may be in such confusion, as to take the devil's whispers within you for your own voice, God will carefully distinguish the two, and not lay that to your charge wherein ye are pure sufferers. And continuing to pray, ye are in the way of duty, wherein ye may expect God will hear and pity at length.

3. They must insist on their tabled petitions, while their need remains, whatever entertainment they seem to meet with, as the woman of Canaan did, Matt. xv. If ye insist not, ye will be construed to have fallen from it: but importunity will speed at long-run, Luke xi. 8, "I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend: yet, because of his importunity, he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And indeed, need continuing to pinch, and the petitioner giving over his crying for supply, is fainting with a witness.

Case. But may it not be that the Lord may say Speak no more to me of this matter? *ANSWER.* It is true, it may be so, as the Lord did to Moses, Deut. iii, 26, "But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this matter. But in that case I conceive, (1.) The Lord shows his people they do not need that thing; let it suffice thee, or thou hast much, or enough. And to quiet Moses in this case, he gave him a sight of the land from Pisgah, ver. 27. (2.) The help of the Spirit as to praying in that particular is withdrawn. There is an embargo laid on them in that point, "Speak no more unto me of this matter."

4. They must carry all their incident needs in new petitions, to the same throne of grace, where the former petition may have been long lying, and still unanswered; and so pursue all together. The latter must not drive out the former, nor the former keep back the latter. It is one of the ways how the Lord keeps his people hanging about his hand without fainting, by sending them several loads above their burden; which loads he takes off soon at their request; and so makes them go under their burden the more easily. These short incident processes, that get a speedy answer, confirm their faith and hope in waiting on for the answer of the main. I believe it will be found, that the Lord's children, who have had the most tedious process before the throne, have not wanted experience of very quick dispatches in the time, Isa. lxxv. 24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

5. They must continue in the faith of the promise, never quit the gripe of it; but trust and believe that it shall certainly be accom-

plished, though the wheels of providence should seem to drive out over it and in over it, Rom. iv. 19, 20, "And Abraham being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Providence is not our Bible; the works of God may be very various, but the word of promise is always the same, it is never moved. Ye have a very poetical passage, Psal. xviii. 7, and downwards. I think it proceeds upon this view, that though all the confusions of the universe cannot move the promise; yet if hills, earth, fire, waters, heavens, were all standing before it to hinder its accomplishment, it would move them all out of their places, and make its way through them.

6. They must keep up hope of the thing promised over the belly of all improbabilities, 2 Pet. i. 13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Faith opening the door of the promise, hope sees the blessed answer to the petition lying at the King's hand, however long it may be ere it be transmitted. That is very pleasing to God, Psal. cxlvii. 11, "The Lord taketh pleasure in those that hope in his mercy."

7. *Lastly*, If at any time they begin to faint, they must wrestle against it, that they go not quite away, Heb. x. 35, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." If faith and hope fail, so will patience: but ye must set yourselves to believe over the belly of sense, and hope against hope.

USE. Christians, communicants, and whosoever of you would have your business go right in heaven, go from this place resolute to hang on about the Lord's hand, and not to faint, whatever ye have met with, or shall meet with from that airth. Have a horror of fainting, giving over, or going back to another door. Consider,

1. If ye faint and give over, your suit is lost, ye have given up with it. And,

1st, If your suit be the main thing, the eternal wellbeing of your soul, which is what we all pretend to; then your soul is lost, Heb. x. 38, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Be resolute in religion, as ever ye would not be eternally lost; for none will get to heaven but those that have a brow for a bargain, to yoke with difficulties in the way, and go through them. It is a concerning word, Rev. xxi. 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving,—shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death." I think it has a view to the fearful and unbelieving disposition that kept the Israelites out of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 33, and xiv.

2^{dly}, If it be a temporal mercy, ye may get it, but the substance will be out of it, at least till ye repent of your fainting, Psal. cvi. 15, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul."

2. If ye hold on and faint not, be your on-waiting ever so long, it shall not be in vain. Matth. xxiv. 13, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Gal. vi. 9, "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." God will never put those away empty from him, that hang on, and will not go without the blessing.

3. He is well worth the waiting on. (1.) Though he is infinitely above us, he has waited long on us. (2.) The longer you are called to wait for a mercy, ye will readily find it the more valuable when it comes. The promise uses to go longest with the biggest mercy; witness the promise of Christ, while many lesser promises brought forth. (3.) His time will be found the due time, Gal. vi. 9; the best chosen time for the mercy's coming; witness the time of Isaac's birth. (4.) Ye shall be sure of some blessed offallings, while ye wait on, Psal. xxvii. 14, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." and cxxxviii. 3, "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Ye shall be sure of some pledge of a good answer, Jer. lii. 31, 32.

4. *Lastly*, They have waited long, that have lost all, by not having patience to wait a little longer, Exod. xxxii.; 1 Sam. xiii. 8, 10. Therefore "let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," James i. 4; "for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not," Gal. vi. 9.

PETITIONERS AT THE COURT OF HEAVEN ENCOURAGED; OR,
THE HAPPY ISSUE OF PRAYING ALWAYS, AND NOT FAINTING.

Two Sermons preached, on a Sacramental occasion, at Galashiels, August 12 and 13,
1727.

LUKE xviii. 8.

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

At a late occasion I spoke to the scope of this parable from ver. 1. The parable itself we have vers. 2—5, the doctrine of it, vers. 6, 7.