

## SERMON XIII.

THE CURE OF DISCOURAGEMENTS BY FAITH IN JESUS  
CHRIST.

*“Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God;” or, wait thou, or, trust thou in God.—Psalm xlii. 11.*

YOU have heard of the saints' discouragements, and the unreasonableness of them; there is no just cause or reason for their discouragements. Would you now hear of some means against them? The Psalmist saith in these words, “Hope thou in God,” or trust thou in God, or wait thou on God. And so the doctrine plainly is this:

Faith is the help against all discouragements.

Hoping, trusting, waiting on God, is the special, if not the only means appointed against all discouragements. “I had verily fainted, unless I had believed, (saith David,) to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” I had fainted, unless I had believed. Faith bears up the heart against all discouragements.

For your more clear understanding of this truth, and our better proceeding, I shall labour,

First, To shew you what it is to hope, trust in God, or to wait on him.

Secondly, That faith doth quiet one's heart in the times of discouragements.

Thirdly, That it is the duty of all the saints and people of God, when discouragements do arise, then, and then especially to trust in God and to exercise their faith.

Fourthly, What there is in faith that can bear up the heart against all discouragements, and how faith doth it.

First, if ye ask, What it is to hope in God, to trust in God, and to wait on him?

I answer, that to hope in God, is to expect help from God; to trust in God, is to rely or rest upon God for help; and to wait on him, is to continue and abide in this expectation or reliance. Properly, according to scripture phrase, trusting in God is the recumbency or the reliance of the soul upon God in Christ, for some good thing that lies out

of sight. I say, first, it is the recumbency or reliance of the soul upon God, the staying of the soul upon God: so you read in Isaiah xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." So the spouse in the Canticles, is found leaning upon her Beloved; and so we are commanded to trust: not *εν τω Χριστω* only, but *επι τον εγχεινλα ιησουν*, on him that raiseth Christ from the dead: which notes a fiducial repose; so that trusting in God, is to stay upon him. Rom. iv. 11. And then I say, it is the reliance or the stayance of the soul upon God in Christ; and so I take it to be meant here, for the word here translated, God, hope or trust in God, is in the plural number, *Elohim*; and so when the prophet, in Isa. xxvi., doth exhort unto trusting in the Lord, he gives this reason, at verse 4, "For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;" so you read it, but according to the Hebrew thus: "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in Jehovah Jah is everlasting strength." "For in Jehovah Jah:" Jah is an abridgment or an abbreviation of Jehovah, noting the Son of God; and so when Jesus Christ comes in the end of the world, to sit upon his glorious throne, the converting Jew shall praise him under that name, singing, as you read in Revelation xix., "Hallelujah," praise the Jah: which if you compare with Psalm lxviii., you shall find is to be understood of Christ, at verse 4: "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name; extol him that rides upon the heavens, by his name Jah; rejoice before him, extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah;" and they shall sing, Hallelujah. Now if you look into Psalm lxviii. 18, you shall find the reason why this Jah is to be praised: for, saith the Psalm, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men." Which words, Eph. iv., are applied to Christ: "But unto every one of us, is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Verse 8, "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." So that when the prophet doth exhort us to trust in Jehovah Jah, he exhorteth us to trust in the Lord, in Christ; and therefore I say, both according to the Old and New Testament, faith is the repose or recumbency of the soul upon God in Christ.

But yet that is not all. A man that doth repose upon

God in Christ, trusting in him, doth trust unto him for some good thing that lies out of sight; and therefore the apostle saith, that "faith is the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi.; where he gives divers instances of Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and others, who all did repose upon God for somewhat that lay out of view; and this indeed is only worthy of the name of faith. I will trust a man that is most unworthy, I will trust a thief, I will trust a liar, so far as I can see him. But as Parisiensis saith well, this is *fides Deo digna*, faith worthy of God, to repose on God for somewhat that lies out of sight, and out of view; and when a man doth thus stay himself upon God in Christ, for somewhat that lies out of sight, then he is said to trust in God; and when a man doth continue thus, then he is said for to wait on God. This is the first. But then,

Secondly, How may it appear that faith, and the exercise thereof, will quiet the soul, suppress or allay discouragements?

You know how it was with Hannah, when she had received a word from God, "She went away (saith the text) and looked no more sorrowful," her heart was quieted; why? she had a word from God; and though before she was a woman of a sorrowful spirit, yet having received a word from God, and believing that word, her heart was quiet. Prov. xvi. 3: "Commit thy works unto the Lord," there is faith; "and thy thoughts shall be established," there is quietude. And if you look again into Isa. xxvi. you shall find that the Scripture is most express for this, verse 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Mark the words. First, the Lord doth here engage himself to give peace unto those that do stay upon him, that have this faith of reliance, though they have not yet attained to the faith of assurance, to be able to say, I know my sin is pardoned, and that Christ is mine, yet, if they can but stay themselves upon God, the Lord doth hereby engage himself to give peace unto them; yea, he doth not only engage himself to give peace unto such a soul as stays himself upon God, but double peace: you read it in your English, perfect peace; thou wilt keep him in perfect peace: but in the Hebrew it is, peace, peace; thou wilt keep him in double peace, he shall have

peace, and peace; not peace and doubting; not peace, and no peace: but if he stay himself upon the Lord, he shall have peace, peace; he shall have double peace. Yea, the Lord doth not only engage to give peace unto such a soul, but to keep him in peace; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," or in peace, peace; and all upon this account, because he trusteth in thee; not because he prayed, not because he humbled himself, (though that is his duty; and he doth thereby *placere Deo*, though not *placare Deum*) but because he trusteth in thee, because he stayeth himself upon thee. And ye know, that if ye have a business depending at law, though for the present you be much troubled about it; yet, if you have a friend, a lawyer, that is able, faithful and willing to look to it; if you can but leave your business with him, it doth very much quiet your heart; the very leaving your business with him, doth quiet your mind. So here. If a man can but leave his business, and his cause, and his things with God; then he is at rest, and he may say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul," as David did; which is done by faith. And to clear this a little, three or four things there are that do ordinarily cause disquietude or discouragement. First, the darkness that is in the understanding; for when a man is in the dark, especially if he be alone, he is very apt to be scared, and to be disquieted. Secondly, inordinate and unruly affections, and passions, especially that of fear, whereby the soul is benighted. Thirdly, guilt of conscience. Though there be much water that doth beat upon the ship at sea, yet it sinketh not; but when there is a leak, a hole in the ship, then the ship sinketh, and the water doth become its grave. So, though there be many troubles that beat upon a man, yet his heart doth not sink; but when there is a leak in his conscience, when there is a hole there, when a man hath a guilty conscience, then he sinketh, and his heart fails him. And fourthly, the apprehension of God's greatness, with our distance from him. Now faith cures all this; for in opposition to the first, of darkness, faith brings light into the soul, and shews a man his way, and his warrant for what he doth. Secondly, it doth pare and take off those inordinate and unruly affections and passions that are in the soul; and therefore in Psalm xxxvii., at verses 1 and 7, you shall find that fretting and trusting are set in opposition. "Fret not

thyself because of the evil doer, verse 3, but trust in the Lord." And again verse 7: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way." Thirdly, it doth heal the conscience, and purify that; therefore saith the apostle, "Let us draw near with assurance of faith, having our consciences sprinkled," &c Heb. x. Fourthly, it does also bring the soul near to God; the great work of faith is to bring God and the soul together. So you have it in Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him." Faith gives a man access unto God, and brings him near unto God. But a man may come near unto God, and yet he may fear, and tremble, as the Jews did at Mount Sinai; true, but saith the apostle, "By this faith we have boldness and access." The word is, *παρρησια*, a freedom of speech; a man by faith may come into the presence of God with open mouth and speak all his mind unto God. Yea, faith doth not only thus bring a man into the presence of God with open mouth, freedom of speech and boldness; but it brings him into the presence of God with open face and uncovered. "We all with open face," saith the apostle, speaking to believers in the times of the gospel; "We all with open face behold, as in a glass, the mirror of the Lord;" with open and uncovered face. There are three veils, or coverings that we read of in the Old Testament, that were thrown upon faces. 1. There is the veil of obscurity, and that was upon the face of Moses. 2. The veil and the covering of guilt, and so Haman's face was covered, a cloth thrown over his face, and his face was covered. 3. And there is the veil of abashment, or shame; and so it is said of the angels, that they cover their faces in the presence of God. Now to shew with what boldness a christian, and a believer, comes into the presence of God by Christ through faith, as if all veils were taken off; saith the apostle, "We come with open face;" and "we all with open face behold, as in a glass, the mirror of the Lord." And upon this account, a believer may now come with more boldness into the presence of God, than Adam in the state of innocency; for though Adam in the state of innocency had no veil, or covering of guilt thrown over his face, yet there was a great distance between God and him. But now, since the fall, since

Christ's time, God is come into our nature, manifested in the flesh; and so God is come near to us, and by faith we do draw near to God. No wonder, therefore, that the apostle saith, that "by faith we have boldness, and access with confidence." Faith tells a man, that God is come near to him, and he is come near to God; and therefore faith certainly is the great remedy and means against all discouragements that can arise.

Thirdly, How may it appear, that when discouragements do arise, it is the duty of every christian to exercise faith, and then especially?

You know what David said, "At what time I am afraid, I trust in thee." And the Scripture is most express for this: Isa. l. 10, "Who is amongst you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." First, It is possible for one that is the servant of God to be in darkness, and in such a dark condition, where no light nor no comfort is. Secondly, When he is in this dark condition, and discouragements do arise, (the commandment is most express,) then he is to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. So also our Saviour Christ commands his disciples, John xiv. 1, "Let not your hearts be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me." There was a great cloud arising upon Christ's disciples, Christ to be taken from them by death; the Shepherd to be stricken, and the sheep scattered. Now the only means against trouble that Christ prescribes, is this: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" and he gives many arguments to press thereunto, in this xivth chapter. This time was the time of Christ's own trouble; Christ was now to die, and to bear the sin of many, and to lie under the sense of his Father's wrath and displeasure; whereupon he saith, that his heart was heavy unto death: but though it was the time of his own trouble, yet he addresseth himself to comfort his disciples against their trouble, and the only means and remedy that he doth prescribe is this, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." So that I say, when discouragements do arise, it is the duty of all Christ's disciples then, and then especially, for to trust in God by Christ; for I pray, what is faith made for, but for such a time as this is? every grace is

to be exercised in its season. If a man have sinned, then he is to repent; that is the season for his repentance. If a man have received any mercy from God, then he is to be thankful; that is the season of thankfulness. If another poor christian be in want, then he is to exercise his charity; that is the season of that grace of charity. If God's face do shine upon a man, then he is to rejoice; that is the season of spiritual joy. If a man be given to wantonness, and have a beautiful object laid before him, then he is to exercise chastity; and that is a season for it. So, when discouragements do arise, then he is to exercise faith; and that is the season, the proper time and season for it. For it is not only our duty to bring forth fruit, but we must bring forth fruit in its season. Psalm i. 2. Now this is the proper season for faith to work in, when all a man's comforts are out of sight; and therefore when discouragements do arise, then, and then especially, the saints and the people of God are to exercise their faith.

Fourthly, But what power hath faith to suppress and allay discouragements; and what is there in faith that can bear up a man's heart against all discouragements, and how doth faith do it?

Faith doth give a man the true prospect of things, past, present and to come, and of things as they are. Whence are all our fears and discouragements, but from hence, that men do not see things as they are: if evil be stirring, they think it is greater than it is; if good be stirring, they think it is lesser than it is. If a man be in temptation, then he loseth sight of his former experiences, and so he is much discouraged. If a man be under a desertion, he loseth the sight of what is present, what God is to him, and what he is to God; and so he is discouraged. If a man be under an affliction, he loseth the sight of what is to come; the end, and the issue of the affliction, and so he is disquieted. But now when faith comes, it opens a man's eyes to see things that are invisible; it is the evidence of things not seen: "By faith, Moses saw him that was invisible." And therefore when the apostle Peter doth direct his people for to see things past, present and to come, he exhorts them to a work of faith, Epist. 1. 9. "He that lacks these things, is blind;" one of those things is faith, as you read in verse 5, "Give all diligence, add to your faith," &c., then, "He that lacketh

these things is blind," at verse 9. But suppose a man do want faith; wherein is he blind? Why, saith the apostle, "He cannot see things afar off," he cannot see into the other world, he cannot see unto the end of a temptation, or affliction, or to the end of a desertion. Well, but though he cannot see things that are to come, yet he may see things that are past: nay, saith he, if a man wants the assurance of God's love, and that is an act of faith, "he hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins: Wherefore the rather (saith he at verse 10) brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." If you would see things past, present and to come, then grow in faith, and assurance of God's love, and so, saith he, shall you be able to see things afar off. Could a man but see what would be the end, and issue of his affliction, he would be quiet under it. It is in regard of our affliction, as it is in regard of your salt, or sea water: take the water as it is in the sea, and so it is salt and brackish; but drawn up by the sun into the clouds, it becomes sweet, and falls down into sweet rain. So take an affliction in itself, and it is salt and brackish; but drawn up by divine love, then it is sweet; and if a soul can but taste the love of God in it, and see what a loving end the Lord will make; he will then find it is very sweet, and say, I could not have been without this affliction; I do not know how any one twig of this rod could have been spared. Now, it is only faith that shews a man the end and the issue of all his troubles. It stands upon the high tower of the threatening and promise, seeing over all mountains and difficulties; it seeth into the other world; it sees through death and beyond death; it sees through affliction and beyond affliction; it seeth through temptation and beyond temptation; it seeth through desertion and beyond desertion; it seeth through God's anger and beyond his anger: I say, it seeth things past, present and to come. Now, if a man had such a power as he were able to fetch in all his former experiences, to see things present as they are, and to see all the events, and issues of things to come, would he not be quiet notwithstanding all that might arise for the present? Thus faith is able to shew a man things past, present and to come; and to shew him greater matter of comfort, than the matter of his troubles is; and in so doing it must needs quiet the soul.

Faith, true saving faith, doth see that in God and in Christ, which answers unto all our fears, wants and miseries; for faith closeth with the name of God; "Let him stay himself upon the name of God," Isa. 1. Now there is that in God's name that doth answer unto all our fears and wants. For example, Exod. xxxiv., the Lord descended in the clouds at verse 5, and stood with Moses there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, ver. 6. the Lord, the Lord: Jehovah, Jehovah: that is, one that gives a being unto things that are not. Will you say, Oh, that it were thus, or thus with me? but as Rachel mourned for her children and could not be comforted, because they were not: so do I mourn after my prayers, because they are not; and after duties because they are not; and after humiliations, because they are not. Well, saith the Lord, be of good comfort, for my name is Jehovah, who do give a being to things that are not; and this he repeateth, the Lord, the Lord; or Jehovah, Jehovah. Well, but though the Lord do give a being to things that are not, this doth not comfort me; for though, I praise the Lord, I can say, my prayers are, and my duties are; yet the Lord knows they are very weak, and my temptations are very strong, and my lusts mighty and therefore I am thus discouraged. Yet, be of good comfort; for, saith the Lord, my name is EL; that is, the strong, or the mighty God; and therefore though thou beest never so weak, and thy duties weak, yet I will carry on the work of my grace in thee; and though thy temptations be never so strong, and thy lusts strong, yet I am stronger, for my name is EL, the mighty God. Oh, but though God be strong, and able to help me; yet I fear that God is not willing to help me; I know God is able, and that God is strong enough, but I fear the Lord is not willing, and therefore I am thus discouraged: yet, be of good comfort, saith the Lord, for my name is *Merciful*, that is the next word; the Lord, the Lord; the Mighty God: and as my name is the Mighty God, and therefore I am able to help thee; so my name is *Merciful*, and therefore I am willing to help thee. But though the Lord be willing to help me, yet I am a poor unworthy creature, and have nothing at all to move God to help me; yet be of good comfort; for saith the Lord then, my name is *Gracious*; I do not shew mercy because you are good, but because I am good; nor do I stand upon your desert, but

I shew mercy out of free love ; my name is Gracious. Oh, but I have been sinning, I have been sinning a long time, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years : had I come in at first, I might have had mercy ; but I have been sinning long, and therefore I fear there is no mercy for me. Yet, saith the Lord, be of good comfort for my name is Long-suffering, that is the next, Gracious and Long-suffering ; slow to anger, or long-suffering. Oh, but I have sinned exceedingly, I have sinned abundantly ; so many sins as I am never able to reckon up, and to humble myself for ; I have broken all my promises with God, and all the vows that I have made unto him ; and therefore I am thus discouraged. Yet saith he, be of good comfort, for “ I am abundant in goodness and truth : ” art thou abundant in sin ? I am abundant in goodness : and hast thou broken faith with me ? yet I am abundant in goodness and in truth also. Oh, but though the Lord be thus unto his own chosen ones, such as David, Abraham, or Moses, yet I fear the Lord will not be so to me. Yes, saith the Lord at verse 7., “ Keeping mercy for thousands : ” I have not spent all my mercy upon David or upon Abraham, or upon Paul, or upon Peter ; but I keep mercy for thousands. Oh, but yet my sins do recoil, I am the greatest sinner in the world, for I have sinned all kinds of sin, I have sinned all sorts of sins, and therefore I fear there is no hope for me. Yet, saith the Lord, be not discouraged, for I keep mercy for thousands, “ forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ; ” even all sorts and all kinds of sins ; the sin of nature and the sin of life ; the sin of weakness and the sin of presumption ; the sin of ignorance and the sin against knowledge : these, saith the Lord, I forgive, even all sorts and all kinds of sins, and this is my name for ever. Oh, but I am afraid to lay hold upon this promise, for I think this is a doctrine of liberty. Say not so, saith the Lord, at the next verse, “ I will by no means clear the guilty : ” but if there be ever a poor, drooping, fearing, trembling soul, that desires to know my name, lo, saith the Lord, here is my name, whereby I will be known for ever : “ The Lord, Jehovah, that gives a being to things that are not ; the mighty God ; the merciful God : the gracious God ; abundant in goodness and in truth ; reserving mercy for thousands ; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin ; and this is my name for ever.” Now

faith comes, and closeth with this name of God, leading the soul into this rich wardrobe, and so doth quiet the heart against all discouragements.

Faith doth put the soul under God's commandment, and leaveth God to answer unto all such objections and inconveniences as may come thereby; which if a man can do he may be very quiet. Now true saving faith will enable him to do this. For ye know how it was with the three children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; they put themselves under God's commandment. The Lord commanded and said, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image." Well, but the king commands them to fall down before his image. No, say they, we will not stir, we will not bow. But, saith the king, I will make you bow or I will heat the furnace seven times hotter for you. Well, be it so, say they; as for that we are not solicitous, we will do the work that God hath set us to do; we will put ourselves under God's command; we know that our God is able to deliver us; and whether he will deliver us or no, we will leave that to him, let him answer to the inconveniences and mischiefs that follow upon his work; for saith the text: "They trusted in the Lord." And so you know it was with Noah; Noah was commanded to build an ark, for, saith the Lord, yet an hundred and twenty years and the whole world shall be destroyed, and therefore Noah, "build thou an ark for thyself and thy family;" which Noah did and put himself under this command. But now the world, the old world might speak thus (as certainly the language of their conversation was): Noah, dost thou think that thou art the only man in all the world that God loves? Dost thou think, Noah, that God loves thee, one man, more than all the men in the world; and thy one family, more than all the families in the world beside? And if thou dost believe what thou preachest, that the world shall be destroyed by water in an hundred and twenty years, why dost thou marry and beget children, as thou hast done since thou hast preached this doctrine? And Noah, if thou dost make an ark or a ship, who shall be the pilot; who shall be the mariner, the sailor? As for thyself, thou hast been a preacher, and dost thou think that thou and thy few sons are able to guide and govern so great a vessel? If it be as thou preachest, that the beasts, the wild beasts of the field shall

come unto this ark; the lion, and the bear, and the tiger, will they not tear thee to pieces? And if all the beasts of the field, two by two, shall come into the ark, Noah, will there not be such a stench in the ark with their dung as will poison thee; shalt thou be ever able to live, thinkest thou? Well, for all this Noah goes on, and he built the ark and leaves God that set him on work to answer to all these objections, and to all those inconveniences that might come by the doing the thing which God commands. And so doth faith always; faith puts a man under the commandment of God, and leaves God to answer to those objections and inconveniences that may come thereby. Now when a man can do thus, must he not needs be quiet?

It is (to speak more briefly) the proper work of faith to resign and give up our wills unto God; for by the resignation of the will unto God, we do trust God with ourselves and conditions.

It is the proper work of faith to fall with a suitable promise and to apply the same. If that plaister of the promise be not laid on the soul with a warm hand it will not stick. And what is the reason that the promise sticks not upon many souls, but because it is laid on with the cold and chill hand of unbelief. Now the hand of faith is a warm hand.

It is the proper work of faith to trade with the call of God; for true saving faith is a venturing grace, but without a call it will not venture.

It is the proper work of faith to see the hand of God in every dispensation; "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," saith faith. "I was dumb and opened not my mouth, for thou Lord hast done it," saith faith.

It is the proper work of faith to look on both sides of God's dispensation and of our own condition. There is a dark side of a dispensation and there is a light side thereof. Sense and reason look on the dark side alone, faith seeth both sides. Come, my beloved brethren (said Latimer to his fellow prisoners when he went to the stake), though we pass through the fire to-day, yet we shall light such a candle in England, as shall never be put out again. He saw both sides of the dispensation, why? but because he believed.

It is the proper work of faith to see one contrary in another; for it speaks and concludes as the word of faith

doth. Now the word of faith speaketh on this wise: "I will give you a door of hope in the valley Achor. And the Lord shall judge his people, and repent towards his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and none shut up or left." Deut. xxxii. 36.

It is the proper work of faith to engage God to succour, Psalm xxxvii. 40: "For the Lord will save them, because they trust in him." So Isa. xxvi. 3: "Thou wilt keep them in perfect peace, because they trust in thee." Now when a man can do all these things, will he not be quiet and free from discouragements? Surely he will. Faith can and will do these and all these things. Certainly therefore, faith and faith alone is that grace which will bear up the heart against all discouragements.

Now if faith be such a help against all discouragements, then in case that discouragements do arise, you see what to do: exercise your faith; trust in the Lord, trust in the Lord for ever; for in Jehovah Jah is everlasting strength; he is the Rock of Ages, trust in him. Oh, ye people of the Lord, trust in the Lord for ever, pour out your hearts before him; wait, hope, trust in the Lord.

But will every faith quiet a man's heart against discouragements; suppress and allay our discouragements?

No. There is a feigned and there is an unfeigned faith. There is an effectual and there is an ineffectual faith. There is an operative, working faith and there is a workless faith. Saith the apostle: "Thou sayest thou hast faith, shew me thy faith by thy works." The more precious a thing is, the more counterfeits there are of it. And what is more precious than faith? Therefore there is a counterfeit faith, and a counterfeit faith will not quiet one's heart, suppress and allay one's fears. Yea, true saving faith will not do it neither in the habit; it is only that faith can do it which God rewardeth. God doth not reward the habit of grace, but the act of grace; he rewardeth men according to their works and not according to their habits. Yea, strong and grown faith will not do it always. A man may have assurance of God's love and yet he may be discouraged. You say indeed, if I had but the assurance of God's love in Christ, and did know that God were mine, and that I had an interest in Jesus Christ, I would never be discouraged. But be not deceived. When

David spake the words of the text he had assurance, for he saith: "I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God," and yet he was discouraged; for he saith: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me?" So then it is not every faith, nor always true faith, nor always grown faith can do it.

But how then should a man so exercise his faith as he may bear up his heart against all discouragements, in case that discouragements do arise?

You must be humbled for your unbelief. A man can never believe as he should that is not humbled for his unbelief; and he is not far from faith and the workings thereof, that is humbled for unbelief and the workings thereof. You shall see therefore in Lam. iii., that as soon as the church had reproved herself for her unbelief, how presently she gathereth hope; saith she at verse 17: "Thou hast removed my soul far from peace, I forgot prosperity, and I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." Now she humbles herself for it: "Remembering mine affliction and my misery; the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me: this I recal to mind, therefore have I hope."—I humbled myself for my former unbelief and despairing thoughts and words; and therefore have I hope. Some think they do well to doubt. Oh, says one, if I should not thus fear and doubt I should grow secure. But a man may be *tutus* though he be not *securus*. Safety speaks opposition to danger, security to watchfulness; yea, there is a holy security which we are to labour after, and the more we are freed from these doubting fears, the more we attain unto that security. Would you therefore, so exercise your faith as that you may not labour under sad discouragements? Take heed that you do not please yourself in your doubting, but be humbled for your unbelief.

Be sure that you do not go to God immediately without Christ, but with Christ in your arms; "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," saith our Saviour. God out of Christ is a consuming fire, and there is no coming at him; so he is a dreadful God and we tremble at his presence, not rely on him. Now we are very apt to go unto him alone, and to trust in a naked God; for there is much of old Adam in us still: the vessel keeps that savor long wherewith it was

first seasoned. And at the first, Adam went unto God immediately, and trusted unto him immediately. But now, says Luther, give me a God clothed with flesh; God manifested in the flesh, is the object of our faith. Take heed of a natural faith, for that will end in discouragement.

If you would so exercise your faith as that you may not be discouraged whatever your condition be; then trust in the Lord himself and not in your own duties, your own enlargements, humiliation, or holiness. I know men say that they do not trust in any of these things, but in God alone. But suppose now that a man should come to borrow a sum of money of you, it may be an hundred pounds, and you will not lend him this sum of money unless he gives you a pawn, or unless such and such men be bound with him; will you say that you trust this man alone? Surely no. So, when a poor soul will not trust the Lord unless he have a pawn from God; unless this or that duty, or enlargement shall become bound for God; do you trust God alone? David saith in the lxii. Psalm, at the 5th verse: "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from him:" and then see what the issue is at verse 6: "He *only* is my rock and my salvation, he is my defence, I shall not be moved." He had said at verse 2, thus: "He *only* is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence, I shall not be (greatly) moved." But when he had digested this matter a little further and more fully, he leaves out the word *greatly* and saith, "I shall not be moved." Wherefore, would you so trust in the Lord as you may not be moved, trust in the Lord *alone*; although you have nothing to be bound with or for the Lord.

If you would trust in the Lord so as you may not be discouraged: then trust in the Lord before you do act, or move, or work in your business. Some there are that will trust in God when they can go no further; they will act, and work, and do what they can; and when they can go no further, then they say, I will trust in the Lord for the rest. But saith the Psalmist, Psa. xxxvii. 3: "Trust in the Lord and do good;" he doth not say, do good and go as far as you can, and when you can go no further, then trust in the Lord. No, but saith he, "Trust in the Lord and do good." But if you think to do good and to go as far as you can, and then to trust; such a trust as this will end in discouragement,

and therefore I say, trust in the Lord first before you do work at all.

If you would trust in the Lord, so as you may not be discouraged whatever your condition be, then trust in the Lord Jesus Christ in the first place, before you trust in the promise. Christ's blood is the great and first object of our faith. In times of the Old Testament, they came to Christ by the promise, because Christ was not then come, but promised: now Christ is come, we come to the promises by Christ. Yet mistake not; there is a promise of Christ, and a soul must come to Christ in that promise. But I speak of particular words and promises. Some will not trust in Christ, unless they have this or that particular word set upon their hearts and spirits; and so, indeed, do rather rest on the bare letter of the word, or the sense and impression that is made upon the soul by the setting on of the promise. But all the promises are yea and amen in Christ. Christ therefore is first, and if a man doth trust in the promise first, and so go unto Christ afterwards; then when he wants a particular word or a promise, he will not trust in Christ, but be quite discouraged. But when a man doth trust in the Lord Christ first, and in particular promises afterwards; then, though a particular promise doth not shine forth, yet his faith lives, and he is not discouraged; wherefore, venture upon Jesus Christ first, and then upon the promise as given unto thee by the hand of Christ.

If you would so trust in the Lord, as you may not be discouraged whatever your condition be; then, if ever it pleaseth the Lord to give out a promise to you, never let it go, but hold it fast, although you see nothing but the contrary unto the thing promised. This was Abraham's case: the Lord gave Abraham a promise, but Abraham saw the contrary to the thing promised; yet Abraham did not dispute the promise, he did not stagger at the promise, and say, Surely the Lord hath not given me this promise, it was but a delusion, and I was deceived. No; but Abraham still bears up to the promise, and doth not dispute or stagger at the same. So must you do likewise; if ever the Lord give out a promise to you, hold it, keep it, never let it go, although you do see the contrary.

Oh, but this is hard work indeed; and if I should do so,

I fear that I should presume, and that I should tempt the Lord. What, trust in the Lord when there is no means in view? Yea, when I see the contrary unto the thing promised? I would do it, but I fear I should presume, and tempt the Lord.

Tempt the Lord, say ye? Dost thou know what it is for to tempt the Lord? It is said of the children of Israel that they tempted the Lord, and said, Is God amongst us? And when thou sayest, after all the experience of God's presence with thee, Is God with me? is not this rather for to tempt the Lord? It is said of the children of Israel, that they "tempted the Lord, and limited the Holy One of Israel:" and when you limit God, and say, I shall never receive this mercy for now I do see the contrary; is not this rather for to tempt the Lord? Properly, and according to scripture phrase, to tempt the Lord, is to put God upon a trial for the satisfying of one's lust; and therefore if you look into Psalm lxxviii., you shall find that these two go together, at verse 18, "They tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust." To put God upon a work for the satisfying of one's lust, is indeed to tempt the Lord. Every putting God upon a trial, is not a tempting God: but to put God upon a trial for the satisfying of one's lust, this is to tempt the Lord: and therefore it is said, the wicked Jews came to our Saviour Christ tempting him, and saying, "Shew us a sign." Gideon desired a sign, and yet he did not tempt the Lord. Why? Because he did not desire a sign to satisfy his lust, but to strengthen his faith. But now these Jews came, and desired a sign to satisfy their lust; and therefore saith our Saviour Christ unto them, "Ye wicked and adulterous generation." How comes the word, adulterous, in there? Why, look, as it is with a woman that is naught, filthy, and unworthy; her husband sending a message to her, and warning her to take heed of such company; when the messenger comes, I doubt, saith she, whether you come from my husband, or no; and what sign have you, that ye come from my husband? she knows that he comes from her husband, but because she may go on in her sin, she asketh a sign: How may I know that you come from my husband? So it was with these wicked Jews, they asked a sign that so they might go on in their sins; where-

upon our Saviour saith, "Ye wicked and adulterous generation." But now, when a poor, doubting, fearing, trembling soul shall desire to believe, and would fain have some token from the Lord to strengthen his faith, he is not adulterous then, nor doth he tempt the Lord, nor presume: for is it presumption for a man to keep the Sabbath day? No. Why? Because it is commanded. Is it presumption for a child to obey his parents? No. Why? Because it is commanded. So it is commanded for a soul to believe, when all comforts are out of sight, and when he sees nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised. Presumption, properly, is the taking of a thing before it is given or offered. But in this case, the promise is given, and therefore no presumption for to hold it fast. There is a two-fold presumption which you read of in Scripture: one whereby men do rest upon their own works for salvation without Christ: so the Jews did, and therein they presumed of mercy before it was given unto them. Another, whereby men do as they think, or in their way, rest on Christ for salvation, and yet live without works and obedience: and therein they presume also because they take mercy when it is not given them. But if I rest on the promise, or on Christ, that I may be made the more holy, doing what I can to be fruitful in every good work, yet resting upon Christ for all; this is no presumption; why? because I do not take mercy before it is offered: and though I hold the promise fast, when I see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised, yet this is no presumption; why? because I do what is commanded: for, says the apostle, "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Now creation work, is out of nothing, it is light out of darkness. Yet thus are we commanded to commit our souls unto God; and therefore though all fail, and we see nothing of the mercy promised, it is no presumption then, to hold and keep fast the promise.

But suppose the Lord hath given me a promise and now after the promise given, I see nothing of the mercy promised and that all my comforts are out of sight; how shall I be able to bear up my heart against all discouragements, notwithstanding I see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised, and to the mercy desired?

Either thou hast assurance of God's love, or else thou hast not. If thou hast assurance of the love of God, then put thyself often to this disjunction. O my soul, either it is thy duty to believe, or it is not: if it be not thy duty to believe, why dost thou believe at all? If it be not thy duty to believe and rest on Christ, why dost thou rest upon Christ at all? And if it be thy duty to rest on Christ and believe, why then shouldst thou not believe at all times, and trust perfectly unto the Lord? And if you have assurance, then actuate your assurance, mind yourself of your privileges, and your interest in Christ; then you will say unto yourself: What though I have nothing but bad tidings from this world, yet notwithstanding, I have nothing but good tidings from the other world, and from my Father above: and if Christ be mine, then all is mine, life is mine, and death is mine; and what though all my comforts be dead and are gone, and are all out of sight, yet Christ is a living Christ, Christ is a living Saviour; and therefore be of good comfort, O my soul.

But if you do want the assurance of the love of God, then yet you must and may look on Christ, who is the brazen serpent, the only brazen serpent, and your very looking upon him in the time of your discouragement, shall go for faith: "Look unto me (saith he) from all the ends of the earth, and be saved."

Again; If you want assurance, you may and must turn your eye, and your thoughts, from those objections that do invade your faith. It is said of Abraham, "That he considered not the weakness of his own body:" and this was imputed unto him for believing, that he considered not what might invade his faith: and so this shall be imputed unto you for faith, if, when these objections shall come in upon you, you turn your eye from them, unto Jesus Christ, and do not consider them.

And if you do want assurance, then set yourselves to believe that you do believe. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen;" and therefore if your faith be not seen, you must believe that you do believe; thou must believe sometimes that thou hast faith. As there is a feeling in prayer, so faith hath its feeling too; and therefore if you cannot see your faith, you must believe that you do believe. And whether

you have assurance, or have not assurance, consider these few things as some helps to your faith in this case :

1. That God doth never lead his people unto any great mercy, but first he doth put the sentence of death upon all means that do tend unto it. Thus it was with Abraham, so with Joseph, so with David, and many others.

2. That it is a great sin to limit God's mercy, as well as to limit his power: you say it is a great sin to limit the power of God; the children of Israel are condemned for this; they limited the Holy One of Israel; they tempted the Lord and limited the Holy One of Israel. Now, doth not a man limit God when he limits his mercy, as well as when he limits his power? And when you say, you shall never have such a mercy granted, because I now see the contrary; is not this to limit his mercy?

3. That when the Lord hath given out a promise to his people, he doth then sometimes try whether they will trust to his naked word, or no. Christ hath his times to try men; and when he gives out a promise, and bringeth the soul into a quite contrary condition, this is his trying time: and therefore hath the Lord now given out a promise unto you; and do you see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised? Say unto thine own soul, O my soul, it may be Christ is now trying of me, it may be this is my trying time, and therefore now will I wait on God.

4. That God doth oftentimes fulfil one promise by denying another. Hath the Lord therefore given thee a promise, and doest thou see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised. Now know, and remember, that we have by not having; God doth give by denying, and fulfils some promises by not fulfilling others.

5. That when we see nothing but what is contrary unto our help then is Christ's time to help. I read, as I remember, but twice in the New Testament, that mention is made of Christ's hour: once in John xiii. "And he knowing that his hour was coming," and that was the hour of darkness: once in John ii. 4, when his mother came unto him for wine, he said, "Woman, mine hour is not yet come:" but afterwards, when their own wine was done, and their pots were filled with water; then he turns their water into wine, then Christ's hour was come. So now, when all our bottles are dry, when

there is no wine of comfort in our own bottles, then is Christ's hour; and when the hour of darkness is upon our condition, then is Christ's hour: and if thou wouldst but say unto thine own soul: Soul, Christ's time and hour is an hour of darkness; Christ's time is a time when there is no wine in our own bottles. Now thus it is with me; I have no wine left in my own bottles, my bottles are all dry and empty, and there is an hour of darkness upon my condition, therefore this time is the time for Christ to help me. This would cause you to wait on God, and exercise faith in the lowest condition, even when you see nothing but the contrary unto your desires, and the Lord's promises.

6. That either you are under an extraordinary affliction or an ordinary. Either you are under an ordinary temptation or an extraordinary. Either you are under an extraordinary desertion or an ordinary. Either thy strait or stress and trouble is ordinary, or else it is extraordinary. If it be an ordinary trouble, why then are you troubled more than ordinary; why are you discouraged extraordinarily? If your affliction or misery be extraordinary, then either God hath brought you into this condition, and hath led you heretofore in a way of extraordinary deliverance or of ordinary deliverance. If God have led you heretofore in a way of ordinary deliverance what mean those wonderful incomes of love and supporting grace that you have had, when your soul hath been ready to sink and to die within you? And if the Lord hath heretofore led you in a way of extraordinary deliverance, and hath now brought you into this extraordinary condition; then know from the Lord, that it is as great a sin for you now not to trust in God for extraordinary mercy, as it would have been for you not to have trusted in the Lord for ordinary deliverance in an ordinary case. You know how it was with the children of Israel, they sinned greatly in the wilderness, so much that the Lord kept them out of the land of Canaan, and many of their carcasses fell in the wilderness; what was the reason? The text tells us they did not believe. Wherein was their unbelief? They did not trust God for meat in the wilderness. Why, but that had been a miracle to have meat in the wilderness; true, yet this was their unbelief, that they did not trust God for meat in the wilderness. Again, they sinned and did not trust God

for water. Why, but it was a miracle for them to have water in that place, where no water was naturally; true, yet because the Lord had led them in a way of miracles before, they sinned now in that they did not trust God for miracles; and it was as great a sin that they did not trust God for miracles, being led in a way of miracles, as that they did not trust God for ordinary mercies, when the Lord led them in ways of ordinary mercies. So I say to you; if God lead you in a way of ordinaries, then must you trust God for ordinaries; but if ordinary means cannot be had, and God have led you in a way of extraordinaries, it is then a sin in you to tie God to ordinaries. Are you therefore in an extraordinary case and strait? Know that it is no sin now to trust God for extraordinary mercy, help and relief.

7. And if after all these things your hearts fail you and you would so trust in God, as that you may not be discouraged whatever your condition be; then ask thine own soul these questions.—First: Whether there be any gain by doubting; whether there is any spiritual gain to be made by doubting? Faith purifies the heart but doth doubting purify the heart? Secondly: Whether there is anything in all the world more pleasing to God, than to trust the Lord, in and by Jesus Christ, when all comforts are out of view, and when you see nothing but what is contrary to the thing promised? Thirdly: Whether you must not venture upon Christ at the last; and if you must venture upon Christ at the last, why not now as well as at the last? When a man comes to go over a river, though he ride once and again into the water, and comes out saying, I fear it is too deep for me; yet considering that there is no other way for him he resolves to venture; for, saith he, the longer I stay the higher the waters will rise, and there is no other way for me, and I must through at last, as good at the first as at the last; and so he doth venture through and is safe. Thus it is here. You must venture upon Christ at the last, there is no other way but venturing upon Jesus Christ, thou must do it at the last; and were it not as good for you to do it at the first as at the last? Surely, the longer you stay the harder you will find it to venture, and the more difficulties will arise upon the work of believing. You say now, Oh, but my heart is not humbled; Oh, but I am a great sinner, and should I venture upon

Jesus Christ? But will thy heart be more humbled by keeping from Christ; and shalt thou be a less sinner by keeping from him? No, certainly; but the longer you stay from Christ, the harder work it will be to venture upon Christ at the last. Wherefore, if there be ever a poor, drooping, doubting, fearing, trembling heart in all this congregation, know, that I do here in the name of the Lord, call out to you, and say, O soul, man or woman, venture, venture, venture upon Christ now; for you must come to this venturing work at the last, and if ever, it is true here, better at the first than at the last. Must you not venture upon Christ at the last; and if at last why not now? Thus ply and follow your own souls with these three questions. And,

8. If you would so trust in God as that you may not be discouraged whatever your condition be; then consider frequently and seriously, what a blessed thing it is for to wait on God and for God. Yea, what a reasonable thing it is that you should wait for him and on him. For,

He hath waited on you and for your repentance. He waited in the days of Noah for the repentance of the old world, and he waited long, 1 Peter iii. 20, a long while also hath he waited for your repentance; and if he had not waited long, what had become of you? Yea, and he hath not only waited, but he doth still, and will wait to shew mercy, Isa. xxx. 18, he waiteth to shew mercy on them that wait for his mercy. Now shall God wait for us and for our repentance; and shall not we wait for him and his grace?

Ye have waited on others and do still wait on others; who is there in all the world that you deal with, but you do wait upon; will ye instance in great men; must you not wait long to speak with them; yea, though it be for their own good? It is recorded of Henry, the emperor of Germany, that when he came to speak with the Pope, the Pope made him and his wife and eldest son, stand waiting three days in the cold winter season at his palace gates, before he would speak with the emperor. Will ye instance in your inferiors and such as are beneath you; must you not wait even for them that do wait on you? Your servants, if you bid them do a thing, you must wait till it be done; and if you bid them come, you must wait till they come. Or will ye instance in other creatures? Do you not wait on the sun for

light ; on the water for coolness ; on the fire for heat ? Now if we wait on the creatures, all the creatures, is it not reasonable that we wait on the Creator ? Yet further, do ye not sometimes wait on the lusts of men ? Yea, ye have sometimes waited on your own lusts, "The adulterer waiteth for the twilight," saith Job. And how often have you waited for an opportunity of sinning ? Now will ye wait on men, your inferiors, other creatures, yea, on the wills and lusts of men ; and will you not wait on the grace of God ?

Look when you give over waiting then may deliverance come ; and if it come then how will you be filled with shame and confusion ? 2 Kings vi. 33, the king said, "It is a vain thing to wait on God any longer." And if ye look into the next chapter, at verse 1, ye shall find that deliverance came in the next words. No sooner had the King said, "It is a vain thing to wait on God any longer," but the prophet in the next words saith : "To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gates of Samaria." chap. vii. 1. So that deliverance doth sometimes come when men give over waiting. And if deliverance do thus come to you, what shame and grief will this be to you ; how will you befool yourself and say, Oh, what a fool was I that I could not wait a little longer ? I have given over waiting, and lo, now deliverance is come and I have no comfort in it.

When you give over waiting, then you lose all your former labours ; though you have performed many duties, yet if you do not wait upon God therein, you do lose all your prayers. It is said of Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6 : "That he inquired of the Lord, who answered him not ;" and so he sought unto a woman that had a familiar spirit, ver. 7. Yet 1 Chron. x. 14, it is said that "he inquired not of the Lord." He inquired and he inquired not ; how doth this agree ? Well, for though he did inquire of the Lord, yet because he did not wait upon God therein, but gave over waiting, his inquiring in scripture phrase is said to be no inquiring ; prayer without waiting, in scripture phrase, is no prayer. Look when a man doth give over waiting, then doth he lose all his labour ; his former prayer is nothing, his former duty nothing ; it shall not once be remembered or imputed to him.

On the other side : if you wait on God he will not alway

forget your work of faith ; though he may seem to forget you, yet “ the patient abiding of the meek, shall not be forgotten for ever.” Psal. ix. 18. God will come and visit you in due time, “ He that doth come, will come, and will not tarry ;” yea, and your very waiting (that I may speak with reverence) will make him come the sooner. It is not so with men ; if you expect a friend, you do go forth to meet him ; but it is not your expecting, waiting, that will make him come. But so it is with God ; your very expecting of him and waiting for him will make him come ; and therefore the holy men in scripture use this argument with God for mercy : “ Let me not be ashamed, for I have waited on thee ;” yea, and if God do come, he will come with a recompence, and pay you all your forbearance money, Is. xxxv. ; yea and when he doth come, you shall be able to triumph in his appearing, and say, “ Lo this is our God, we have waited for him :” if you have not waited, you cannot triumph in his appearance ; but if you wait, you shall say when he comes, Lo this is my God and I have waited for him ; yea the Lord will not only come, but he will come with a blessing, for “ Blessed are all those that wait on him ;” yea, he will not only bless you upon your waiting, but he will strengthen you therein, Isa. xl. : “ Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” Oh, what a blessed thing is it then for to wait on God ; who would not hope, trust, wait on the Lord ? Is there anything to be gotten by your sad discouragements, “ O ye of little faith ?” Are you able to alter one hair of your condition by all your thoughtfulness ? Is it not much better now, for to wait on God ? Why then do you not call your own heart aside, and say, Come O my soul, why hast thou limited the Holy One of Israel thus long ; why hast thou dishonoured Christ thus long by thy vain fears ? “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul ; and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope, trust, wait on God ; for he is the health of my countenance and my God.”

And thus now I have done with this great argument : ye have had the patience to hear it, the Lord give you grace to practise it. I conclude all with the words of my commission : “ Ye that are of a fearful spirit, be strong, fear not : behold, your God will come, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you.” Is. xxv. 3.