

agement, then, should this be to all that hear the word of the Lord this day, to get faith, to strengthen your faith. Oh, you that have no faith at all, and some such there may be here; you that have no faith at all, get faith, get faith; and you that have true saving faith, improve it to do great things by it; and the truth is, if you have true saving faith, you will do it, and there will be some great things found in your conversation: for you remember the doctrine, true saving faith will do very great things. And thus I have done with the first rank of believers. Their doing is first mentioned, their suffering follows.

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## SERMON V.

### THE GREAT THINGS FAITH CAN SUFFER.

*“ And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings: yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being afflicted, destitute, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”*  
—Heb. xi. 35.

THIS xith chapter of the Hebrews, being a chronicle of the Old Testament believers; we find here the report of a doing and a suffering faith. The doing faith is described and commended by several instances at large in the former part of the chapter, and more compendiously and briefly at verse 32: “What shall I say more? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David, also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, women received their dead raised to life again.”

In the words that I have chosen to speak unto at this time,

you have another sort and rank of believers, famous in their generation for their suffering faith. I have spoken unto the former in a neighbouring congregation, having shewed that this faith will do great things. Now in these words we have a suffering faith; for by faith they should be carried through these sufferings: thus are the words to be understood. Others by faith were tortured; and others by faith had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; and others by faith were stoned, sawn asunder, &c. It seems, then, that these the apostle here speaks of, were such as lived in the time of the Maccabees; they did not live after Christ, for it is said at verse 39, "They received not the promise;" Christ was not come when they lived. And they did not live in the times of the prophets, or before; for the apostle had brought down his chronicle unto the days of the prophets, as ye read in verse 32. So that these must needs live in the times of the Maccabees. It seems, then, that ecclesiastical histories may at some times be made use of in the preaching of faith.

Now the things that these believers suffered were great, hard, and very many. Here are nine sorts of suffering set down in the text. It is said that they were racked, or tortured: some read it, beaten with clubs, but it comes all to a reckoning; for when they were racked, they were beaten with clubs. And the apostle saith, that "they accepted not deliverance, that they might be partakers of a better resurrection;" upon which words some do think that there are degrees of glory, and that the suffering saints should have a better degree of glory at the resurrection; but the word *better*, is spoken in comparison with that deliverance that was offered to them. In scripture phrase, afflictions are deaths, and when a man is delivered from an affliction he hath a resurrection. When a man hath been sick, and at the grave, and raised to health again, he hath a resurrection, in scripture language. Now this resurrection or deliverance is refused, hoping for a better resurrection, having an eye to the great, and last, and better resurrection. That is the first; they were tortured or racked. And they had cruel mockings: there is a mocking, and there is a cruel mocking, when a man shall insult over another, and laugh at him in his misery, this is a cruel mocking; as the Jews derided our Saviour on the cross; this is a great aggravation of affliction, this they endured. That is the

second; they had trial of cruel mockings. And they were scourged, and whipped up and down like rogues, as if the world was too good for them, they not worthy to live. And they were in bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder. And they were tempted; some read it, burned, by the change of a letter or two they read it so, "and were burned:" but it seems their afflictions were filled with temptations, and temptation is a great aggravation of affliction; so they were tempted. And they were slain with the sword. And they wandered up and down in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, in mountains and caves and dens of the earth, driven from their own habitation; and these are such of whom it is said here, "the world was not worthy." And these hard things they endured by faith, saith the apostle. So that here, now, you see what hard things faith will suffer, true saving faith (for of that the apostle speaks here) is a suffering grace, a bearing grace, it will carry us through all afflictions, although they be never so great: and so the doctrine from all the words is this:

True, saving faith can, and will suffer very hard things.

It is that grace that will carry us through all afflictions and sufferings, though they be never so great. True, saving faith can, and will suffer very hard things.

This doctrine lies upon the surface of the words and all the words together speak it; but for the further opening and clearing of it: First I shall labour to shew you that it is possible that a true believer, one very precious in the eyes of God, may meet with most unworthy things from the hands of men. Secondly: That faith will carry through these. And thirdly: How, and by what means, faith will carry a man through these.

First: It is possible that a true believer, one very precious in the eyes of God, may meet with most unworthy usage from the hands of men; these were hard things and unworthy that these believers suffered; yet they were such of whom the world was not worthy. You know there is an old enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; a malignant disposition in the men of the world against the saints and people of God, they must work as they are; the wicked and men of the world are an unworthy people. But

because you judge yourselves unworthy, saith the text, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles, because ye judge yourselves unworthy." "Go (saith our Saviour unto his disciples) and preach, and if any be worthy stay;" the men of the world are unworthy, an unworthy people. Yea, they are an unreasonable people, absurd men, impertinent men that have not faith. They are compared in scripture unto beasts for their unreasonableness; "beware of dogs," saith the apostle. When our Lord and Saviour Christ did send out his disciples to preach the gospel, "beware of men," saith he; I do not say, take heed and beware of lions and bears, but beware of men, you shall find such unreasonable dealing by men, therefore beware of men. Now if the men of the world be an unworthy people and unreasonable, will ye wonder that the saints and people of God meet sometimes with unworthy usage from them? It is possible. To raise it a little higher; possibly the more precious a man is, the more unworthy usage he may meet withal. The apostle Paul was a most precious man in his day and generation, and yet what unworthy usage had he? It is said in 1 Cor. iv. 11, "Unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day." We are the filth, we are made the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things unto this day. Some think that the apostle here doth relate unto that of one man dying for the people, the guilt of all the people being upon him. Others, that it is a similitude taken from a kind of tumbrel and vessel that goes up and down the city, that ye throw all the filth into. But I rather take the two Greek words, *περικαθαρματα* and *περιψημα* to relate unto that in Lament. iii. 45: "Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the people." In the Hebrew: "Thou hast made us the off-scouring, and the filth, and refuse in the midst of the people." Thus Paul was made, and yet Paul a precious man; he laboured more abundantly than they all. So that I say, it is possible that the more precious a man is, the more unworthy usage he may meet withal from men.

Yea, to raise it a little higher; it is possible that a man may meet with most unworthy dealings therefore, because he is precious in the eyes of God; not only in regard of men; but in regard of God: for God doth sometimes so order things in his providence, that he doth put men to suffer hard things, because they are precious in his eyes. "Unto you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer." Suffering sometimes is a gift, it is a great gift. A suffering gift, saith Chrysostom, is a greater gift than the gift of miracles; for saith he, if God do give me a gift to work miracles by, I am in God's debt; but if God do give me a suffering gift, he is pleased thereby to become my debtor; suffering sometimes becomes as a reward for doing. Ye read of the heifers that brought home the ark out of the Philistines' country, that when they brought the ark home, the Israelites they take the heifers, and they offer up the heifers unto God for a sacrifice. Why so? saith one, it is an ill requital to the heifers. No, the heifers could not have a higher honour put upon them; this their suffering is a reward for their doing. And so what greater honour can a man have after all his doing for God, than to be called forth to suffer, and to bear witness to the truth? Indeed we do not think thus, but you will say, Oh, surely God doth not love me because he puts such hard suffering work upon me. But I pray tell me, suppose that a general should have some great work or service to do, and he should single and pick some half a dozen soldiers for to go upon this work; would these soldiers say, Surely the general doth not prize us, he doth not honour us, nor love us, because he puts us upon this hard service. No, but they will say the contrary; Surely the general prizeth us, loves us, and honours us, because he puts us upon such a hard service as this is. So here, it doth rather argue that the Lord doth honour, love, and prize you, in that he puts you upon a hard work and service. But now, if these things be true, then surely this first branch is sufficiently made out, That a man may be very precious in the eyes of God, and yet meet with most unworthy usage from the hands of men. That is the first thing.

Secondly: You will say, How shall a man be able to go through these hard things and sufferings; what will carry him through them?

True, saving faith will do it and nothing but this faith will do it; "I had verily fainted in mine affliction (saith David) but that I believed." It is faith and faith alone that will keep from fainting under suffering. And to make this out a little unto you :

The more assurance of God's love any man hath, the more able he will be to encounter with sufferings and with afflictions : the sight of God's love doth cause love in us to God, *Amor amoris causa*, love is the cause of love, and much water cannot quench love, it endures all. Now the assurance of God's love grows upon faith, it is the flower of faith ; faith is the stalk, assurance is the flower ; assurance is the cream of faith, "Let us draw near with full assurance of faith."

The more that any man is able to gather up and to manage his experiences, the more able he will be to suffer, to encounter with sufferings ; experience is a great help in suffering times. Now it is faith and only faith that can gather up and manage experiences. "The Lord (saith he) that delivered me from the lion and the bear : " it was faith that did gather up this experience and did manage it. So in Psalm lvi. 9, "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back : " how do you know this ? saith he, "this I know," how ? "for God is for me ; " this I know, for God is for me. I have this experience of God, that he is with me and for me ; and therefore I know it. But

The more that any man is able to apply the promise, the more able he will be to suffer, to encounter with sufferings ; the promise is a great shelter in a rainy day. Now there is nothing but faith that can apply the promise ; the promise is the plaster that none but the warm hand of faith can lay on upon the sore : if it be laid on by any other hands, it will not stick. I have heard of a poor, doubting soul, drawing near to her death, and the minister pressing one promise after another ; O Sir, saith she, these are gracious promises, but they will not stick upon my heart. And what is the reason that the promise indeed doth not stick upon many hearts ? but because it is laid on by the chill and cold hand of unbelief. Remember faith hath a warm hand, and only faith hath a warm hand to lay on the promise. But then again,

The more that any man doth see his call clearly, his call to suffer, the more able he will be to encounter with his sufferings. Now it is faith only that doth trade with the call of God. God's call is a great wall, a strong wall; God's call can make a wall of water. When the children of Israel went through the Red Sea, the water stood like a wall on each side; it was God's call that made those walls. There is nothing but faith that doth converse with the call of God, and makes out the call of God. Three things call us to suffer: 1. The commandment of Christ: "If thou wilt be my disciple, thou must deny thyself, and take up thy cross." 2. The example of Christ, for thereunto are we called, in 1 Pet. ii. 5; Christ hath left us an example of suffering. And 3. Suffering strength with suffering opportunity. Now there is nothing but faith is able to discern these things; and therefore faith, and faith alone, is that grace under Christ, which can carry us through our affliction and suffering, although they be never so great.

But you will say, We have heard and read of many that have suffered hard things, and yet had none of this faith; no true, saving faith, and yet have suffered great and hard things.

True; you have heard, it may be, of some Jesuits dying for their religion. It is possible that a wicked man may suffer much, and that upon the account of his religion too; but, as Austin speaks, there is an unlikeness of suffering in the likeness of suffering. As, saith he, gold is in the same fire with the wood and with the straw; with the same fire the straw is consumed, and the gold is refined. Things suffered may be alike, and yet a great unlikeness in the suffering. And to clear up this to you, that you may see that faith alone is able to do this:

Though a wicked man may suffer very great and hard things, yet he may also suffer as an evil-doer. "If ye suffer for evil doing (saith the apostle), what thanks have ye?" But faith, true, saving faith, it doth well and suffers ill.

And though a wicked man may suffer much, and very hard things, yet he doth not suffer upon choice; he would choose rather, if it were at his choice, to make a breach upon conscience, than a breach in his estate, for to lose his conscience, than to lose his life; he doth not suffer upon choice,

faith doth. "By faith Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." True, saving faith, it suffers great and hard things, and that upon choice.

And though a wicked man may suffer much, yet he doth not lay the stress of all upon the word of faith; the stress of all is laid upon somewhat else. Faith loves to suffer, and it lays the stress of all a man's sufferings upon the word of faith.

Though a wicked man may suffer much, and that upon an account of religion; yet it may be he is sullen, or froward, or discontented, not cheerful: but faith suffers cheerfully. Paul and Silas sung in the stocks; and the primitive christians took with joyfulness the spoiling of their goods. And so the martyrs in Queen Mary's days. It is reported that when Mr. Philpot was in the dungeon, the bishop sent to him to know why he was so merry? Seeing a pair of stocks in the dungeon, saith he, there is a pair of organs that I have not played on yet; making himself cheerful in the time he was in the dungeon. And meeting with a minister that had recanted, and informing him better, the minister made a recantation of his recantation, and was as cheerful as any others. Faith suffers cheerfully.

Though a wicked man may suffer much, and that upon the account of his religion; yet he will rest upon his sufferings. Faith will make one suffer, and keep one from resting upon one's suffering. As in regard of duty, faith will make one perform a duty, and it will keep one from resting upon that performance; so in regard of sufferings, faith will make one suffer, and it will keep one from resting upon one's suffering. In case that a man hath done much, faith will put him on to suffer as if he had done nothing; and in case a man hath suffered much, faith will put him upon doing, as if he had suffered nothing: according to that of our Saviour, "He that will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Follow me; when? After a suffering; not to sit down and rest there, but to follow me after a suffering.

Again, though a wicked man may suffer much, and that upon the account of his religion, and be very confident, yet he will give in at last. I have read of a great atheist that was burnt to death in Paris, for blaspheming of Jesus Christ.

And as he was going to the stake, saith he to the friars and priests that followed him : Behold, how boldly I go to the fire : as for your Lord and Master Christ, he went trembling to his death, and sweat drops of blood ; but I, in the strength of reason, under which I sacrifice my life, go with boldness unto these flames. But when he came there, and his tongue was cut out for blasphemy, the story saith, that then he cried out, and roared out like a bull. *Vidi ego hominem*, saith the author, I saw the man, I saw him when he was at the stake. In the time of his liberty he was loose ; in the time of his imprisonment, he was sullen ; and when he was at the stake, he was mad, with horror of conscience mad. Oh, but true saving faith will not flinch, and give in at last. The three children did not only come to the fire, but rid out the storm. But I say no more in this, only thus :

Though a wicked man may suffer much, and that upon the account of his religion ; yet he doth not bring forth the quiet fruit of righteousness : but true, saving faith doth, it suffers, and brings forth the quiet fruits of righteousness. So that now you see by all this, that it is faith alone, it is true, saving faith, and faith alone, that will carry a man through sufferings. But then,

Thirdly, you will say, How and by what means can faith do this ? What is there in faith to do it, to carry a man through hard things, and through all sufferings, although they be never so great ?

It is the work of faith to make a man resign and give up his will to the will of God ; and when a man can do so, what may he not suffer ?

It is the work of faith, the proper work of faith, to cleave close unto the commandment of God. True, Satan, I am an unworthy creature ; but God hath commanded me to believe. True, I am a great sinner ; but God hath commanded me to believe. Faith doth peremptorily stick unto the commandment, and it leaves God to answer unto the objections and inconveniences that follow upon his obedience to the commandment ; it leaves that to God. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out, obeyed, not knowing whither he should go. Now when a man can do this, what may he not suffer ?

It is the proper work of faith to close with the gospel,

whereby the soul doth receive the fulness of the Spirit, the promise of the Father. Now when a man's heart is filled with the Spirit of God, what may he not suffer? Pray do but consider the apostles, after that the Spirit came upon them; you know they would suffer any thing, though it were never so great. Before the Spirit came upon them, though they had the personal presence of Christ, they could not suffer any thing, though it was never so small. Now faith doth close with the promise of the gospel, whereby the soul doth receive the Spirit of God, the promise of the Father.

It is the proper work of faith to look upon the recompense of reward. By faith Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward, and so chose affliction with the people of God. Saith our Saviour to his disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled." How so, Lord? Saith he, "I go to prepare a place for you: in my Father's house there are many mansions." Faith shews one the glory and the joys of heaven; and when a man sees those things, what may he not suffer?

The more that a man can see the hand of God as a Father upon the rod, the more able he will be to suffer, and the more cheerful. Ye bring a child to school, and he sees the school hung with rods, in every corner a rod, and the child is afraid: but if his father's house be set with rods, the child is not afraid in his father's house. Now faith, true, saving faith, will shew one the hand of a Father upon the rod: "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.

The more a man can see to the end of his affliction and suffering, the more able he will be to go through it. Now faith tells a man that there is an end. "No temptation (saith the word of faith) hath befallen you, but what is common;" and with the temptation there is an outlet, there is a door, a door in the ark, although the door may be under water, and the outlet may be under water. Faith doth not only tell a man that there is an end, but that the end shall be good, and all shall work together for his good; yea, it tells a man that his affliction shall be but for a moment, and that moment shall be recompensed with abundance of comfort. Ps. xxx. 5: "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his

favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." So also in Isa. liv. 7. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercy will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness, will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Faith tells us this. Now when a man knows, and considers this, what may he not suffer?

It is the proper work of faith to look on both sides of the dispensation; there is a dark side and there is a light side in affliction and suffering. Sense and reason look only on the dark side, but faith looks to both sides of the dispensation. It is written of Mr. Latimer, the blessed martyr, that when he was going to the stake, taking leave of his fellow prisoners, saith he, Be of good comfort, O my friends and brethren, for though we go to the stake to-day, and be burnt to fire, we shall light such a candle in England as shall never be put out; we shall make such a fire in England to-day, as shall never be quenched. He saw both sides of the dispensation, because he believed. Faith will shew one both sides of the dispensation.

It is the proper work of faith, to see one contrary in another, or through another. It will see the smiles of God in the midst of frowns; it will see love in the midst of anger; it will see order in the midst of confusion; it will see mercy in the midst of misery; it will see a door of hope in the valley of Achor. Faith, it looks upon things with the prospective of the promise; and the promise speaks on this wise, in Deut. xxxii. 36; saith the Lord there, "The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself of his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left." Faith, I say, sees one contrary in another, or beyond another; and when a man can do so, what may he not suffer.

And if God do engage to help and succour in afflictions, and if the Lord do count himself engaged to succour, deliver, and help in affliction, because men trust in the Lord; surely faith can do very much in the day of affliction. Now I pray look into scripture, and you shall see that the Lord is engaged upon this account in Ps. xxxvii. 40: "And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the

wicked, and save them, because they trust in him." So in Isa. xxvi. 3 : "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Mark the words, Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, so you read it ; but in the Hebrew the words run thus : "Thou wilt keep peace, peace ;" not peace and doubting, not peace and trouble ; but peace, peace. Why ; Because he trusteth in thee. But I cannot trust in God, I have no assurance of God's love. Mark the words, he will keep him in peace, peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; he doth not say, who hath assurance of God's love, but if it be but a faith of reliance, though it be not a faith of assurance ; he will keep him in peace, peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Now if the Lord be thus engaged to help and succour men that do believe, then certainly faith can do very much in a suffering day. Now I have given you an account of the general, how it comes to pass that faith can do it. Faith will carry us through all our sufferings, though they be never so great, and you see how faith can do it, and so the doctrine is clear.

Now for application.

If true saving faith be such an accommodation unto all our suffering, then, in case that any of you are to suffer any great suffering, the first thing you do, call in for faith. As I said upon the former doctrine, seeing that faith will do great things ; and therefore if you have any great thing to do, call in for faith. So now I say upon this doctrine, Seeing that true saving faith can and will suffer very hard things ; in case you have any thing to suffer, first call in for faith, call in for faith. If you have a great sickness, you will send for the best physician that hath the most skill at such a disease. Faith hath the best skill at your sufferings, and therefore send and call in for faith as soon as ever you come to the brink of these waters, call for your faith, and look to your faith.

You will say, But these are no suffering times, the winter is past, and there is no suffering now.

Then bless God and praise the Lord that you have so much gospel liberty as you have. But our Lord and Saviour saith, that in the last days, there shall be such tribulation as never was ; and I am sure we are fallen into the last days. Our brethren in the vallies of Piedmont, they have suffered ;

and the apostle commands us to be in bonds with those that are in bonds, and to be afflicted with those that are afflicted; what do you know what your faith may do for them?

But to come a little nearer ourselves. Is there never a servant here that suffers from an evil master, that would fain go to the ordinance, frequent the ordinance, but checked, scorned, and despised by his master? Is there never a husband here, or wife here, that suffers hard things from his or her relation, merely upon the account of religion? Is there never a man or woman here that hath suffered hard things from the hand of his or her kindred, since they began to look towards Christ? Is there never a professor here that suffers from the hand of some professor? What devouring among us, biting, consuming one another? Of all reproachings and sufferings, you will find those most bitter that come from professors, when one professor doth reproach another, and slander another, and persecute another. Now if there be any here, unto you I speak, call in for faith, whatsoever your sufferings be, call in for faith.

But suppose there be none of these sufferings among us, who knows how soon you or I may be called forth to sufferings, if not in the public, yet in our particular? I have heard of a good man and woman, that were feasting at a great dinner upon the account of God's goodness and mercy to their family; and while they were at dinner, celebrating the goodness of the Lord to their family, them and their children, comes a messenger in and saith, One of your children is dropt into the well and drowned. Beloved in the Lord, who knows how soon a relation of yours or mine may be in the well; how soon such a comfort of yours or mine may be in the well? Wherefore call in for faith, in all your sufferings call in for faith.

You will say unto me, What shall we do that we may so strengthen or improve our faith, as that we may bear up in a way of believing against sufferings; for I am a man, or a woman that, I confess, have met with sufferings, and I am seldom out of sufferings, sometimes in my body, sometimes in my name, sometimes in my estate, sometimes in my relation, and the Lord knows what I may be called to suffer; what shall we do that we may so strengthen or improve our

faith, that we may bear up in a way of believing, against all our sufferings ?

Consider frequently what great things the Lord hath done for you already. "I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High ; I will remember all thy wondrous works," saith the Psalmist ; stirring up his faith and getting strength from faith. The consideration of what great things God hath done for you already, will engage your heart and make you willing to suffer. For example, go along with me a little, and I will instance only in that great matter of your first conversion and turning to God. That day that thou wert converted and brought home to God, all thy sins were pardoned, past, present, and to come ; I say, virtually those that are to come. That day that thou wert converted and brought home to God, thou wert made the child of God, and heir of the kingdom which is incorruptible, undefiled ; and which fadeth not away. That day thou wert converted and brought home to God, thou hadst the key of the scripture put into thy bosom, I say, thou hadst the key of the scripture put into thy bosom to wear it, I mean the Spirit of God. That day that thou wert converted and brought home to God, thy old nature was taken away, and thou wert made partaker of the divine nature. That day that thou wert converted and brought home to God, thou wert received into union with Christ and into communion, thou wert received into union and into communion with the Father, and with Jesus Christ. That day that thou wert converted and brought home to God, thy soul was freed ; those that the Son makes free, they are free indeed ; though your will were not *libera*, yet it was *liberata* ; as soon as a man is converted and brought home to God, he is free to duty, though not from duty ; and he is free from his sin, though he be not free to his sin. That day thou wert converted and brought home to God, thou wert received unto the special protection of God, though not to free, yet to sanctify and sweeten your affliction. That day you were converted and brought home to God, you had a right and title given you unto all the ordinances, *Jus ad rem*, though not *in re* ; they are your Father's plate, and as a child you may drink out of your Father's plate. That day thou wert converted and brought home to God, thou hadst a special right and title given thee

unto all the creatures: you may look up to heaven and see the stars, and say, these are my Father's candles; and when you hear the thunder, you may say, this is my Father's voice; and when you see the sea, you may say, this is my Father's fish-pond; and when you see the godly men of the world, you may say, these are my Father's children; and when you see wicked men, you may say, these are my Father's dish-clouts to make his children clean; and when you consider of the devils, you may say, these are my Father's hangmen, his executioners; and when you see the gold, and riches, and wealth of the world, you may say, this is my Father's dung-hill. I say, that day thou art converted and brought home to God, God doth great things for you in that moment. Now the more that you consider what great things God hath done for you, the more your heart is engaged to God; and the more your heart is engaged, the more willing and able you will be to suffer.

If you would strengthen your faith to suffer great and hard things, study much the book of the Revelation, which is a standing cordial for the relief of the saints, in suffering in antichristian times; and study and read and commend to your children, the Book of Martyrs, where you have examples to the life of the people of God, dying for the faith: but above all things, study much the sufferings of Christ. Faith, true saving faith, it loves to dwell in the wounds of Christ; and believe it, the sight of a suffering Christ will teach one to suffer; nothing like it: the example of Christ, especially the sight of Christ's sufferings, will not only teach you to suffer, but will sanctify your heart by the suffering, and will provoke you to suffer. What, shall the Lord Christ suffer such great things for me, and shall I suffer nothing for him? Study the sufferings of Christ.

If you would so strengthen your faith as you may be able to suffer hard things, consider much and frequently, the great gains of suffering, possess your heart therewithal. Beloved, suffering times are gaining times; and if your heart and mind were but possessed with that truth, it would not be a hard thing to suffer hard things, and that by faith: I shall therefore spend a little time to make out this, for the strengthening of your faith, that suffering times are gaining times.

Suffering times are teaching times; "Blessed is the man

whom thou chastisest, correctest and teachest out of thy law : *Schola crucis, schola lucis* : the cross is God's free school, where we learn much : suffering times are teaching times.

As suffering times are teaching times, so suffering times are sin-discovering times ; afflictions recal sins past, and prevent sin to come ; afflictions shew us the emptiness of the creature, the fulness of God, the vileness of sin. When Adonibezek had his thumbs and toes cut off, he could remember his own sin. You see how it is in winter, when the leaves are off the hedges, you can see where the birds' nests were ; when the leaves were on in summer time, you could not see those nests : and so in prosperous times men do not see the nests of their hearts and lives ; but when their leaves are off, then their nests are seen. Suffering times are sin-discovering times.

As suffering times are sin-discovering times ; so suffering times are self-bethinking times. You see many a man run on in the day of his prosperity, and never bethinks himself. When the prodigal was pinched, then he bethought himself ; and Manasses in prison, then he bethought himself : and saith Solomon, praying for the people in adversity, " If then they shall bethink themselves." There is many a man that, I may say, doth owe his conversion to his affliction, and can say, If I had not been afflicted, I had never been converted. Suffering times, are self-bethinking times.

As suffering times are self-bethinking times : so suffering times are fruitful and growing times : " Every branch in me he pruneth, that it may bring forth more fruit." Suffering times, then are growing times.

As suffering times are growing times ; so suffering times are truth-advancing times : in the time of prosperity we lose truth, in the time of adversity we find truth and bear our testimony for truth, then truth is advanced. It is a good observation that Marloret hath upon Dan. viii. to shew that truths were advanced by suffering ; verse 11., it is said of the little horn, " He hath magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down : and an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it prac-

tised, and prospered :” that is, saith he, not the horn, as it is ordinarily carried ; for it is in the feminine gender, which only can relate to the word truth, not to the horn ; he cast down the truth, and the truth practised and prevailed. So that suffering times are truth-advancing times.

As suffering times are truth-advancing times : so suffering times are uniting times : in times of prosperity, professors they wrangle, fall out, divide ; but when the shepherd’s dog comes, then the sheep run together. Suffering times are uniting times.

As suffering times are uniting times ; so suffering times are praying times ; he that will not pray, we say, let him go to sea, there he will be sick, and that will make him pray, that is the meaning ; “ In their affliction they will seek me early.” Suffering times are praying times.

As suffering times are praying times ; so suffering times are soul-assuring times : there is many a man or woman goes up and down many years doubting, and hath no assurance ; and when they grow sick, God doth send in his evidence for heaven by the hand of that sickness, and he hath assurance for heaven that never had it before : according to that in Hos. ii. 14., “ I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart.” “ Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, because her iniquity is pardoned.” When ? In the day of her warfare : “ for her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned ; for she hath received double from the hand of the Lord.” Suffering times are soul-assuring times.

As suffering times are soul-assuring times ; so suffering times are weaning times : when this mustard is laid upon the breast of the world, then are we weaned. Suffering times are weaning times.

Suffering times are heavenly times and glorious times ; when the world is most bitter, heaven tastes most sweet and glorious ; for, saith the apostle, “ then shall the Spirit of God and of glory rest upon you.” When ? In suffering times, when the people of the Lord doth suffer, the Spirit of glory shall rest upon them. Suffering times are glorious times. And if all these things be true, then surely you will say with me, suffering times are gaining times. And if you would but think of this, and possess your heart with it, you would be

more willing and able to suffer. Christians, they boggle at sufferings and they startle at sufferings; what is the reason they do not know the gains of suffering. But is this true? That suffering times are gaining times; that suffering times are teaching times; that suffering times are sin-discovering times; that suffering times are self-bethinking times; that suffering times are growing times; that suffering times are truth-advancing times; that suffering times are uniting times; that suffering times are praying times; that suffering times are soul-assuring times; that suffering times are weaning times; that suffering times are glorious times? then surely suffering times are gaining times. And if thou wouldst strengthen thy faith, christian, so as thou mayest be able to endure hard things, think upon this much, and press it upon thy own soul, carry this away with thee, if no more; suffering times are gaining times; Oh my soul, suffering times are gaining times: and thus you shall be able to hold out and suffer. And thus I have done with the main doctrine. There are two or three observations that lie about the words; I will only give you them and so conclude.

You may consider here, what the persons were that suffered hard things. The text saith, they were such of whom the world was not worthy. Then greatness of sufferings and afflictions, are no sufficient reason why you should doubt of God's love, or of your own everlasting condition. Here were very hard things that these believers suffered, and yet they were such of whom the world was not worthy. Shall I then doubt of my condition, or question God's love, because my afflictions are great? I must not. But you will say, My afflictions are very strange, and none like mine; one cannot hear of such an affliction as mine is, not in an age. And I pray, in your age, have you heard of a man or woman sawn asunder? Thus were these, of whom the world was not worthy. But my afflictions are thick, they come very thick. And so did their's here. But my afflictions are filled with temptations; I am not only afflicted, but I am tempted, and temptations grow upon mine afflictions. So it was with these here, they were tempted; not only afflicted, but tempted; and yet such of whom the world was not worthy. But my afflictions are such as make me unserviceable. So, in the eye of reason, these afflictions made these believers; they

were whipped up and down like rogues. And I pray you tell me, who would ever have thought, in the eye of reason, that Paul's ministry should have done any great good, after he had been whipped up and down like a rogue? Yet Paul's ministry was blessed; and, though you think your afflictions make you unserviceable, if God call you to them, he will take care for your service. But my afflictions are such as find me all alone; I am afflicted and afflicted, a man or woman of affliction, and I have none to pity me. So it was here with some of these; they wandered in the wilderness, and they were in the caves and dens of the earth, and such of whom the world was not worthy. Possibly then, thy afflictions, man or woman, may be very great, and yet thou mayest be precious in the eyes of God, and such an one of whom the world is not worthy. And therefore now, if there be ever a man or woman here in all this congregation, that labours under any great burden; I say to that person, Question not thy condition, doubt not concerning God's love, because of the greatness of thy affliction; thy affliction may be very great, and yet thou mayest be a person of whom the world is not worthy in God's account. I will give you this parable, apply it yourself. Suppose you see a company of children playing together one while, and may be afterwards fighting; and then you see a man come and carry away one of these children, and he strikes him, but he lets the others alone, and he strikes them not; which of these children, will you say, this man is a father unto? Will ye not say, in all likelihood he is a father unto that child that he carries away and strikes. I leave you to apply it.

You may observe upon what account they suffer these hard and grievous things; upon the account, saith the text, of a better resurrection. Then what shall we say to those that would steal away from you the doctrine of the resurrection? It may be, men will not speak out here with you, but they have done it with us, and nibble at this doctrine. What shall we say to them? They are enemies to your faith, they are enemies to your great relief in suffering times, they are enemies to your good conscience; a good conscience is a great matter in suffering times. I remember a speech of a good minister, when he was silenced in the bishops' time, and had his living taken from him; Well, saith he, I praise

the Lord, though I have lost my living, I have saved my conscience, and this conscience is a great matter in suffering times. Now by their having an expectance of a better resurrection, they refused the present deliverance, and so kept their conscience. Do there therefore come in men among you, to steal away this great doctrine of our resurrection? Avoid them, avoid them, that they may be ashamed; hold close to this doctrine. As you desire, christians, to have comfort in a rainy day, and a bottom for your faith in suffering times, hold fast this doctrine of the resurrection, and this doctrine that you have been instructed in from the word.

And so to end, ye may observe here, by what means they suffered these hard things, and that is, as you have heard, by faith. Surely then, it is no easy thing to believe, with this true, saving faith; a hard thing to believe. This true, saving faith, can do great things, and can suffer hard things. True, saving faith, will make it easy to do great things, and easy to suffer hard things; but it is hard to get this true, saving faith. You will say, If a man were in the sun, he might go round the world in a day; but it is hard to get into the sun. So this true, saving faith, will make a man to do great things, and to suffer hard things; but it is a hard thing to get it, and few there be that have it. We read of Elias, that when the Lord had given him a power to shut heaven, that it rained not for three years and a half, he went away and hid himself; they could find him before: ordinary men might be found; but Elias that did this great work, could not be found. So an ordinary faith may be found out; but this true, saving faith, that doth great things, and suffers hard things, is hardly to be found. There is a common faith that grows every where. As it is in your flowers and plants; ye have your field thyme, and your garden thyme; ye have your field rose, and your garden rose; your field rose grows every where, but your garden rose grows not every where. You have pebble stones every where, but diamonds are not to be found every where. So there is a pebble faith, and a field faith, an ordinary faith, and this you may have every where. But this diamond, this garden faith, to suffer hard things, it is hard to be found; few there be that have it, and therefore few can do great things for God, or suffer hard things from

men. Wherefore, beloved in the Lord, give me leave to end with this exhortation, to beseech you in Christ Jesus to get this faith; above all getting, get this faith; you that have not this true, saving faith, get it. Some there be here, it may be, that have faith good enough to swear by, but not faith good enough to live by; true, saving faith, a believer can live by, but he cannot swear by it. A true believer is very sensible of his unbelief: saith he, There was never a more unbelieving heart than mine; I think there is not a man or woman in the world, is troubled with such an unbelieving heart as I. True, saving faith, is sensible of unbelief; and therefore you that have not this true, saving faith, labour to get it; above all, get it. Get this true, saving faith; and you that have this true, saving faith, improve it, use it, do great things for God, and suffer hard things from man. Yea, certainly, if you have this true, saving faith, you will be able to do great things for God, and to suffer very hard things from man: for that is the doctrine at this time, True, saving faith, can and will suffer very hard things.