

REMAINS.

SERMON I.

ON MAN'S BLESSEDNESS; OR, THE BLESSED MAN.

"Many there be that say, Who will shew us any good! Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."—PSALM IV. 6.

IN this psalm we are taught, by David's example, how to carry and behave ourselves in times of danger. By David two things are done, which are the parts of the psalm.

First, He prays, ver. 1.

Secondly, He believes; which appears by,

His exhortation to his enemies, ver. 2—6.

The profession of his faith, see ver. 7 to the end. Which profession of his faith is illustrated by an argument drawn *a dissimili*, ver. 7, "Many say," &c. but, "Lord," &c.

By his own security in this time of trouble, verse 8.

"Many there be that say:" that is, not with the mouth only, but by the language of their lives and practices, for even those that are dumb do say, "Who will shew us any good?" who will shew us, or will make us to see or enjoy any good? The words note an ardency of their desire, "Who will shew us any good?" But I say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance (or face) upon me;" that is, shew thy love and thy favour to me. The elevation of God's face or countenance, in scripture phrase, doth note the communication and manifestation of the gracious presence and favour of God. For it is a metaphor drawn from the rising sun, scattering the beams of its light so upon inferior creatures, that thereby life and comfort is brought unto them. This David prays for, and chooses in opposition to the generality of men's desires. And so the doctrine is this:

Though men do ordinarily seek after something that may make them happy in this world, yet a gracious man doth

count himself fully happy in the enjoyment of God, and the light of his countenance.

It is true, indeed, there is an happiness to be obtained, saith he, and ordinary men do seek this happiness in the crowd and throng of the creatures; but as for me, I do not place my happiness there, but in the clear enjoyment of God. Whatever, therefore, men say or do in reference to their happiness, this is that I say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me." So that, though men do ordinarily seek after something that may make them happy in the world; yet a good and gracious man doth account himself fully happy in the enjoyment of God and the light of his countenance. For the opening and prosecuting whereof:

First, I shall labour to shew you that there is a disposition in men, to seek after something that may make them happy.

Secondly, That they are commonly mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

Thirdly, Yet there is a generation of men, who have found out true happiness, and are truly blessed.

Fourthly, Wherein this happiness doth consist, and why it doth consist therein?

Fifthly, How a man shall know, whether he hath ever been thus blessed, or enhappied with the light of God's countenance shining on him?

Sixthly, How he may attain hereunto?

As for the first, That there is a disposition in men to seek after something that may make them happy. This text saith, "Many say, Who will shew us any good?" By which *many*, we are, saith Dr. Ames, to understand all men.* But that cannot be, because here is an opposition in David's practice, to the practice of this many: but his practice was not opposed unto all, but to the generality of men generally; therefore there is a disposition in men, to seek after something that may make them happy. In the beginning man was truly happy, and though he be now fallen from that happiness, yet there is a disposition in him still to grope after

* *Nemo est mortalium qui habet in votis ut fruatur bono: hoc est, naturale est omnium creaturarum commune tendere in aliquem finem, sub aliqua ratione boni, finis enim et bonum convertuntur, homini autem maxime convenit, qui præditus est intellectu, quo finem apprehendit ibi proponit et ad illum per media contendit.—Ames in Psalm.*

Agere propter finem est proprium creaturæ rationalis.—Aquinas.

happiness. Ye see how it is with a house that is burnt down, though it be burnt down to the ground, there are divers pieces of timber left; though scorched and burned and spoiled, yet left: and so, though man be fallen, and that goodly building which God created at the first be now burned down to the ground, yet there are certain scorched and spoiled principles left in him; and what more natural to man than to desire that he may be happy: surely, therefore, there is a disposition still in man to seek after happiness. Look how far a man knows that a thing is good, so far he may act and seek after it, because good is the object of man's will; but every man knows in general that it is good for him to be happy.

It is true, indeed, that naturally men do not distinctly know wherein their happiness lies; but as Aquinas observes,* there is a general knowledge of happiness, and there is a distinct and right understanding of it. Now though all men have not this distinct knowledge of our happiness, yet all men have a general knowledge of it, and they know that it is good for them to be happy; surely, therefore, there is a disposition in all the children of men to seek after something that may make them happy. But,

Secondly, Though there be such a disposition in men, yet they are generally mistaken in the matter of their happiness. Many say, Who will shew us any good? but, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance, &c. It seems, then, that there is a general mistake amongst men in reference to this happiness. Is not he mistaken herein that doth bless himself in the way of his sin? some do so, Deut. xxix. 19. Is not he mistaken herein that doth bless the covetous, whom God hates? some do so, Psalm x. Is not he mistaken that doth place his happiness in the enjoyment of the creature? and who doth not so? Oh, says one, if I can but attain to such and such an estate, then I shall be happy. Oh, says another, I am now reviled and reproached; if I can but clear myself,

† *Utrum omnis homo appetat beatitudinem? Item quod beatitudo dupliciter potest considerari, et primo secundum communem rationem beatitudinis, et sit necesse est, quod omnis homo beatitudinem velit, ratio autem beatitudinis communis est, ut sit bonum perfectum, &c. Secundo possumus loquide beatitudine secundum specialem rationem quantum, ad id in quo beatitudo consistit, et sic non omnes cognoscant beatitudinem qui nesciunt cui rei communis ratio beatitudinis conveniat, ut per consequens, quantum ad hoc non omnes eam volunt.—Aquinas 12 æ. q. 5, a. 8.*

and come off with honour, then I shall be happy. Oh, says another, I have such and such an adversary, if I can but overcome him, then I shall be happy. What man is there that doth not place his happiness in one creature comfort or another? Do not some place their happiness in pleasure, some in riches, some in honour, some in power, some in health, strength, and beauty of body; some in knowledge, wit and learning; some in moral, civil life, and other excellencies? But if happiness cannot be found in these, either singly or together, then surely there is a great mistake amongst the children of men in reference to there last end and happiness. Now what creature excellency is there in all the world that can give this happiness to the children of men? Certainly none.*

For will ye instance in the strength and health and beauty of one's body. Indeed our health is the salt of all the mercies and comforts which we do enjoy; but may not a bad and wicked man enjoy his health and strength and beauty as well as a good man, and can any wicked man be happy: happiness consists in a stable good, but what more unstable and uncertain than our health and strength and beauty. Surely, therefore, our happiness is not to be found therein. Or,

Will ye instance in riches, wealth, and this world's goods. It is the property of happiness to be desireable for itself; it is that good thing which all things are desired for, and which is desired for nothing else: but riches are desired for something else, not for themselves; and if it be a man's duty sometimes to part with them and to despise them, then our happiness cannot consist in them, but we are sometimes to part with all these things for Christ. Surely, therefore, our happiness is not to be found therein.

Will ye instance in honour, fame and credit in this world. What more uncertain than that which is not one's own? Is it not a better thing to deserve honour than to be honourable? But that is truly blessed which is best of all. And if it be more safe for a man to be reproached sometimes, than to be applauded, then our happiness cannot consist in honour; but as Seneca says, *Beatus est qui contemnere potest et contemni*: He is a happy man that can contemn and be contemned. If I be reproached, then I learn to walk humbly; if I be ap-

* Vide Aquin. Sum. i. 2 æ. contra gent. l. 3. Suar. de Beat. Anton. panth. ps. 1.

plauded, then I grow proud thereby. And ye know what was the issue of Haman's honour. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in power and outward greatness in this world. What doth more depend on others? That which depends on many other men's wills cannot be my happiness; so doth all worldly power and greatness do: there is nothing better than our happiness. Now worldly power may be used to evil; and that is better which cannot be used or abused to evil: but so worldly power may be; surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in pleasure, which is the great Diana of the world, that is common to brute beasts; and can that make a man truly happy which the beasts have. If pleasure make a man happy, then the more pleasure he takes the more happy he is; but the more pleasure that a man takes, the more wicked he is. It is the property of true happiness to elevate the mind, to ennoble the soul, and to justify the heart; but the more carnal pleasure a man takes, the more his mind is depressed, his soul effeminated, and the less his heart is satisfied. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in knowledge, wit and wisdom. Solomon tells you, that "in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Eccles. i. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in moral virtues, and in a civil life; the more happy that any man is, the more he doth draw nigh and is made like to God; but a man is not made like to God by moral virtues or a civil life: surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein.

But though our happiness doth not consist in any of these alone, yet it may be that all these together can make one happy.

Nay, for put all these things together, yea, put all the good things and comforts of this world together, yet they are not sufficient for to make one happy;* for take the good things

* Omnes creaturæ sine Deo, non possunt esse sufficiens objectum humanæ beatitudinis.—Suar. de Beat. Disp. § 1.

Solus Deus, sine consortio alicujus creaturæ, est sufficiens objectum beatitudinis.—Ib. § 2.

of this world, and abstract them from the enjoyment of God, and though they be never so many, yet they are dependent things which do depend on another, and can that make you truly happy which doth depend on another? Take all the blessings and comforts of the world together, and they cannot make a man godly that is ungodly; now can that make you happy which cannot make you good? What is there in the world, take it singly, or in society with others, which is free from imperfection; and can that make you perfect which is in itself imperfect? The more that any superior thing is mingled with its inferior, the more it is defiled. Is not gold defiled by being mixed with silver; is not silver defiled by being mixed with brass; is not wine defiled by being mixed with water; is not wheat defiled by being mixed with chaff? Now take all the creatures in the world together, and they are inferior to your souls. Surely, therefore, you may be defiled, but you cannot be made happy or blessed thereby. Yet, Lord, how many are there that say, concerning these outward things, Who will shew us any good? Why? Because they are mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

But how comes it to pass that men are thus mistaken in the matter of their happiness?

Sometimes this mistake doth arise from ignorance of the right and true notion of happiness. If a countryman that hath heard of a king, go up to the court, and see a knight, or lord, or prince come out in fine and brave apparel, he saith, Lo, there is the king; because he knows him not by face; a general notion he hath of a king, but not having the true notion of his person, he is mistaken, and saith, Lo, there is my king and sovereign. So a man having heard that there is something that will make one happy, but not having the right and true notion of it, he is thereby mistaken in the choice of his happiness; as for example: it is truly said, that he that is happy hath what he would; now men turn this principle, and say, He that hath what he would have is a happy man: and so if a wanton hath the embraces of his beloved, then he says, Now am I happy, because I have what I would; so if a drunkard meet with his vain and wicked companion, he saith, Now am I happy, because I have what I would: whereas in truth, as Austin's mother said, He is not happy that hath what he would, but he that wills aright, and then hath what

he would.* But because men are ignorant thereof, and have not the true notion of happiness in their hearts, therefore they are so mistaken.

Sometimes this mistake doth arise from the misapplication of the true notion of happiness. For what is happiness but the enjoyment of that which doth command all things else? But now, through misapplication of this notion, men say, Money commands all things; and therefore the more money I get, the more happy I am: and so are mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

Sometimes men are mistaken herein, because they measure their happiness by their own present want. For, saith Aristotle,† if you look into your experience, ye shall find, that if a man be poor, then he thinks it an happiness to be rich; if a man be disgraced, then he thinks it is his happiness to be vindicated; if a man be sick, then he thinks there is no greater happiness in the world than to have his health; and so men measuring their happiness by their own present wants are mistaken therein.

But ordinarily men are mistaken in the matter of their happiness, because they do not hearken to and consider what is spoken to them about true happiness. Famous is that story of Cræsus among the heathens; he was a king of a great country, and boasted in his gold and silver, and Solon, that wise man of Greece, coming into his country, he desired to speak with him, and when he saw him, after Solon had seen and viewed all his wealth and glory, he asked him, Whom he thought to be the most happy man in the world; imagining that Solon would have said Cræsus. But Solon answered, I think Tellus was the most happy man; Tellus, saith he, why Tellus? Because, said Solon, he having governed the commonwealth well, and brought up his child honestly and religiously, he died honourably.‡ Well then, said Cræsus, but who dost thou think is the second happy man in the world? I think, said he, those two brothers,

* Si bona velit et habet beatus est, si autem mala velit et quamvis habeat miser est.—Augustini Confess.

† Aristotle Ethic. i. 1.

‡ Τελλω τουτω μεν παιδες ησαν καλοι και αγαθοι πολλοι μεν γαρ πλουτοι ανδρωπων ανολβιοι εισι, πολλοι δε μεθριως εχοντες βιου ευτυχεις. Vide Heroditus, lib. i.

that instead of horses, drew their mother in a chariot to the temple. Whereupon, said Cræsus, What thinkest thou of me? I think, said he, thou art a very rich man; but a man may be happy though he be poor, and a man may be unhappy though he be rich, for he may lose all his riches before he die; and therefore, *ante obitum nemo*, I think none truly happy, but he that lives well, and dies well; whereupon that wise man Solon was dismissed the court with neglect: but afterwards this Cræsus making war against Cyrus, he was overcome by Cyrus, and being taken captive, he was laid upon a pile of wood to be burned to death; then lying on the pile of wood, he cried out and said, O Solon, Solon. Cyrus inquiring what he meant, then he said, This Solon was a wise man of Greece, that told me, that happiness did not consist in riches, for they might all be lost, and a rich man might die miserable; whose words, said he, I then neglected, but now I find true, and therefore now I cry out and say, O Solon, Solon. And truly thus it is at this day, preachers call upon men, and tell them, that our happiness lies not in these outward things, and they do not regard it. But there is a time coming when men will cry out and say, O Solon, Solon; but for the present, men will not hear and consider where their happiness lies, and therefore they are thus mistaken in the matter of heir thappiness. But thus now you have heard, that men are mistaken, and how it comes to pass that they are so mistaken; and so I have done with the second general, now the third follows.

Thirdly, Though men are generally mistaken in the matter of their happiness, yet there is a generation of men who have found out this happiness, and are truly blessed. Many say, Who will shew us any good, but I say otherwise; plainly then, there is a generation of men that have found out this happiness, and are truly blest; for those that the Scripture calls blessed, are blessed indeed. Now there is a generation of men whom the Scripture calls blessed, and if you would know who these are, I will instance to you in some particulars.

The Scripture calls them blessed, that have their sins pardoned, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered," Róm. iv.

The Scripture calls them blessed whom the Lord doth teach the mysteries of his kingdom, "Blessed is the man

whom thou teachest out of thy law," Ps. xciv. 12. "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father," Matt. xvi. 17.

The Scripture calls them blessed that wait at the posts of wisdom, and are made wise thereby, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and waiteth daily at my gates, watching at the posts of my door," Prov. viii. 35. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and getteth understanding," Prov. iii. 13. so again, verse 18, "and happy is every one that retaineth her."

The Scripture calls them blessed that are of a meek, humble, and a pure spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." "Blessed are the pure in heart." "Blessed are the meek in spirit," Matt. v.

The Scripture calls them blessed that do walk in God's ways, and not in the ways of the world. Ps. i. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth meditate day and night." So Ps. cxix. 1, "Blessed is the man that is undefiled in the way," and so again, Ps. cxii. 1, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments."

The Scripture calls them blessed that suffer for Christ, his way, and truth, and name. Matt v., "Blessed are ye when men persecute and revile you for my name's sake."

The Scripture calls them blessed that consider the poor saints and people of God, who have bowels of love and compassions. Ps. xli. "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor."

The Scripture calls them blessed that know and do the work of their place and office, both to God and man. John xiii. 17, "I say unto you, saith Christ, the servant is not greater than the lord, if ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them."

The Scripture calls them blessed that wait and prepare for the deliverance of the churches, and the coming of Christ: "behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments," Rev. xvi.

The Scripture calls them blessed that die in the Lord, and are found so doing when Christ comes; blessed is that ser-

vant whom, when the Lord comes he shall find so doing," Matt. xxiv. "And blessed are those that die in the Lord," Rev. xiv. 13. Do you therefore ask who is this blessed man, the man that is truly blessed? the Scripture tells you in all these particulars, so that doubtless there is a generation of men that have found this happiness, and are truly blessed; that is the third general, now the fourth follows.

Fourthly, Wherein the true blessedness or happiness doth consist; the text tells you, "in the light of God's countenance and the shine of his face;"* for look wherein God did command the priests of old for to bless his people, therein true blessedness must needs consist; now if ye look into Numbers vi. 23, ye shall find that therein God commanded Aaron and his sons for to bless the people; "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee;" and if you look into Ps. lxxvii. 1, ye shall find that when the psalmist prayed for a blessing, he prayed thus, "The Lord be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us." Surely therefore the happiness and blessedness of man must needs lie and consist in the light of God's countenance, and the shine of his face.

But if our blessedness doth consist herein, then some of God's own people are not blessed; for God doth hide his face from some of them, and how many are there, even amongst the saints, that complain, saying, Oh, the face of God doth not shine upon me?

I answer, True they do so, and it is possible that God may hide his face from his own children for a time; but what child of God is there in all the world, but the face of God hath shined upon. It is possible that a child of a natural father, may never see the face of his father; his father may be dead before he is born; but no child of God but hath seen his Father's face: for what is the face of God but his favour; and what is the shine thereof but the manifestation of his favour; and when God pardoned his sin at the first, did not he manifest his love and favour to him? And doth he not

* *Beatitudo formalis consistit in fruitione beatitudinis objectivæ, beatitudo autem objectiva est Deus: quia est bonum perfectum satiens appetitum.*

daily do it in supporting him with his arm? In the times of the Old Testament, the saints did measure the favour of God too much by outward mercies and blessings; because the land of Canaan was promised them as a favour from God, when the enemy did break in upon them, they said, That God did then hide his face from them; but ye know how it is with the day; if it be day, the sun shines, and though ye see not the beams thereof, yet you see the light thereof; so here, though you see not the beams of God's countenance, yet if it be day with you, you see the light thereof. Now it is day with all the children of God, they are children of the day; and therefore whatever they say or think, there is none of God's children, but the face of God doth or hath shined upon.

Fifthly, But how shall I know that the face of God hath ever shined on my soul, for there are many delusions about this matter; how shall I therefore know that God hath ever lifted up the light of his countenance upon my soul?

That is the fifth general, therefore I shall now speak to that. If God hath ever blessed you in truth, then hath his face shined upon you; for his blessing and the shine of his face go together, as ye have heard. Now when God blesses a man, then he draws him nearer to himself, "Blessed is the man (saith the Psalmist) whom thou causest to approach unto thee;" when God blesses a man, then he makes him to increase and multiply; if he bless him in his estate, then he doth increase and multiply therein: if he bless him in his parts, or gifts, or graces, or comforts, then he causeth him to increase therein; so at the beginning the Lord blessed man and said, "Increase and multiply." And therefore if thou hast been such an one as hath lived at a distance from God, and now art brought nigh to him, and increased in thy gifts, graces, and comforts, then hath the Lord blessed thy soul, and so hath shined on thee.

If God hath ever shined upon thy soul, then he hath wonderfully irradiated, and enlightened, and taught thy soul the mysteries of the gospel, which did never enter in thy heart before. Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2, the Psalmist saith, "Be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known," &c. And says the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 4—6, "God that commanded light to shine out of

darkness, shine into your hearts, to give you the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If this light of God's countenance hath indeed shined upon your heart, then your other carnal, kitchen lights have been put out thereby. Ye see that when the sun shines upon the kitchen fire it doth put it out; so if ever God hath shined upon your soul, there hath such a glory fallen upon your hearts, that thereby all your carnal, kitchen comforts and delights have been put out thereby.

If God hath shined upon thy soul in truth, then are you satisfied with the light of God's countenance, and yet your desire after it is the more increased. This seems to be a paradox, but it is true; the more a man sees the light of God's countenance, the more he longs after it; and the more he longs after it, the more he is satisfied with it. "Shew us the Father (saith Thomas) and it sufficeth;" I have now that, saith the soul, which doth make me happy; therefore I am fully satisfied, yet I have tasted such sweetness in it, as I cannot but thirst and long after more. Oh, when shall I come and appear before thee, that I may be fully satisfied with thy likeness.

If the face of God hath ever shined upon your soul, then there hath been a time when you were in the dark, and by the light of God's countenance, your doubts and fears have been all dispelled at once. God never shines but upon those that have been in the dark; "God that commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts," saith the apostle, and when God shines, then all your fears, and doubts, and objections are answered at once; not by degrees, and one after another, but the face of God answers all at once. As when the husband comes home, though his wife have had many fears that she should never see him again; yet when she sees his face, then all her fears and doubts are answered at once; so here, although you have had many fears that you should never see the face of God again, yet when his face shines, then all your doubts are answered at once.

If the face of God have ever shined upon your soul in truth, then have you been thereby enabled to do and act some great thing for God, and you have had a heart given you to do it. Cant. i. 12, "When the king sits at his table, my

spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." By spikenard here, we are to understand the sweet smelling fruits and graces of the spouse of Christ. Now saith she, these graces send forth their smell when Christ sits at his table: when I have the gracious presence of Christ, then are my graces most odoriferous, then can I act and do that for Christ which I never could before, then my graces do send forth their smell, then can I do some great and special thing for Christ. And,

If the face of God did never shine upon your soul, then you could and would not be so afflicted for the want thereof. *Ignoti nulla cupido*, if you had not tasted of this sweetness, you could not be so afflicted for the want thereof; but when you think that God hides his face from you, then you are as one that goes down to the pit, and you say, Oh, all the world for one smile from Christ. Lord, let me see thy face though I be a beggar, and though I have no comforts in this world, yet let my see thy face, for I am not able to live without the light of thy countenance.

And if ever you have seen the face of God in truth, then hath your heart been inflamed with love to Christ upon that account: for by him you had your address into the presence of God, by him and in him God's face doth shine upon your soul. God that commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Though you cannot behold and look upon the sun in his full glory; yet if you look upon the water where the sun shines, you may see the sun. Now God shineth upon Christ, and in him you do see God's face; and therefore if ever God did in truth shine upon your soul, then hath your heart been inflamed with love to Christ upon this account; but if your heart were never inflamed with love to Christ upon this score, if you were never afflicted for the want of God's face and presence, if you never were enabled to do any great thing for Christ, if you never were in the dark in reference to your spiritual condition, if your desires after God were never satisfied and increased at once, if your kitchen fire was never put out by divine irradiation upon your soul, if you have never been so blessed by the Lord as thereby to be drawn out of the world to himself and to be increased in spiritual things, then hath not God shined

on you to this day, and therefore you are yet to seek for your true happiness.

Sixthly, But suppose the face of God never yet shined on my soul, or that it hath shined, and is now hidden, what shall I do that the face of God may shine upon me, that so I may be made partaker of this true happiness and blessedness?

That is the sixth general which I will only speak unto and conclude. Would you have this light of God's countenance, and the face of God shining on you? then,

Be sure that you take heed of all the sins which do or have hid the face of God from you, Isaiah lix. 1, the prophet saith unto the people of God, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you;" is God's face therefore hidden from you, look into your life and way, and consider what those sins are, and take heed thereof.

The way to have any mercy from God is to be upright in the desiring of it; "He will be a sun and shield to them that fear him, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Is therefore the face of God shining, the good thing that you desire? Take heed that you do not desire it, merely for the sweetness of it.* It is a sweet thing to behold the sun, much more the shine of God's face, but if I desire it only for the sweetness of it, then I am not upright therein; take heed therefore of that.

If you would have the face of God shining on you, then be sure that you stand where God shines and blesses. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined; and there (saith the psalmist,) he commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore," Ps. l. 2. What is his blessing, but the shine of his face; and how doth he command it? By giving it: there "he commandeth his blessing." There then do you stand, where the Lord blesseth and shineth.

In case that God seemeth to hide his face from you at any time, then walk wisely and humbly towards God in the time of his supposed absence; then lament after God and his presence, as the greatest loss in the world; then take heed of jealousies, and do not say, God is gone and will return no more; then be much in obedience, and say, Well, though I

* Multi sunt gulosi spirituales. - Avila.

cannot see God, yet I will serve him, and though I cannot enjoy him, yet I will obey him: and if you carry it wisely and humbly towards God in the time of his absence, then will he return again unto you, and will cause his face to shine upon you. But,

Take heed that you do not dig too deep into the earth: he that is much under ground, cannot see the sun or the shinings of it. So if you be much in the world and under ground, you cannot see the face of God, and the light of his countenance. Therefore take heed that you be not much under ground in your callings. And,

Whatever frowns you meet withal from men, be quiet under them and improve them; for usually God shines when man frowns. Do men therefore frown upon you, take their frowns quietly, and wait for a shining God now. And,

Be sure that you do not frown nor look awry upon any that are Christ's; for how should God look kindly on you, when you look unkindly on his? How should his face shine on you, when your face doth not shine on his? Therefore take heed that you frown not on any that are God's.

Then throw yourself down at God's feet in a quiet resignation of yourself unto God, for God will surely take them into his arms that do throw themselves down at his feet. If I can leave myself at Christ's feet, he will take me into his bosom, and I shall see his face: wherefore then throw yourself down at God's feet. And,

Pray, and pray much for the presence of God, and the shine of his face upon your soul. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," saith the spouse. Ye have a command for this, "Seek the Lord and his strength; seek ye his face evermore," Ps. cv. 4. And the Lord hath promised to give you this mercy; for look what God promised to his people of old, that he promised to you and to all his people. Now he saith, "Neither will I hide my face any more from them," Ezek. xxxix. 29: though I have hid my face from them for a time, yet I will not hide my face any more from them. Would you, therefore, have the face of God to shine upon you? go and pray, and pray earnestly for the face and presence of God, and say with David here, "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me;" and thus shall you be made partakers of this great blessing. And thus I have

done with this argument, The blessedness of man, or the true blessed man.

SERMON II.

AFFECTIONS RIGHTLY PLACED.

“*Set your affections on things above.*”—COL. III. 2.

IN this verse the apostle Paul doth exhort the Colossians, and us by them, to seek and favour spiritual things. The exhortation is expressed and answered: expressed in the first verse, “Seek those things which are above,” and in the second, “Set your affections on things above.” It is enforced by divers arguments. One is drawn from our communion with Christ in his resurrection and ascension: “If ye then (as I have told you in the former chapter) be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, for Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God.” Another argument is drawn from our communion with Christ in his death: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ; therefore set your affections on things above, and not on the earth.” Another argument is drawn from the danger of inordinate affection, for which things’ sake “the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience,” ver. 6. “Therefore mortify your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,” ver. 5. Another argument is drawn from our present relation, state and condition: “In the which ye also walked sometimes when ye lived in them; but you also put off all these,” &c. ver. 7, 8. So that the words of the text are part of the exhortation itself, “Set your affections on things above, *τα ανω φρονηετε*. By things that are above, we must not only understand heaven, the joys and the glories of it, but all spiritual and heavenly things also, which are to be enjoyed and obtained here, which are from above, because “every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights;” and whatever grace or spiritual enjoyment we have on this side heaven, is the seed of that heavenly glory. Now these heavenly things we are to mind especially, *φρονηετε*, mind ye: but because the apostle had