

SERMON XXVIII.

OR,

THE ORDER OF THIS BEATITUDE.

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

WE finished, you may remember, the last day, the sixth beatitude—the promise to the pure in heart that they shall see God. We come to this seventh beatitude, 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'

This blessedness, for the order, it is in the seventh place. As we read in Prov. vi. the contrary unto this, that God saith he hates, it is the seventh thing which is there revealed as an object of God's hatred: ver. 16, 'These six things doth the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination unto him.' Then the Holy Ghost having named the six, the seventh thing that is named it is, 'Him that soweth discord among brethren' that is the seventh thing that God hates. And here the seventh thing that God promises blessedness unto is the peace-makers, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' And it well follows the former, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'—and then 'Blessed are the peacemakers;' for it is from the impurity of men's spirits that there is so much discord in the world. There would be more peace if there were more holiness. 'Follow peace and holiness, without which no man can see God.' They cannot see God without peace and holiness. Those two are joined together in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And purity of heart and peacemaking are joined together here. A pure heart and a pure heart will make peace. In James iii. 17, mark there what the scripture speaks of the head: 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.' The wisdom that is from above is pure—that is, not defiled; there is no by and base ends and tricks and devices, and cunning, crafty ways, in the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, then peaceable. And here the heart is first pure, then peaceable. The pure in heart, and then the peacemakers. There is nothing makes more disturbance than men's corruptions: James iv. 1, 'From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members.' Here is a question, 'From whence come wars and fightings among you?' If so be that this question

were asked among us, From whence are wars and fightings? from whence are jars and divisions among us? One would say, It is from such a party that would have such a thing; and the other would say, It is from such a party that would have such a thing; but few would answer it as the apostle doth here. Oh it is from the lusts that are in our hearts; wars and fightings between nations and in commonwealths are from the lusts of men's hearts. And wars in the church, and divisions there, are from the lusts in men's hearts; wars and divisions in cities, divisions in families, and contentions in men's own spirits, they are all from the lusts of our hearts. Saul, before he had defiled himself so grossly, as after he did, was of a very quiet and peaceable disposition; but when he came to be corrupt, and had a defiled conscience and heart, oh then he was of a cruel, rugged, and very perverse spirit. Those that keep themselves pure, whose consciences and hearts are clean, they are peaceable, and fit to make peace with others; but corrupt hearts, they make all the stir among us, and therefore so much division, so much corruption, so much impurity in a family, in a particular person. So far as thou art contentious and troublesome in the place where thou art, there is so much impurity in thy spirit. Wicked men, that are full of sin, cannot but be full of trouble. In Isa. lvii. 20, 21, 'But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' The wicked are troublesome; they are troublesome wheresoever they live. In Gal. v. 20, you find what the fruits of the flesh are, 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest; first he speaks of uncleanness, then in ver. 20, 'Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.' These are the fruits of the flesh. Mark how many words there are that tend almost to the same thing: 'hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders.' All comes from the fruit of the flesh. Blessed, then, are the pure in heart, for then, as they shall see

God, so they will be peacemakers. Although ordinarily men lay all the trouble upon such as desire to walk most conscientiously, that desire to keep their hearts and ways most clean. Indeed, men who can yield to anything this way or that way, they are accounted quiet men; but men that must walk according to the rule that God hath appointed, so far as they can see light for, and whatsoever becomes of their private interests or private peace, dare not go contrary to the rule, dare not go one step in the dark, these are accounted the troublers of Israel. And who were they in former times that were accounted the troublers of the state, but those that were called Puritans? but Christ accounts them the best for making peace. The pure in heart first, and then peacemakers. Yea, it was Jeremiah's lot, chap. xv. 10, to be accounted a troublesome man: 'Wee is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth.' Jeremiah a man of strife and contention to the whole earth! And yet he pleads his innocency, he walked with a pure conscience before them all; and yet they all did account of Jeremiah as a man of strife and contention to the whole world. This is the perverse judgment of wicked men. It was just so in the primitive times, they were accounted the great troublers of states. Paul, you know, was cried out of 'as a man that turned the world upside down.' And whatsoever trouble they had, presently they cried out of the Christians, that they were the cause of it. And what kind of men now are cried out of, as causes of trouble and disturbance? You know, and God knows, that the Lord will clear those men one day for walking according to the rule that Christ would have them, and keeping themselves from uncleanness and impurity. They are they who bear up the world; and let the world think what they will of those that walk most closely and strictly with God, according to the rule of his word, yet these are the peacemakers and the sons of God. But thus much for the order of this beatitude, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' We come to the beatitude itself, to the subjects who are blessed, and to the blessedness, what it is that is here promised to them.

'The peacemakers.'

The word that is translated 'peacemakers,' I find it generally understood by interpreters, those that either keep peace or make peace; any that are furtherances of peace any way, for the preserving of it where it is, or the procuring of it where it is not. It is a blessed thing to have a peaceable heart one's-self, to keep peace within one's own soul, that is blessed. It is blessed to be of a peaceable disposition towards all with whom we live. A froward, a perverse disposition, it is a cursed disposition; but a peaceable, quiet, and gentle disposition, it is a blessed disposition.

But further, it is more blessed for to be a means to procure peace in the places where we live, among those with whom we converse; and if ever we had cause to account it a blessed thing to be a peacemaker, then at this day: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

First, Those that labour to make peace between man and God.

And, secondly, Those that do labour to make peace between man and man.

Blessed are those that labour to make peace between man and God. They are the words of Christ, and therefore we must understand them in the most spiritual sense; we must not exclude that, however. Blessed are those who, having found the blessedness of peace themselves, and so having peace with God, they are very desirous to make peace between other men and God too; they finding the sweetness in their own hearts of their peace with God, their earnest desires are, Oh that they could bring others to be at peace with God too. When the husband hath had the work of God in purifying his heart by faith, and hath found the sweetness of peace with God; Oh that I could be a means to make peace between the soul of my wife and God too; and so the wife that hath made her peace with God, having her heart purified by faith, and feels the sweetness of it; Oh, now that I could do anything in the world, any way, with prayers and tears, and walking convincingly before my husband, to work his heart to God, that there may be peace between God and his soul likewise; so one brother having his heart purified by faith, and having the sweetness of peace with God; Oh that I could but do anything before I die to further this great work of peace between the soul of my brother and God. Oh the grace of God to my soul, in bringing it to be at peace with him; and oh that I could be any way instrumental for the furtherance of the work of the grace of God on the soul of my brother; and so one kinsman to another, and one neighbour to another. Certainly those that ever knew what the peace of God meant, will endeavour what possibly they can to make peace between their brethren and God, by telling of them what their condition was. There was a time that I went on in a wretched way, as you are now going on in. I was an enemy to God; there was nothing in my heart but enmity against God. Oh, I would not for ten thousand worlds be one hour in that condition that I was once in, for fear I should die in it, and so be eternally an enemy to God. Oh that you would consider your ways! The way that you go on in, it is certainly a way of enmity against the blessed and eternal God. Oh, consider what God hath revealed in his word concerning the glorious work of reconciliation of sinners to himself. Thus we should be pleading one with another, and praying one for another, and la-

bouring to instruct one another to be at peace with God. Oh, blessed is that man or woman that hath in a gracious way laboured to draw any to be at peace with God, and whom God hath blessed in these endeavours. Hath God brought thy heart to be at peace with him, and to desire that others might be brought in to love the ways of God? Oh blessed, that ever thou wert born to be an instrument of so great a good, if it be but to bring in one soul to be at peace with God, so that God hath one enemy in the world less through thy means and endeavours. Thou mayest bless God, I say, that ever thou hadst a being, that canst have this comfort to thy soul: though I am a poor wretch myself, and was a long time an enemy to God, yet the Lord did not only bring my soul to be at peace with him, but made me an instrument to bring others to be at peace with him likewise, so that the Lord hath one enemy less in the world through my endeavours. Oh, it is that that would rejoice thy soul! Blessed art thou that hast a hand in this work, for it is the greatest work that ever took up the heart of God from all eternity. Of all the works that ever were in the heart of God from eternity, the work of reconciling souls to himself was the greatest work of all; and of all the things that God expects glory from unto all eternity, the work of reconciling souls to himself is the thing that God makes account to have the greatest glory from, that ever he shall have to all eternity. Now then, if God shall employ thee to be instrumental in so great a work as this is, blessed art thou that ever thou didst live in the world. That man is not blessed that is great in the world, or hath fine clothes, but that is the man that is a blessed man, that the Lord makes instrumental for the furtherance of that work: for that, above all things, his heart is most in. Besides, we might speak of the great evils that thou deliverest the soul of thy brother from, and the great good that thou bringest to the soul of thy brother, and the great blessing that thy brother's soul does bless thee withal, if thou beest an instrument to make peace between him and God. Oh, those that are instrumental this way have the blessing of such as they have been instrumental of good unto. They bless God that ever they saw such a one's face. Oh, the blessing of God be upon such a man or woman! I was going on in the ways of eternal death, and partly through the holy carriage of such a one I was convinced, and partly through their holy persuasions I was brought to the word, and there I met with those things that wrought upon my heart, that I would not have been without for ten thousand worlds. Oh, the blessing of God be upon the soul of such a man—of such a woman! Why, when such a one shall lie a-dying, going the way of all flesh, launching into the infinite ocean of eternity, he shall lie blessing God that ever

he knew thee; yea, and when he shall come to heaven, shall be there blessing God that ever he knew you. Is it not a blessed thing to labour to draw others to be at peace with God?

What a blessed work is the work of the ministry then! and the calling is a blessed calling. 'Oh, how beautiful are the feet of those that bring the glad tidings of peace!' So people should account it. And the first work that a minister hath to do when he comes to a place, is to say, Peace to that place. 'To us,' saith Paul, 'is committed the word of reconciliation;' that is our great embassy; this is the work that the Lord hath designed some men to. God may bless the endeavours of some private men to be peacemakers in this sense; but the work of the ministry is appointed by God. God hath set them apart to be his great ordinance for the reconciling the world to himself. Saith the Lord, There are a company of poor wretches that are now in ways of enmity against me, yet I have thoughts of peace towards them, and I send you among them for to carry the embassy of peace unto them, and I require and command you that you open the glad tidings of peace to them, and that you tell them how my heart is towards peace with them, and that you shew them the way how they may come to be reconciled to me, and that you do woe and labour with them with all your might, though it be to spend your lives with them. Yet if you can but labour to bring them to be at peace with me, it would be worth your lives, had you a thousand. This is the work that I require of you. Oh, it is a blessed and honourable work, and look upon it so! Look upon it as the great ordinance of God, appointed by God to make peace between God and souls that are in a way of enmity against him. And then indeed hath the word had its proper work upon a people, when it hath made peace. And oh how careful should ministers be in this, in this their work. What a cursed thing is it for ministers to be negligent in such a work as this is, when they have such a glorious end appointed by God. And if any of you have been brought in by the ministry of the word, and peace made between God and your souls through it, you are not only to bless God, but to bless the instruments of it. This is that the ministers of God may require as what is due to them; for it is promised here, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' All those whom the Lord hath pleased to work this good upon by their ministry, they should bless them. When you are alone in your closets, blessing God for peace made between God and you, you are bound in conscience to bless the instruments of this, to bless those ministers of God, and to pray for a blessing upon them; because the Lord made them instruments of so great a good unto you. And this certainly must needs be

an encouragement to any minister to be faithful and laborious, to spend their lives in labouring to reveal Christ to men's souls, when they know that if they do but gain any man's soul to be at peace with God, that soul will bless them, and bless them for ever, and even in the day of Jesus Christ they shall find the blessing. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' in that sense.

And if so, oh how blessed is that great peacemaker Jesus Christ, who is designed by the Father to make up peace between man and him. All the children of men being fallen from God in Adam, they are all in an estate of enmity against God; that is certain. And all the angels in heaven and men upon earth, all the creatures in heaven and earth, could not make peace between God and one sinful soul; it was too great a work for any creature. But now Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, the second person, he looks upon the wretched, miserable estate of the children of men, and saw that if they were left to themselves they were all undone, and would be eternal enemies to God, and God an eternal enemy to them. He now steps in between, and, through the appointment of the Father, he mediates between wretched man and God to make up peace. He stands, I say, as the great mediator of the second covenant. And his heart was so much in the work of making peace between man and God, as he was content to lay down his life to the end he might make peace: Col. i. 20, 'And, having made peace through the blood of his cross.' Mark, Jesus Christ's heart was so much in being a peacemaker between the world and God, as, though he knew it would cost him his dearest heart blood, saith Christ, It shall go. Yea, the Scripture tells us he was content to be a curse for man. Oh, do but consider, you children of men, what a distance there was between God and you, that Christ, God and man, must come to make peace between God and you: and he must shed his blood, he must be made a curse for the accomplishing of this great work of God. This, my brethren, is the great mystery of godliness; this is that that we should spend all our days in admiring in, in standing and wondering, and blessing our Saviour, the great peacemaker. Had it not been for him, we had all been eternally enemies to God. Oh, let our souls bless Jesus Christ; and the greater the curse was upon Christ in this work, the more let our souls bless Christ. It is the work that the angels and the saints shall be exercised in to all eternity, in saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and praise, and worship, and service be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore;' for he hath redeemed us by his blood, as in Rev. v. Those that ever knew what the blessing of peace with God means, they know how to bless God for Jesus Christ. And any

of you that sometimes will be blessing of God for outward peace, for plenty and comfort that you have in this world, I appeal to your consciences in this question, demanding of you, in the name of God, When did you spend time above in your closets in admiring at the glory of God in that great work of the mediation of Jesus Christ, in making peace between God and your souls? When was ever your hearts taken with that great work above all things in the world, and your spirits raised in admiring and worshipping of God and of Jesus Christ, that great peacemaker, blessing and magnifying and praising the name of God, and blessing Christ his Son, who was God blessed for ever, for this great work of his in making peace between your souls and God? It would be one good argument that Christ hath been a peacemaker for your souls, if you have had your hearts so affected. But if there be nothing in this work of Christ in making peace between man and God, but you only give it the hearing, and let the great mystery of godliness in the gospel pass lightly away; when you hear it, and your hearts never taken with it, it is much to be feared, nay, it may be concluded as a certain truth, that to this day yet peace is not made between your souls and God. What his blood may do, what the effects of it afterwards may be, we know not, but yet it hath not this gracious effect upon you. But now we come unto the second thing:

'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

Peacemakers between man and man, they are blessed. As for this point I confess I intended to speak but very little of it at this time, nor out of this Scripture; for in another place many sermons I have preached about the point of heart-divisions; and almost every head that is needful about this point there I handled—namely, the evil of divisions, the causes of them, and the means how to heal them; and therefore thought to have passed very briefly over this. But yet because many there are that either have not heard, or have not use of those things for the present, and because of the necessity of the point, I shall speak a little about peacemaking between man and man.

This work is a very delightful work to meddle in, in these times especially. To meddle with the point of peace between man and man, it is one of the difficultest arguments that any minister can speak of in such times as these; and there is scarce any one thing wherein a minister is more put to it, to shew the wisdom and the meekness and the spirit of Christ, than when he meddles with this argument at such a time as this is. Very difficult it is, because men's hearts are so impure, such filth and uncleanness is upon the spirits of men; and to make peace with them, how should one go about it? Difficult it is,

because there is no man almost in the world can be brought to judge himself as any cause of want of peace among others. If all the people in England were together, and you should go from one to another, and ask, What! are you any cause of the divisions that are in England? he would profess against it. Ask every man, and he would disavow it: God forbid that I should have any hand in breaches and divisions. One party casts it upon another, and the other casts it upon them again. All cry for peace, and many times even those that cry much for it are the great hindrances of it; yea, cry after it in such a manner as do very much hinder it when they are speaking about it. It is very difficult to meddle with this, because a man cannot tell how to come to the practice part of this; but he must intrench upon one side or other—he must bring some to yield something. It is impossible there should be any peace between any two that are fallen out, if there be no yielding on either side. The Spaniards have a proverb, that stone and mortar makes a wall, because one yields; but two hard things will not. Now, because it is so hard for any to yield to another, therefore it is hard for any to meddle with the point of peace; yea, it is more difficult now than ever, because we find all sorts of men that are the greatest means of division and contention, yet they will all plead the National Covenant, that was a covenant for union—they will all plead it for their parties, and for the fomenting and maintaining of disunion. It is just here as it falls out in the point of the sacrament, that is appointed by God to be the means of union in the churches, it is therefore called the communion. It is an ordinance for the union of the churches, and through man's corruption there is nothing that ever hath been occasion of so much disunion as the sacrament hath been. And so even our covenant, though certainly intended for union, yet through man's corruption, if heed be not taken, as it hath been made use of, so may be further, for as great breaches as can be. Now, to come as it were between parties that are at variance and division, oh, how should a man behave himself! Truly, thinking of it at first, I was almost discouraged to speak any word about it, because of the indisposition of men's hearts at this time for peace. The prophet Hosea saith, chap. vii. 7, that the people were hot as an oven. The meaning is this, that the people had their hearts so set upon that way and course which they were in, that whatever the prophet spake to them it was in vain; as if a man should throw a few sticks into an oven when it was red hot, they are devoured presently and consumed into ashes. As if the prophet should say, All my speech to them hath no more effect, and there appears no more of what I say to them, than there will appear of a little straw that is cast into a hot

oven. And truly, my brethren, are not men's hearts heated in their way of divisions, some in one way and some in another, and seem to be resolute, and even set on fire almost at this time, that what is said to them is as presently devoured and comes to nothing, as, I say, a little straw or stubble in a hot oven, and therefore like to be as unprofitable at such a time as this as anything, though nothing more needful? But though it may be so unprofitable, yet because there is so much blessedness in it, I shall address myself to speak a little. It is a blessed thing to be a peacemaker. Now, certainly, those that can carry it well shew that they have a gracious temper of heart, and therefore are blessed. It doth argue a very gracious and holy spiritual temper of heart to be a peacemaker between man and man, if it be done in a spiritual way, for spiritual ends. That man that would meddle in point of peace with others, he had need have all well between God and his own soul first, and had need be of a very peaceable disposition himself; for any one that is of a froward or turbulent disposition himself, if he should come to talk of peace and cry out of divisions, every one would be ready to fly in his face. He need have much self-denial, not at all to look at himself, at his own party any way in respect to himself, but to have pure aims; he need come with a pure heart, to have pure aims at God and his glory, and at public good; and then, I say, it is an evidence of much grace in the heart, and therefore he is blessed. He is a blessed man that carries this wisely and prudently and graciously.

And then blessed, because by this means he shall prevent abundance of evil. Oh the woeful evils that do proceed from jars and divisions, from national divisions, from sea divisions, church divisions, family divisions, personal divisions, divisions between neighbour and neighbour, and the like! I had thought to have spoken a few words to all of them. Oh the abundance of sin that is committed in the time of division! There were many great sins committed among the people of God in former times, but I am verily persuaded there was never, in any thirty years since the gospel was known in England, so much sins among godly people as there hath been these last three years; the people of God have more defiled themselves by sinful distempers in these last three years than ever they were defiled in any thirty since the gospel was known in England. As in a family, sometimes there is more sin committed in one hour, where there are brawls and contentions and strife, than in another family in a whole twelvemonth; yea, I verily believe sometimes in some persons, some one man put into a passionate fit, into a way of contending with others, doth sometimes commit more sin in one hour, when he is in a passionate fit, than at another time in a whole quarter of a year; he may

reckon that hour an hour that contracts more guiltiness than, I say, all the sins that he commits sometimes in a quarter of a year besides. I fear that many of you may find this by experience, as we read of Moses, when he came down from the mount he brake the two tables, when he was in a fit of anger; but that was holy anger, it was for God. Truly so it is; many men and women, in the fit of a sinful anger, breaks both the tables, all the ten commandments, in one fit. Oh there is abundance of evil, of sin, that is committed by divisions. The apostle James saith, that where there is strife and anger and debates 'there is every evil work,' James iii. 16. Oh, my brethren, this it is that makes the devil so foment our divisions, because he sees that there is so much sin committed. What railing and reviling, what hatred, what brawling, what sins in thought, plotting, contriving, counselling, and what sins in word, what sins in actions, are where there is strife and envy! nothing but labouring to mischief one another what possibly they can. The devil looks at the sin and aims at that. It is not so much the division that the devil so much cares for, as the sin that is committed by it. As sometimes I have made use of a similitude that Austin hath; saith he, 'When a fowler goes to catch fowl, he sets his net on the other side of the hedge, and then he takes stones and flings into the hedge.' Why, he doth not expect to kill the bird by his stones, but to make a disturbance, and to cause the bird to fly out, and hopes that he shall catch the bird in the net, that is on the other side of the hedge; that is that which he aims at. So, saith he, it is when the devil would make divisions and stirs, he tempts men, as it were, to throw stones one at another, and stirs up strife one against another, and makes a great deal of stir; but that the devil aims at is the net on the other side of the hedge—he sees that this will be the occasion of abundance of sin, there will be bitterness of spirit and wrath, and there will be wicked words and actions, and so he shall catch poor souls. When you are tempted to a fit of passion, know then the devil expects a great deal of sin that will follow. Now blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the means to prevent abundance of sin; and that is a most blessed thing. What blessed work can a man be more blessed in than to be a means to prevent sin; it is a blessed thing to prevent any one sin, but to be an instrument to prevent so much sin, that must needs be blessed.

'Blessed are the peacemakers,' for they are instruments of abundance of good likewise. All things flourish where there is peace; spiritual things flourish where there is peace; little things grow to a great height where there is peace. 'O blessed are the peacemakers,' they are the cause of much good. To shew both the evil of the want of it, and the good that is in peace,

either of these would be a large point; and I having done it elsewhere, shall not mention particulars now.

'Blessed are the peacemakers,' for they are instrumental for God in the work that God takes much delight in. Read but the Scripture; you will find there is no duty in all the book of God more urged, more backed with arguments and motives and persuasions—no duty hath stronger exhortations to it than peace. Read but the Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Romans, Corinthians; when you read them you shall find continually peace is the thing that the Holy Ghost doth most persuade men to. And Christ himself, who is the great peacemaker, he is tender of peace, not only between God and us, but between man and man. He glories in this title. Other great captains did use to glory in the places where they had wars, as Scipio Africanus, but Christ he takes his denomination from peace; he was typed out by Solomon, who was the prince of peace; and he came into the world in the time of peace. And the angels they sung a song of peace, 'Glory to God on high, peace on earth;' and his ministers were appointed to go and preach peace; and his kingdom it consists in righteousness and peace; and his blessing is a blessing of peace. And when he rose again he spake peace; and his legacy is a legacy of peace, 'My peace I leave with you.' And an apostolical benediction, it is 'grace and peace' still. So that by these things we may easily conclude that there is no one thing that God's heart is more upon than to see peace. Blessed then are the peacemakers in being so instrumental in such a thing, in which the Lord hath so much glory in.

Certainly they shall have the blessing likewise of many upon them. As when David had an unpeaceable disposition in his spirit towards Nabal, and he would do this and that against Nabal; when Abigail came, and through her wisdom, and the peaceableness of her spirit, did allay the heat of David's anger, and so brought David into a more quiet and peaceable disposition; why, presently David blessed God for Abigail, and blessed Abigail; 'Blessed be thou, and blessed be thy counsel,' saith David to her, I Sam. xxv. 33; for I intended to do thus and thus. And so if men have not very wicked and vile hearts, though when their corruption is stirred, then they will do thus and thus, and they will have their minds, and make men thus to yield thus unto them; and they have most bitter thoughts and desperate resolutions; but if it pleases God to send a son of peace to them, some that shall come with a quiet and peaceable spirit, and by persuasion, by laying scripture to them, shall be a means to appease their boiling spirits, to cool that boiling passionate heart of theirs, and so to allay those desperate resolutions of theirs, I say, if

they be not desperately wicked, they will see cause to bless God for this : well, blessed be God that sent such a man to me to prevent me, for I see I should

have done that that I should have repented of. 'Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.'

SERMON XXIX.

OR,

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MAKE PEACE BETWEEN MAN AND MAN.

'Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

It is a blessed thing to be an instrument of peace between man and man. I find the story of Moses, in Exod. ii. 30, wherein he doth engage himself in a quarrelsome business, but to the end that he might make peace, to be recorded by the Holy Ghost afterwards in the New Testament as a high and great commendation of Moses. 'And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together; and he said unto him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?' Why, now Moses he might have lived at the court, and had all the delights that possibly might be, why would he meddle with the Hebrews that were striving together? In Acts vii, we find there among the great commendations of Moses, this set forth; ver. 26, 'And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?' He would have set them at one again. The Holy Ghost forgets not this, that Moses would not content himself to live at the court, and have all kind of pleasure and delight there, but he would interest himself in the fallings-out of his brethren, so as if possibly he could to set them at one again. The Holy Ghost remembers this in after ages. Then somewhat is to be said about this of making and keeping peace between men and men. It is not, blessed are those that are at peace with sin, or seek to make peace with men's sins and corruptions, but peacemakers that make peace between brethren and brethren, neighbour and neighbour; for though we should labour to be at peace with all men as much as possibly we can, yet we must not so much as endeavour nor desire to be at peace with any sin. Though God were infinitely willing and desirous to reconcile the world to himself, yet he would never reconcile sin; God and sin can never be reconciled—God and the least sin cannot. All the angels in heaven and men upon earth can never reconcile God and sin;

yea, whatever Christ did, as it was not intended by him, so it could never reconcile God and sin together; but God would remain to be an eternal enemy to sin, and that is the glory of God. So when we are endeavouring to make peace, we must not think to make peace with men's corruptions, with men's sins; we must not so love peace as to swallow it wrapt up with the dirt of guiltiness and of sin, not so as to soothe and humour men's corruptions. Certainly there is no blessedness here, but a curse. But yet thus far, though we ought never to be at peace with men's sins, yet we may forbear men though sinful—we may forbear sinners; yea, and when we come to oppose their sins, we must oppose them only with those weapons that God hath appointed. The magistrate in his place, and the church in its place, must oppose sin. There may be a great deal of turbulency of spirit, more than God allows in men, in opposing men's distempers and corruptions; but that that we are now speaking of is peace between man and man. I shall therefore first labour to propound some general rules of peace between man and man. Secondly, Some more special rules in reference unto family peace. Thirdly, Some rules in reference unto neighbourly peace. And I confess I had some thoughts of rules about church peace, and commonwealth peace; but I shall tell you after why we shall not speak to that now.

First, then, Some rules in general for peace between man and man.

That is the first: That we should never use violence to any man, but where there is a necessity. If what we would do may be done by any means but by violence, we should rather try it. When we see such and such walk disorderly, otherwise than we would, they do wrong. First, We should study whether there may be any means to recall them before any violence be used; use that always as the last help. It is quite otherwise with most men and women. When any-