

but by 'kingdom of heaven' is often meant the ministry of the gospel, and that is one especial thing intended here, that the riches of the gospel, the state of

the gospel, the doctrine of the gospel, all the good of the gospel, doth belong to those that are poor in spirit.

SERMON IV.

OR,

PROMISES TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' &c.—MAT. V. 3.

I SHALL now briefly give you a few promises that are made in Scripture to such as are God's poor, and then proceed to the blessedness that Christ pronounces of them—namely, that 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now for the promises to those that are poor.

First, God thinks upon these. It may be thy friends think not of thee. Thou art a poor man or woman, and yet godly; thou hast rich friends that perhaps have their full dishes and want nothing, but have all coming in according to their hearts' desires, and they think not of thee: ay, but if you be one of God's poor, as hath been described, God thinks of you, P's. xl. 17.

Secondly, The Lord looks towards the poor as an object that he takes content in; he doth not only think of you, but 'his eye is upon you.' Poor men when they pass by others, they scarce have a look from them, but God's eye is continually upon them for good; so you have it in Isa. lxvi. 2, 'He looks to the contrite and poor.'

Thirdly, He so looks as he would not have his dreadfulness to daunt thy heart; so in Isa. xlv. he begins it thus: 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; he raises up his glory to shew what a God he is. Alas! now may a poor soul say, oh, how glorious is God! his glory will daunt my heart. How shall I be able to stand before him! Nay, though heaven be his throne, and earth be his footstool, yet 'he will look to him that is of a poor spirit, and that trembles at his word.' As if he should say, Let no poor soul be daunted with my glory, for it is for their good, and no hurt at all to them.

The fourth is this: The Lord he prepares his good-

ness for the poor, Ps. lxxviii. 10. Perhaps thou hast not mercy for the present as thou desirest; but God is preparing all this while mercy for thee, and preparing thee for mercy.

Fifthly, The Lord hears the poor. It may be poor people may petition to others and they cannot be heard, but if the rich petition they can be heard; but the Lord he hears the poor. You have many scriptures for that, Ps. lxix. 33; and we find the psalmist makes it a rise of his prayer, because he is so poor and needy, P's. cix. 22—'For I am poor and needy'—that God should hear him the rather; and so P's. lxxvii. the rise of his petition is, that God should hear him because he is so poor.

Sixthly, The Lord will not have the expectations of the poor to be frustrated. Poor men may wait and wait long enough, and yet may fail at the last. But now if thou heest one of this poor spirit, the Lord will not have thy expectation to be frustrated, but there shall come good of it at last, Ps. ix. 18.

Seventhly, The Lord will not forget the poor, Ps. ix. 12. Others may forget them, it may be, even when they have granted their petitions; but the Lord will not forget the poor. Many such kind of promises doth the Lord make to those that are of poor spirits. But what do we speak to particular promises? we have one in the text instead of all, 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' This hath all promises joined together in one. Now from the words before, we come to search into the bowels of them; from that that doth appear at present view, you have these three or four notes: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Obscrv. 1. The first is this, That God loves to honour those that are willing to debase themselves.

God doth not say here, Blessed are the poor, for their sins are pardoned; Blessed are the poor, for the promises of the gospel belong to them; but 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' It is a kingdom that is theirs. God puts an honour upon the poor. That which seems to be the most contrary, that Christ doth assume. If one that is poor should come to have such a promise made him, Well, you are poor, you shall be provided for, you shall never want as long as you live; that were well. But that is not all, they shall have a kingdom: so Christ saith himself to poor broken hearts that think themselves not worthy of the least crumb of bread, 'theirs is the kingdom.' It is no less than a kingdom that is prepared for them; and therefore do not have such a poor spirit as to have low designs; though thou beest poor in respect of thyself, yet lift up thy heart, and aim at no less than a kingdom. Many poor people would think they should be happy men and women if they might have a hundred pound a year land given them. But those that are poor in spirit, as here is spoken of, it is not a hundred pound land a year, nor the possession of the world, but it is no less than the kingdom, and the kingdom of heaven, that will satisfy their souls. That is the first note; the Lord loves to put honour upon those that are willing to debase themselves. I find likewise other scriptures that are suitable: Luke xxii. 28, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom; ye are content to endure in my cause, and to suffer the loss of all, and therefore have I appointed a kingdom unto you. But I intend not to stand upon these notes; that we only observe by way of connexion.

Observ. 2. That blessedness doth not consist in any worldly thing: 'Blessed are the poor.' Why? because they shall have the riches of the world, they shall be brought into honour, they shall be brought to have preferment in the world? no, but 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' There is nothing in this world can make them blessed; it is the kingdom of heaven that must make them blessed. If you would be happy, you must look beyond the world. Thou dost not know what the true happiness of an immortal soul is capable of, if thou dost expect it here in this world.

Observ. 3. In that it is said in the present tense, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. From whence the note is this, that the saints of God live not only upon comforts that they shall have hereafter, upon the assurance of what they shall have, but upon present comforts. They have enough for the present to uphold their hearts, in all their poor and mean condition in which they are in respect of the world. You will say, Indeed for good people that are mean in the world, whatsoever they suffer, God will reward

them hereafter. Ay, but, poor souls, what have they to comfort themselves withal for the present? Ye, saith Christ, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Take all together now, and thou hast enough not only to uphold thy soul in this thy poor condition, but to comfort it, and to make the angels in heaven to look upon thee as a blessed creature. It is said of the pure in heart that they shall see God; but the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And the reason why Christ puts it in the present tense is, because he saw that those that were poor in spirit had need of present comfort.

Observ. 4. That heaven is now to the saints. There is comfort indeed! Ay, but heaven they must look for afterwards. No, they shall have it now; heaven shall come down to them before they go up to heaven. In Luke xvii. 21 you have a notable scripture for that: 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' It is within the saints now for the present. This that I now say may seem to be a paradox, yet it is a certain truth; no soul shall ever go to heaven that hath not heaven first come down to it. There is certainly no man or woman upon the earth shall ever go to heaven, but such as hath heaven come down to them. There is none shall ever be glorified among saints and angels in heaven, but such as it may be said of them, that the kingdom of heaven is within them.

You will say, What is that? Why, that I shall further open in coming to the main promise, 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now the great thing that we are to do, it is in these two particulars:—

First, To open to you what is the meaning of this; what doth Christ mean by the kingdom of heaven.

And then, secondly, To apply the kingdom of heaven to such as are poor in spirit. I shall not speak of it, perhaps, as some of you may think, to open the glory of God in the general, but only so far as it is applicable to the poor in spirit. Christ means some special thing here, that is more peculiarly applicable to the poor in spirit—viz., three sorts of poor who are to have the treasury of comfort in the kingdom of heaven, which will appear further, both in the opening of the kingdom of heaven, what it is, and then the application of it unto these three sorts of poor people.

For the first then, The kingdom of heaven.

By the kingdom of heaven is understood not, firstly, the glory of the saints that they shall have to all eternity, but the state of the Messiah, that is, the king of heaven; the state, I say, of the Messiah after his coming into the world, and all the good things that he brings with him. That is the kingdom of heaven which is here meant. There is the kingdom of God's power whereby he rules over the world; and then there is the kingdom that he hath given to his Son the Mediator. It is the second kingdom that is

here meant. When God had made this world, he himself reigned over it, and was the king of it. But the world that he made was spoiled with sin, and so God could not have that glory from the world that he made it for. Therefore, the Lord he was pleased to erect a new world, another spiritual, heavenly world, to glorify himself in in another manner, more spiritual and heavenly than in the former world; and he makes his Son to be the king of that spiritual world—that new world which the Scripture speaks of when it saith, ‘All old things are done away, and all things are become new’—which new world is begun in the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, and so carried on till it comes to eternal glory. Jesus Christ he is the king of that world. As for the other, it is spoiled, and must come to confusion. Now before Christ’s coming, actually in taking flesh upon him, there were some rays of his glory that did shine unto the forefathers; but in comparison of what was to be done after the Messiah came, this kingdom was not set up. For the administration of things in the times of the law, it is not called the kingdom of heaven. The Jews they waited for the kingdom of the Messiah; and the kingdom of the Messiah that they waited for, it is this kingdom of heaven that is here spoken of in this text. When Christ was near coming into the world, this great king he sends his harbinger before—John the Baptist—to proclaim that he was coming, and that there was a new kingdom to come into the world. Therefore, saith John, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ He did not mean thereby, Repent, repent because you must go to heaven, go and be glorified with God in heaven; but as if he should say, Oh, now is the kingdom of the Messiah at hand. Within a few months Jesus Christ is coming, and will appear to be king, and the gospel will be made more clear to you; within a small time the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up. Repent, therefore, and turn from your wickedness, that you may have the benefit of the kingdom of the Messiah when it comes to be set up. And it is said, therefore, that ‘from the time of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence.’ It may appear then that the kingdom of heaven was in the time of John the Baptist. The meaning of it was this, that John Baptist being the harbinger of this kingdom, when people did but hear that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, their hearts were set on fire after it, and there was a kind of holy violence to hear down all kind of difficulty and opposition. They were resolved with themselves, whatsoever becomes of us, we will endeavour to the uttermost, at least that we might have our part in the good things of the kingdom of the Messiah; it suffered violence for that time. John Baptist did but speak a little of that kingdom though not set up, yet the

hearts of the people were set on fire after it. O Lord, where are our hearts then, when a minister of the gospel shall not only say that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, but it is come, and this king hath come and ascended and triumphed in heaven, and set at the right hand of the Father, and governs and rules his church! Now, when we call upon men, ‘Repent, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is come,’ it doth not suffer violence. But it is a blessed thing when it can be said, that since the time of such a minister, even heaven hath suffered violence. Whereas the hearts of people were loose before, and they minded nothing but the world, and gathering a little together, and that they might eat and drink and sport, that is all they minded; but since they came to hear of the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, this kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. This kingdom of heaven it is therefore the state of the gospel. And in this sense I take it that that is meant, when they brought little children to Christ: saith Christ, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me, for to them belongs the kingdom of heaven.’ He doth not mean that some of them shall go to heaven; but thus, as if Christ should say, In the times of the law, I there did not only take believers, but their seed, to have the privileges of that state under that administration, of the good things that were in the law. Therefore do not now think that when I am come to set up another kingdom, that I will take believers now and reject their seed. No! ‘Suffer them to come unto me, for unto them belongs the kingdom of heaven;’ and they are members of this kingdom that I am now setting up, as well as they were members of the Jewish church, and had the benefit of that administration: so shall they be members and partakers of the state that now I am setting up, together with the privileges of it; and therefore suffer them to come to me; I will own them to be such to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven; and therefore let them not be excluded any more from this state of the gospel than they were before excluded from the state of the law, and the good things therein. That is the meaning of that text, and a special scripture for the encouraging of believing parents in respect of their children, and the bringing of them to that ordinance of baptism.

Sometimes this kingdom of heaven is taken for some particular thing in the state of the gospel, as for the preaching of the gospel it is called the kingdom of heaven: as the kingdom of heaven is like a man going out to sow his seed, that is, this administration of the gospel in the preaching of it is like a man that sows his seed, and some fell upon the highway, &c. The preaching of the gospel, that is one thing in the kingdom of heaven that hath the name of the whole. And sometimes it is taken for the

work and efficacy of the gospel in the heart of a man: as 'the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed;' what is that? That is the work of the gospel that is now preached in the state of the Messiah; it hath that effect upon the heart, as a grain of mustard-seed. Though it be little at the first, yet it grows up to a mighty tree; this is the substance of this kingdom of heaven, it is the state of the Messiah. So, then, the meaning of Christ is this: Blessed are the poor in spirit; you that are thus poor, oh, blessed are you; for look, what good or benefits are come by the Messiah's coming into the world—look, what blessedness there is in the state of the Messiah, that belongs to you, you shall certainly have that blessedness.

Again, Sometimes the kingdom of heaven is taken for the church, and the privileges thereof, as, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and that is one great part indeed of the kingdom of heaven, the privileges of the Christian church. The privileges and administrations and ordinances that there are in the Christian church are a great blessing of the kingdom of heaven, and you shall have all these, you that are poor in spirit.

Why is it called the kingdom of heaven?

First, It is called the kingdom of heaven because Christ is from heaven, who is the king thereof.

Secondly, In distinction and opposition from or unto the kingdoms of the world. It is not of this world, saith Christ.

Thirdly, Because that Christ his seat is now at the present in heaven.

Fourthly, Because that the way of his government is spiritual and heavenly, not in an outward way. And then,

Fifthly, Because it will certainly bring both soul and body to heaven at last. Therefore the whole administration of the Messiah in his way and government is called the kingdom of heaven.

Christ is the king, and the blessing of this it would be very large to open in the particulars; there is infinite blessedness in this kingdom of heaven.

For, first, It is Christ the Mediator that gives the laws. If thou beest brought under the state of the gospel to be a subject of Christ by being a believer, I say, Christ he gives thee thy laws; now thou hast them from the hand of a mediator. The Jews had their laws—the ten commandments—from the hand of a mediator, from Moses. But thou hast the law for the guiding and ordering of thee from the hand of Jesus Christ. It is true, the same thing that Moses did require men then, was that that Jesus Christ gave to them, and Moses likewise he was a kind of type of Christ even in that; but thou hast them more fully from the hand of a mediator, from the hand of Christ,—the law,—for the guiding and ordering of thy

life. And that is a great dispute about the law now, which truly hath little in it to edification,—viz., whether we have our law now from Moses or from Christ; and so many that speak against the law, when it comes to a dispute, the uttermost that they can give is this, that we are delivered from the law as it was given by Moses. Why, what is that to purpose, if we be bound to the same thing that Moses did command, and by as strong bonds as those were that lived in the time of the law? What great matter whether we have it from Moses or no? We have it, and are bound to it by as strong bonds if it comes from the hands of Christ. And we may satisfy ourselves enough in this, for we have the laws that are the rules of justice and equity, that are moral, we have them in this kingdom of heaven. Indeed, we have them given in another way in the hand of this mediator, with more strictness, with more spiritualness and enlargement rather. For this our king tells us afterwards in this chapter, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; he comes to open it; saith he, 'Ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Christ expounds the law, and seems to put it in a higher pitch than the Jews had. There is a great deal of comfort now I confess in that, that thou hast thy law now from Jesus Christ. And in this, indeed, thou mayst have this comfort, having thy law from him, that he will not be so exact as to require all forfeitures from the breach of the law, as was required of the Jews. In the administration of Moses there was such and such forfeitures upon breach of the law; but God is pleased to manifest more grace now, so that he doth not now stand so exactly upon breaches as to pronounce a curse upon every one that doth offend in that way. Moses delivered his law that the people should look upon themselves as accursed if so be that they did offend in any part of it. It is true, there was something of Christ revealed to help believers indeed, but for the most part it was little known, so as for the generality of the people they looked upon themselves, or should do so, as accursed, if they did break any part of the law.

But in this kingdom of heaven, that is a blessedness that thou hast a law from him that loves thee more than his life; he was willing to lay down his life for thee that gives thee thy law. Now when one hath a law from one that we know loves him dearly, it is comfortable. And he is the judge of the law, and he is to take all the forfeitures of the law that loves me dearly, even more than his own life; why, this is a great comfort.

The second thing in the blessedness of this king-

dom of heaven is this, That Jesus Christ he now rules in the hearts of his saints, by his word and Spirit, a great deal more fully than he did in the times of the law, or in any way can be conceived. It is true, there was a general work of God upon the hearts of heathens, in those moral virtues of theirs, but there was not a ruling in their hearts by the sceptre and Spirit of Jesus Christ the Mediator; and though believers in the time of the law had the sanctifying spirit—some of them—in some high degree, yet generally it was very poor and low in the hearts of believers in the times of the Messiah. The Spirit of God is shed abroad in this his kingdom with more fulness, with more clearness, with more power, with more excellency abundantly, and it was reserved for the coming of this king the Messiah to set up that spiritual government of his in the hearts of his people, which is a thing that we little understand. We think there is such a duty required of us, and we fall upon it; ay, but we do not look upon Jesus Christ swaying his sceptre in our hearts for the enabling of us to do what he requires of us in his word. And then,

Thirdly, All transactions between God and them are in this kingdom, and not to go out of this kingdom. By that I mean this: when thou hast offended God at any time, and God hath anything to say to thee for thine offence, thou shalt not come to have this business of thine tried in the court of exact justice. No; it must not go out of this kingdom, but it must all be within the kingdom of the Messiah. As this is the privilege of one that lives in one kingdom, he cannot be called to another kingdom to answer for his fault. If he were in another kingdom he might die for it; but here the laws do help him more, and that is a comfort to him. So now, wert thou in the kingdom of God's power, as he is Creator of heaven and earth, and so rules the world, certainly any offence of thine would be eternal death to thee; and it is so with all those men and women that are, I say, only under the kingdom of God's power—that is, they are God's creatures, and God is their Creator, and so they have to deal with God as under the kingdom of his power; if they offend as creatures, God in that kingdom deals in a way of exact justice, so as to punish with death upon every offence. But now a believer brought into another kingdom, the kingdom of the Messiah, there he comes to have other privileges; so that when a believer offends he doth not go to answer in that court of his—to wit, the kingdom of his power—but he is to answer before the court of Jesus Christ, and Christ is to be the judge, and Christ he is to deal with them in that administration of his that he hath received from the Father, and so comes a believer to stand with comfort before God, notwithstanding all his offences

and weaknesses, for the transaction is between God and him within this kingdom, and not without it. Oh, this is a great comfort for one that is poor in spirit: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The kingdom of heaven, of the gospel, it is theirs, and this is the blessedness that they have by this kingdom of the gospel, that, I say, all the transactions between God and them are in this kingdom. So likewise all God's dealings with them every way it is through a Messiah, and all that they tender up to God it is through the Messiah, so as indeed they have nothing, as I may so speak, to do in their reference to God, but only through this their king; their king doth undertake all business between God and them. Thou that art brought to this kingdom, he that is thy king, the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, hath undertaken all things that concern thee in thy reference to God. Therefore, 'Blessed art thou, for thine is the kingdom of heaven.'

So that all the mercies that come from God, they came from God through Christ to thee; by the means of this king he brings them, and it is through his right that thou hast them. As now, when there is anything to do between two kingdoms, why, the transactions are between the two kings; every private man doth not meddle in transacting of business between kingdoms. So I may say there are, as it were, two kingdoms—the kingdom of God as he is a Creator, and then the kingdom of the Messiah. Now all those things that we are to receive from the kingdom of God's power as Creator, Jesus Christ he deals with God for them, and we come to receive them all through the right of this our king's all-mercy. And if there be any afflictions comes, if we have offended the Father, and sin against the work of creation, and so have deserved evil, God as Creator doth not take believers so as to bring afflictions upon them, but he gives them up to Christ; it is Christ thy king that doth correct him; and the afflictions being within this kingdom, they are of another nature than the evils that are inflicted upon those that are under the kingdom of God's power. Now the evils that are inflicted upon such for their sin, they come from revenging wrath; but the evils that are inflicted upon those that are brought into this kingdom, they are inflicted upon them by Christ the mediator, and so come to them in another way, so that there is abundance of blessedness in being within this kingdom.

Thirdly, and then further, From hence thou hast protection. Though thou beest poor and mean in thyself, thou hast Jesus Christ the Son of God that undertakes to protect thee, to deliver thee from evil, and to supply thee in all thy wants; that is the work of a king. And those that are subjects in a kingdom,

they have a great deal of benefit in the protection of the governor of that kingdom; and for any man to be in a kingdom and to be denied the protection, is a great misery. Now there are none in the kingdom of Christ that Christ will deny the benefit of protection, but protects them all, and provides for all within his kingdom. Indeed, kings of the earth may leave the protection of their subjects, and if they should deny protection to their subjects, there is some other help for them to protect themselves some other way; but there is no protection to the saints but only by this their king.

Fourthly, And all provisions necessary. A king doth not take cognisance of every family; but Christ doth take cognisance to provide for every particular soul.

Fifthly, In this kingdom Christ undertakes to subdue all the enemies that are against thy spiritual and eternal good. Christ is thy king, and either he must lose his power or faithfulness, either of which he will not do; therefore he must subdue thy enemies: he will subdue sin, and death, and the devil, yea, and all the enemies of the church shall at length be subdued.

Sixthly, He, as a king, gives ordinances and gifts and administrations. All the ordinances, gifts, and administrations of the church they are given by Jesus Christ as the king of it, and thou that art poor in spirit thou hast right to them. It is not such a one as hath such a high degree of grace that hath right to the ordinances, but where there is any that are but sensible of their poverty, thou hast right to all ordinances upon that. But though there be right to them, yet you must be exercised in them, in a way suitable to the ordinances. All the gifts of the saints are thine, and all administrations are thine; thou hast the benefit of them all in this kingdom.

Seventhly, further, All the world is brought into subjection to this kingdom. The kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of power, whereby the Lord doth rule the created world, and so by providence is continued, all this is in order to this kingdom of the Messiah. Certainly there is a great deal in this, for one to know that all the administrations of God in the ordering of heaven and earth, it is for the furtherance of the kingdom of the Messiah, and of the spiritual good of all those that are within this kingdom. 'Blessed therefore art thou, for thine is the kingdom of heaven.'

Eighthly and lastly, For this will bring thee at length to reign with Christ. Thou dost in some degree reign with Christ already; all the subjects of Christ's kingdom are made kings and priests to God, and they must be in a further glorious manner made to reign with Christ: so you have it in Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my

throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne.' It is a text that hath a great deal of difficulty in it; but here clearly you see there are two thrones that Christ mentions—his Father's and his own. Now, saith Christ, 'I overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne,' so that Christ doth sit with the Father, and rules altogether with his Father. But, saith Christ, 'I will give you to sit down upon my throne, as I sit upon my Father's.' There is a throne that is more particularly the throne of Jesus Christ, and all the saints shall sit with Jesus Christ thereupon. Now for this throne: It is that that we have mentioned in divers other scriptures. In Mat. xiv. and Luke xxii. Christ tells his disciples that had endured with him in his temptations, 'That they should sit with him and judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and they should eat and drink with him in his kingdom when he did come.' Now these scriptures seem to hold out some special and glorious condition that the saints must have at length before they come to that full possession of that glory that shall be in the highest heavens. They shall sit upon the Lord Christ's throne, judging. Surely in the highest heavens there is no judging throne. But there is a time of judging the wicked and the ungodly; and the saints shall reign with Christ in a glorious manner, and at length they shall be brought to heaven itself, to the possession of all that glory that Christ hath purchased by his blood. And therefore, though now for the present you deny yourselves so much, as to be willing to suffer poverty, to suffer the hardship of poverty, the contempt of poverty, the trouble that there is in a poor estate, it is in my cause that you are willing to be poor. It may be you could get riches in the world as much as other men, but be content to be in a low condition for the things of this world; be content to be mean, to trust me; for there is a kingdom for you—the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom seems to be poor now. As you are poor in spirit, so this kingdom seems to be a poor contemptible thing; the glory of it, it is spiritual, and only can be seen with a spiritual eye. It cannot be seen with a carnal eye, but yet you who are mine, and have received my Spirit, you can understand the excellency of this kingdom, and the many privileges that are in this kingdom; and therefore do you labour quietly to bear your low condition, and though you be low in parts, yet go on; though you have many weaknesses in you, yet still comfort yourselves in this, for you are those that sit with the Messiah, and the good of the gospel is yours, and the glorious kingdom that both Father, Son, and Spirit doth intend to raise up to a mighty height. It is begun for the present in your souls, and you shall certainly come to the accomplishment of it in the fulness of all the glory of it. This kingdom Christ

speaks of in Dan. vii. 24, and there calls it the kingdom of the saints that shall prevail in the world. Certainly there is such a kingdom of Christ as will prevail in the world, let men oppose it what they can. The kings of the earth they rage, and the heathens they imagine but vain things, for the Lord will set his king upon his holy hill, and the saints that are in this kingdom of Christ they shall prevail in the world at last. This kingdom must certainly go on. My brethren, we read in Scripture of the good tidings of the kingdom. These few things that I have spoken of are some of the good tidings of the kingdom; and in Acts i. 30, when Christ was risen again, we find that the great things that Christ did, it was to tell his disciples of the good things of this kingdom of heaven. You know Christ after his resurrection did continue with his disciples forty days. Now you will say, What did Christ do in those forty days? We read of many things that Christ did before his death, but what have we of what he did in those forty days? The Scripture tells you that he did speak to them about the kingdom of heaven. Christ then did discourse about this point that I am now speaking of, telling of them what a blessed and glorious kingdom of the Messias they were to come to; and though they were like to be poor in the world and despised, and be as nobody, yet they were members of that kingdom, and had the privileges of it, and Christ would make them instrumental for the furtherance of that glorious kingdom, and so told them what belongs to the kingdom, the ordinances of the kingdom, the laws of it, and the privileges of it; and therefore we find it that the disciples before the

resurrection of Christ, and the shedding abroad of the Spirit, they dreamed of a mere earthly kingdom—When wilt thou restore the kingdom to Israel?—but when Christ had told them of this kingdom, and the Spirit was shed abroad in their hearts, they never minded an earthly kingdom more. No: they had done with that, now they came to understand what was the meaning of the kingdom of the Messias that Christ did preach unto them in the forty days that he was with them before his ascension. Now these are some brief things that I have endeavoured to present unto you about this kingdom of heaven that here is said to be the portion of those that are poor in spirit. You will say, Oh, these are blessed things indeed! But for the applying of them, that is the thing we have now to do; only at present remember what hath been said. And now know what the meaning of that scripture is, 'First seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' I have here briefly set out a little of the glory of the kingdom of heaven, though all this while I have not spoken of the felicity of the saints after the day of judgment, but what shall be between this and their going up to heaven. You see enough to set your hearts on work, in the first place to seek the kingdom of heaven. Oh, you that have sought after the world, and have thought yourselves blessed if you might live bravely and have a little coming in, now know that there is a kingdom concerns you, and, for aught we know, every soul in this place, and therefore above all things seek after that kingdom, that you may have your portion in it.