

SERMON V.

OR,

COMFORT TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

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

We are, as you may remember, upon the first blessedness here that is attributed to the poor in spirit. The subject of this blessedness we have spoken to at large; who those poor in Scripture are, and, in general, that they are blessed.

But we came the last day to make entrance into the blessedness that Christ pronounces upon them: 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' There were divers observations taken notice of from the connexion: 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' He doth not say, Blessed are the poor, for God will be merciful unto them, but 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven'—a suitable blessing unto that grace that is most eminent in them—that poverty of spirit. Therefore Christ would raise them up with the glory of a kingdom: 'theirs is the kingdom.' But it is no kingdom but the kingdom of heaven. There we shewed that it is not anything of the world that can make us blessed, but it must be somewhat of the kingdom of heaven. And that is observable, he doth not say, theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven, as he saith of others: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' He doth not say, Blessed are the poor, for they shall have the kingdom of heaven, but 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Poor people cannot stay, they have present need; saith Christ, I will not only promise you what you shall have when you die, but you shall have a kingdom now, for the present. 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

We came to the opening of this kingdom of heaven—what it is—and shewed you the several acceptations of the words, 'the kingdom,'—what it is taken for in Scripture. But this is that that was conceived to be the scope of Christ here, the kingdom of heaven—that is, the estate of the Messiah, the good things that the Messiah was to bring into the world in his administration; that is the kingdom of heaven that is here meant. I do not think that Christ did aim at this, that they should go to heaven when they die and be in glory there, as the only thing; that is indeed among other things that will follow. But

that which Christ aims at here, those that are poor in spirit they are blessed, for they are partakers for the present of the blessed estate of the people of God, that is, in the time of the Messiah's coming into the world. And therefore I do not intend here to speak about the glory of heaven; for anything that may be spoken about that will rather fall into the tenth verse. 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' But all that I shall speak of here is, the blessed estate of those that are poor in spirit—viz., the enjoyment of the good things in the state of the Messiah; and that is the meaning of that scripture, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' that is, repent and turn from your evil ways, and follow not your lusts as you were wont, but repent, for Jesus Christ is come into the world, that brings a great deal of glory with him. Because I would gladly finish at this time, I will pass by what we spake to, and come to what remains, and the rather because in that that doth remain we shall make use of somewhat that we spake to the last time, about the opening of the point of the kingdom of heaven. And that is this:—

What comfort there is in the consideration of the estate of the Messiah's coming into the world; what encouragement there is in this to those that are poor in spirit; and how they in particular come to be made happy—that is the scope of this sermon, and the scope of Christ. Now, then, for the opening of this I shall cast it into these three heads:—

First, What comfort those that are outwardly poor, poor people that have spirits suitable to their outward conditions, that are godly poor, whose spirits are willing to submit to God in that poor condition that they are in, what encouragement they can have from the state of the Messiah, from this kingdom of heaven. And I rather think that Christ intended this, because I find in Luke vi. that Christ doth oppose the rich in this world to poor in spirit. Therefore Christ intended certainly in this scripture to speak comfortable words to godly poor people.

And then, secondly, To those that are poor in parts, poor men and women that have mean gifts and abilities, and yet are godly, and their spirits are low in consideration of the poor parts that they have, that they cannot be useful for God as others are; to shew what good they have, or what comfort they may have from this kingdom of heaven.

Thirdly, Those that are poor in grace, that are sensible of their spiritual poverty, what blessedness they have from this kingdom of heaven.

First, then, Those that are outwardly poor, all godly poor people, I am speaking to them; and I verily think Christ speaks to them, and so would have his ministers to speak to them, such as are for the outward estate kept low and mean; and yet God gives them spirits to submit to his hand in that, and are willing to honour God as they are able in that poor condition without murmuring. Christ Jesus doth pronounce you blessed this day, and tells you that yours is the kingdom of heaven. As if he should say, Be not you discouraged because you are mean in this world, for your spirits being suitable to that condition God hath put you in, the Lord hath appointed a kingdom for you, even the kingdom of heaven. You cannot be great in this world, but you have very much in the kingdom of heaven.

Now for that there are these several things to be considered of in poor people, that are poor in this world, yet godly, Luke xiii. 29-31. See what Christ saith to them that are so outwardly poor, in reference to this kingdom: 'And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; neither be ye of doubtful minds.' What are the thoughts of poor people, even of poor godly people many times? 'What shall we eat, what shall we drink?' How shall I provide for my family? But be not of doubtful minds. Those that Christ spake to were in as hard a condition I believe as almost any godly poor are that hear me this day; yet be not troubled. Why should we not seek for what we should eat and drink, &c.? 'For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Look after the kingdom of Jesus Christ; if you have that, you have enough, and though you be a little little flock, yet it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. As if Christ should say, The consideration of this, that your Father hath appointed a kingdom for you, and doth give you a kingdom, should quiet your hearts in all those straits that you are in, in respect of your poor condition. But now for the particulars—that for the general, that the consideration of the kingdom of heaven should support

all godly people who are in a poor estate, and whose spirits are humbled in respect of their poverty; but particularly—

First, Consider he that is the king of this kingdom of heaven, he was poor himself; your king was poor. You tell us of a kingdom of heaven, but we suffer hard things in the meantime in this world. But you suffer not harder things in this world than the king of this kingdom did, even Jesus Christ himself, that was the great prince. The king of this kingdom that you are translated into, he was poor in this world. Now the consideration that the king himself is in a poor condition, and hath no better supplies and comfort than we have, it is a very great supportment. As now in an army, if the general should say to his soldiers to encourage them, Go on, you have nothing to drink but water; ay, but you have as good to drink as your general. So Christ may well say, You that are poor in spirit, what! are you dejected because of your poverty? Why, are you poorer than I was? It may be you have a poor house; you know what is said of Christ: 'The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but the Son of man hath not whereon to hide his head.' Christ had no house at all; Christ had not so good a house as you have, that was the great king of heaven and earth. For your diet, that seems to be poor and mean; you have not those full dishes that others have. In John xxi. 5, Christ comes to his disciples and saith, 'Children, have ye any meat?' He doth not say, have you such and such kind of dishes, but have you anything; yea, and this was after his resurrection, after he had made an end of suffering for sin. Oh remember that scripture! Christ was content with anything; 'Have you any meat,' saith Christ. 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'He was made poor,' saith the text, 'that he might make us rich.' There was never a godly man that we read of was in a poorer condition than Christ was, in many respects. Now he that was your king, and is your king, he subjected himself into such a poor condition. Be comforted in this, 'yours is the kingdom of heaven.' If you understood what the kingdom of heaven means, who is the king of this kingdom, and considered that his estate was so poor, it should take away your murmuring thoughts against a poor estate. 'My kingdom is not of this world,' saith Christ; therefore, what though you have not the riches of this world; Christ himself had them not.

But, secondly, Consider this, Christ's poverty it was to sanctify your poverty. Merely to consider that our captain or king suffers as well as we, that is somewhat; but no poverty or suffering of a king or captain can take away the curse of the sufferings of his subjects. Ay, but the poverty of Jesus Christ, the heir of this kingdom, it was to take away the curse of thy poverty, and to sanctify thy poverty. When thou

hearest that he was poor in this world, why, thou mayest exercise thy faith : Lord, this was to sanctify my poverty. Whenas indeed, otherwise, poverty in itself it is a curse, but those that are godly have the curse taken away in the poverty of Jesus Christ. As the death of Jesus Christ did sanctify the death of the godly. The sting of death is taken away by his death ; so their poverty and all their afflictions are sanctified by what poverty and afflictions that Christ himself did endure ; and therefore in this kingdom you see what comfort and good there is to you.

Thirdly, This kingdom of heaven it is so ordered out for the most part, that the poor in the world are the subjects of this kingdom. The very consideration of this is a mighty help to those that are outwardly poor. I confess sometimes there are some rich men that are subjects : as in Mark xv. 43 ; ' An honourable counsellor,' there it is said, 'waited for the kingdom of God.' Great men sometimes are, but ordinarily it is the poor that are the subjects of this kingdom.

Then, fourthly, The Lord hath so ordered things that the great transactions of this kingdom of heaven—that hath been opened unto you—hath been carried on by those that are mean and poor, not by the great ones of the world. The Lord Christ hath been very little beholden to the great ones of the world for the furthering of his kingdom.

Hence follows therefore, in the fifth place, That poverty it is no hindrance to the highest degree in this kingdom of heaven. Indeed, poverty it is a hindrance to degrees in the honours of a worldly kingdom. A poor man cannot expect to bear great offices in the kingdoms of the world ; but for the kingdom of heaven the poor may, the poorest that is may, come to as high degree as the richest that is. So that the truth is, when you come to choose any officers that concern the church, there should be no consideration of men's estates. I confess when you come to choose officers for the state, though perhaps a poor man may be a wiser man than a man of estate, yet a man of estate should be chosen rather than another that is poor, because it is not so fit for a man that hath no estate to have the dispose of all other men's estates. But now when you come to the kingdom of heaven, where there is nothing but spiritual power, nothing but in a spiritual way wherein men are to deal with consciences, and no way to deal with men's estates nor outward liberty—the kingdom of heaven concerns not the business of outward liberty or estate, but merely to deal with men's consciences in regard of their spiritual estates in reference unto heaven—I say now, whatever offices there are in the church, there should be no consideration of the estates of men so as to downweigh the least grain ; but if the poorest man have more godliness and understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven,

he should rather be an officer there than any man whatsoever that hath less understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven : and therefore it is a carnal way to go after that manner when they come to choose church-officers, then to think of the chief of the parish whether he be godly or no. It is true, if he were as godly and understanding as any other, then for him as well as another ; but to make that to be the sway of business, though there be not that godliness nor understanding, I say this is to suit the state of the kingdom of heaven to the world, whereas those that are poor in that kingdom, they are capable of as high dignity there as any whatsoever. And that is a great help and comfort to godly poor people that are partakers of the kingdom of heaven, they have all the privileges of this kingdom ; they cannot enjoy the privileges of a worldly kingdom so as others do, but they may enjoy to the full the privileges of this kingdom.

Sixthly, Even those that are outwardly poor, if godly, they have right to all things in this world so far as may be good for them. It is said of Abraham, Rom. iv. 13, that he was 'the heir of the world.' It is spoken of Abraham as he was a believer. Now every believer is a child of Abraham, and every child of Abraham doth inherit Abraham's blessing, and therefore every believer is heir of the world : 'All is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' You will say, Why have they not the world then in possession ? There may be right to all things, and yet not possession, because they are not in a fit condition for them : all things are to work for their good, one way or other. As all the kingdoms of the world are subject to Jesus Christ,—they are given up to him for the furtherance of his kingdom,—so all the things in the world are given up to the saints for the furthering of their good, whose is the kingdom of heaven.

Seventhly, In this kingdom are spiritual riches that may countervail to the full, and are infinitely good beyond all outward riches. Thou thinkest if the state would give thee so much, thou wouldst be a happy man. Oh, that were a carnal heart, to prize more the riches of the world than the things of the kingdom of heaven ! The things of the kingdom of heaven make thee rich in faith, rich in holiness, rich in the promises, rich in thy reference to God and Christ, and rich in the enjoyments of the Holy Ghost and his gifts and graces. Now these things are in an abundant manner communicated in the kingdom of the Messias, more than they were in the times of the law. Indeed it was a greater evil to be a poor man then than now. Why ? Because then there was not such a plentiful measure of spiritual riches communicated from God ; but it was reserved to the coming of the Messias that there should be such

spiritual riches let forth and communicated. God indeed to some few did communicate his spiritual riches then, and there were some eminent godly people in the times of the law, such as Abraham and David; but ordinarily they were very scanty in regard of the communications of spiritual things now; and the reason was, the Lord reserved those spiritual riches to the Messias' coming into the world, and hence it was that God was more indulgent in the times of the law for their outward estates. We read there, that if they did but walk in ways of obedience to God, they were for the most part abundantly blessed in outward things more than he doth now, because that now is the time of communication of spiritual riches. If thou hadst lived in the times of the law, it is very like that thou wouldst not have been so poor; but then, on the other side, it is not like that thou wouldst have had such grace as now thou hast, such manifestations of God to thy soul as now thou hast; and therefore it is well with thee that thou art in the kingdom of heaven, where there is such communications of such spiritual riches.

And then from all these, in the eighth place, follows, That hence the great temptations that those that are poor people are troubled withal, may from the consideration of the blessing of the kingdom be taken away. What are they? you will say. There are three great temptations which those that are poor people and are godly have; the devil comes against them with very sore temptations, that such as have estates are not so much troubled withal.

As, first, I am afraid that God goes out against me, and doth not bless me in anything that I go about; and so they are afraid, and under great bondage. But that hath been answered already.

The second is, I am in a poor condition, and therefore despised. No; thou art a king, thou art translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; thou hast part in his kingdom, and art a king together with himself. And therefore listen not to that temptation that rises from contempt and being despised. Doth not the world regard thee? the Lord God hath a high respect to thee, for he hath given thee a kingdom.

And then a third temptation is, They are useless in the world. Nay, this text will answer this temptation, Thine is the kingdom. And as you heard, the Lord Christ doth carry on the great design of his kingdom by those that are poor; and therefore be not troubled because of thy uselessness in the world. And that is the eighth support of those that are outwardly poor, and poor in spirit suitable to their outward poverty.

The ninth is this, That at last those that are poor and godly, yet they shall possess all things; and I find scripture for it, Rev. xxi. 7. Let men think what they will of such an assertion as this, yet by

comparing one thing with another, it cannot speak of the glory that there shall be in the highest heaven, but of another glory: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.' There is a time that he shall have all, and honour certainly he shall have enough. In Zech. ix. 16, he speaks there of the kingdom of Christ; and we have there an excellent expression of the honour that God will put upon his saints—'And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.' It is a promise that respects all the saints. That there is a time a-coming that they shall be as the precious stones in a king's crown, that are lifted up—that is, that they shall be honoured among all people howsoever they are despised now. And in Mat. xiii. 43, there Christ tells what his saints shall be in his kingdom: 'Then shall the righteous,' speaking of the time of his kingdom, 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.' There is a time coming when poor people that are clothed with rags, and are very despicable in the eyes of the world, shall shine then as bright as the sun. Dost thou see the sun in the firmament? That poor body of thine that wants food and raiment shall within a while shine as bright as the sun in the firmament. And for possession of the things that are in the world, compare those two scriptures together: in Mat. xix. 29, 'And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' So that he doth not speak of being rewarded in heaven for it; for that is beside, besides his everlasting life he shall receive an hundredfold. But, you will say, I find in another gospel that the hundredfold it is spoken of with the addition of persecution—in Mark x. 30. Though there be the addition of persecution, you shall find the promise more large, for 'He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands.' You will say, He shall receive an hundredfold—that is, he shall have grace, that is as much worth as a hundred times his lands. Nay, you see the Holy Ghost doth mention the particulars, of houses, and lands, &c. But, you will say, there is one passage that seems to spoil all—he shall in this time receive houses and lands, and the like, but with persecution, and in the world to come eternal life. It shall be with persecution, so that this speaks of a time when they shall be persecuted. Now how can these two stand together? Therefore, for the answer to that, I do verily think that this is a true answer to it, that this that is translated in your book *with*

persecution, those that understand the original know that it is *μίστα*, it doth not always signify *with*, but *after*. I could give you divers places where the word *μίστα* signifies *after* as well as *with*; as in Mark viii. 31, 'And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.' There it is *μίστα*, the very same word, and it must of necessity be translated *after*. So that you may by the same warrant that here it is translated *after* three days he shall rise again, so translate the other, that he shall receive houses and lands, &c., a hundredfold *after* he hath endured persecution. Now to determine in what way, or how, or when the Lord will fulfil this, it is very hard to do. You know the fulfilling of prophecies is the best interpretation of them; but to me it seems to be very clear that the Scripture doth hold forth this, that it is part of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that he will bring his people in time to enjoy whatsoever good things there are to be enjoyed here; for the reward of God stands in a spiritual way—not in a sensual way, as some have dreamed of, but in a spiritual and holy way. And this is the blessing of those that are poor in respect of their outward estates, and have spirits suitable.

Now there are many that are troubled in respect of the mean parts that they have; yet they having spirits suitable to their mean parts, and willing to honour God in them, theirs is the kingdom of heaven also. But now I will for the present leave them, and speak to the third, and that is those that are poor in grace.

As, first, Thou hast but a little grace, and art very poor and mean, and this troubles thee, yet blessed art thou. For,

First, Thou art translated from the power of darkness by that little grace thou hast, and so art translated into the kingdom of heaven: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Though there be a great deal of darkness in thy mind, yet the power of darkness is taken away, and so thou art brought into the kingdom of his dear Son. And in Mat. xii. 28, where Christ makes that a fruit of casting out the devil. The devils were cast out Why? Because the kingdom of God is come: 'But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.' When the kingdom of the Messias came, then the devils were cast out of possession. You never read concerning the casting out of devils till the Messias came into the world; which was to shew us that it was reserved to Jesus Christ for to manifest his power over the kingdom of Satan; and it was a sign that the kingdom of God was come, because the devils were cast out.

So then the kingdom of heaven is come to thy soul, if the devil can reign no more. Certainly the devils had their reign in thy soul before thou wert translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; and thou mayest be sure now that thou shalt never be under the power of darkness—that the devil shall never reign in thee—because the kingdom of God is come to thee. Thou art one under the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The devil is the king of this world. The devil rules in the air, and in the children of disobedience, but the devils have nothing to do to rule in the children of the kingdom; those that have got out of the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of Jesus Christ the devils have no further power. It may be, when thou art melancholy or in the dark, thou mayest have apprehension of devils; but certainly all those that have in them but the least drachm of grace, though they are never so poor, yet theirs is the kingdom of heaven—that is, the kingdom of God is come to them that hath cast out all the power of the devil. Thou wert a captive slave to the devil before thou camest into this kingdom, but now thou art delivered from all the power of the devil.

Secondly, The meanness of any one's parts cannot hinder them from understanding the highest things in the kingdom of heaven, for it doth not depend upon parts at all. Nay, we know that usually those are chosen that have mean parts, to confound the wisdom of the world; and such as have very mean parts may have more understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven than the greatest Rabbis in the world.

And then, thirdly, which is an admirable help to them that are sensible of their little grace, Why, thou art not now to answer for any of thy miscarriages in the court of divine justice, for thou art got into the kingdom of heaven. If thou wert in the kingdom of God's power only as he is Creator, there thou art to answer for all thy offences in the court of God's justice. But now being translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, thou art to answer for all thy miscarriages there, and not to be hauled before the court of divine justice; and that is a mighty help to those that are poor in grace, to consider of this thing; and this is the privilege of one in this kingdom.

Fourthly, Christ himself, thy king, he is thy judge and thy advocate. Oh, it is a blessed thing to be in such a kingdom, especially if a man knows that he is obnoxious many ways. O thou that art poor in grace, and yet art in the kingdom of heaven, know that Jesus Christ, thy king, is to be thy judge, to cast thee for thy eternal estate. He is likewise to be thine advocate, to plead for thee; and therefore it is not the poverty of thy grace that should daunt thy heart, or cause thee to sink.

Fifthly, The righteousness of this thy king is thy righteousness, if thou comest into this kingdom. In 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made of God to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' When thou comest into the kingdom of the Messiah, here thou hast a privilege that no subject can have in any kingdom in the world. There may be subjects in other kingdoms that may have good kings, but the goodness of their king is not their goodness. But thou art in that kingdom that hath a perfect righteous king, and the righteousness of that king is thy righteousness. Thou art poor, and thy corruptions doth overcome thee. Oh, but blessed art thou for all that, being poor in spirit, for thou art come into that kingdom wherein thou hast the righteousness of the king to be thy righteousness. That is the fifth comfort of being in this kingdom.

Sixthly, The wisdom likewise of thy king it is thine. Jesus Christ thy king he hath all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him. He is made unto us wisdom; therefore let not the meanness of thy parts discourage thee.

The seventh is this, If thou beest come into this kingdom, then that little grace that thou hast, be it never so little, yet thou shalt be sure that that grace shall be upheld to eternity. For it is a special part of the glory of the kingly power of Jesus Christ to uphold the graces that are in the hearts of his people; and this doth make them to be of more certain duration than all the grace that Adam had in innocency. Adam had perfection in his state of innocency. Now thou art weak and poor, and art ready to think, if he fell, thou shalt fall much more. It is true, if thou wert left to that kingdom that Adam was in, it might be so; but thou being brought into this kingdom of heaven, the power of Christ, thy king, it is to be exercised in upholding that little little grace thou hast. In 2 Tim. you have a place that is very sweet that way: chap. iv. 18, 'And the Lord,' saith the text, 'shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever.' As if he should say, The Lord hath already brought me into the possession of the kingdom of heaven, and certainly he must preserve me till I come to the full enjoyment of it. Thou art afraid of such and such temptations, that they will prevail over thee; but be of good comfort, it concerns the kingly power of Christ to preserve that little grace thou hast to his heavenly kingdom. It is in thy case here just as it was with David; you know after David was anointed, oh how he was persecuted by Saul! inasmuch as he saith, I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. But if he had had faith to have believed the promise that was made him, he would never have so reasoned. Just thus do many poor souls say which are anointed to this

heavenly kingdom—they say, Certainly I shall perish by the hand of this corruption. Know thou art an anointed one, and it concerns the power of Jesus Christ to uphold that little grace thou hast. And this is another benefit and fruit of this kingdom.

And then, in the eighth place, Know that being brought under this kingdom, though thy grace be poor, yet thou art as perfectly justified before God as ever was Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob; as ever was David, Paul, or Peter, or the strongest saints in the world. Thy grace in respect of thy sanctification is poor, but thy grace in thy justification it is as rich and glorious in this kingdom, as the grace in the justification of any saint that ever lived upon the face of the earth. And indeed this may be said to be the fruit of this kingdom of heaven. In the times of the law this was very little manifested; it being such a great treasury of the goodness of God, it was reserved to be opened when the Messiah was to come into the world. There was this treasury before; but this treasury of justification that now I am speaking of, I say, the opening of it, it was reserved to the coming of the Messiah. And the Messiah he is come to open this rich treasury of justification, and to tell all poor in spirit, that are troubled for the poverty of grace that they have, that howsoever they are poor in respect of their sanctification, yet they are as perfectly justified as ever any godly man was. Now is not here a blessedness, to be a member of the kingdom of heaven? Oh, methinks this should mightily set the hearts of men and women a-work in seeking after the kingdom of heaven!

Ninthly, Know that the right of thine inheritance in this kingdom, yea, the very peace and joy of this kingdom, it is not forfeited by thy failings. In Rom. xiv. 17, 'The kingdom of God it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' So long as thou art in this kingdom, thou hast righteousness and peace, and thou hast matter of joy.

And then, in the tenth place, Certainly thou shalt be perfect ere long. Judgment shall return unto victory. There will be a treading down Satan under thy feet shortly, and all imperfections shall be swallowed up with perfection; thou hast the seeds in thee now which shall come to perfection. Thou art weak now, and dost not love God as thou wouldst. Why, thou shalt love, and delight in, and glorify and fear God ere long as much as thou wilt.

Yet further, in the eleventh place, There is this for the support of such as are poor in grace, that all the ordinances in this kingdom do belong to them, and whatever good is in them, and they ought not to be deprived of them, if there be anything of the grace of Christ in them. Indeed, let men take heed how they come into this kingdom. If I had time I should have spoken a word or two to that, for any man to

challenge the benefit of this kingdom that hath no grace at all; but one that is poor in grace must not say, 'Because I am poor in grace I am afraid to come to the ordinances, or afraid to pray. Oh no; thou shouldst rather come, for all the ordinances are thine, thine is the kingdom of heaven. And therefore, whensoever thou lookest upon any ordinance of the word and sacrament, thou mayest think, Well, this is that ordinance that Jesus Christ hath appointed for the building up of my soul, and for the strengthening of my grace. And therefore come to it in such a way as that that is appointed for the strengthening of thy grace.'

Twelfthly. By coming into this kingdom thou comest to have free-trading to heaven. Men now that live in the city, they have free-trading to divers parts of the world that others have not: so those that remain in the world, and are yet in their natural estates, they are such as are banished from the presence of the Lord; they have not the free-trading to heaven for grace, comfort, happiness, and glory, as the saints now when they are come into this kingdom. Thou through Jesus Christ mayest trade to heaven every day, and hast a privilege and right unto it, and so to enrich thyself in heaven. What though thou beest poor; when the trade is open for heaven, why shouldst thou be discouraged with the little grace that thou hast? Oh blessed art thou, thou hast that privilege of this kingdom.

The last thing that I shall speak of now is, That in this kingdom the Spirit is shed abroad in a great deal more abundance than it was heretofore. Be not discouraged, thou dost not find yet such a work of grace in thy heart but thou art in such a condition wherein the Spirit of God is to be communicated in a far more abundant manner than in the time of the law. Indeed, in the time of the law David and such as were to be employed in public work might expect it; but though thou beest not employed in any public work, yet thou mayest expect to come to be glorious in grace here in this world. So we have the promise, 'That the feeble shall be as David, and those of the house of David should be as the angel of the Lord.' There is a time when the gifts of the saints shall be raised, and they shall have clearer and further understanding in the mysteries of godliness than ever formerly. And one great thing that doth hinder the growth of grace in those that are thus poor in spirit, it is because they have not faith to act upon the promises that are made for the shedding abroad of the Spirit in the times of the Messiah: 'If

evil men know how to give good things to them that ask them, much more will the Lord give his Spirit to those that ask him.' And the consideration of these things is a mighty help to such as are poor in spirit, to shew their blessedness. And that that will bind up all these is this, that in this kingdom of heaven the Lord would have his people delivered from the spirit of bondage. As there is a spirit of bondage, so there is a spirit of adoption, a free spirit to come into God's presence. The Lord would not have his people to be afraid of his presence, but would have them all to look upon themselves—I mean all such as are apprehensive of their spiritual poverty—yet to look upon themselves as the children of this kingdom, and to come with freedom of spirit before their Father. And now, my brethren, I have been shewing you the blessedness of those that are poor in spirit. I would to God I had spoken to none but such as are poor in spirit. I confess such points as these would make one fear and tremble to treat of, especially in these wanton times; howsoever, children must not lose their bread. But now if there be but one poor in spirit that should have benefit by it, though there should be a thousand hardened, yet God will accept of that; and in the meantime, therefore, you that are of poor spirits and truly humbled before God, do but consider what your comfort cost. It may be they cost the hardening of many hundreds in this congregation to speak of such a thing: saith God, let it cost the hardening of them, yet your comfort is so dear to me that I would have it notwithstanding. Oh, therefore take these things and make use of them for the furtherance of your sanctification. We have a very notable scripture for that, to make men to take heed of the abuse of these things, in Heb. xiii. 'We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.' What then? Shall we take liberty and live loosely? No, saith he, 'Therefore let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' He makes this use of it, therefore what?—therefore let us be wanton? No; but let us 'serve him with reverence and godly fear, for even our God is a consuming fire.' And in 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' Walk as those that are partakers of the kingdom of heaven, walk above the world; let there not appear to be such base and low spirits in you as there are in the men of the world, but walk worthy of that kingdom which the Lord hath called you to.