

accuse him to be a froward man and of an implacable spirit, and herein they do verify that they do speak all manner of evil. It is reported that Beza did live without any gall, because he was so quiet that they could never see him provoked; although the enemies would provoke him with a most violent spirit, yet he was as quiet as if he had been a man without a gall. To shew you how it hath been the way of evil men to strive with those that any way have been instruments of good and reformation, and did seek it with the most earnestness and zeal in Queen Elizabeth's days, I mean those that set themselves against prelacy,

it is known how the bishops used them; therefore do not think your names more precious than their names. And why should you think to go easier to heaven than they? why should you think that God should rather favour you than them? and look back and remember that there is the same spirit of darkness still prevailing as ever did; therefore keep your hearts close to God and Christ, and be sure you suffer nothing but for Christ's sake, for then rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

SERMON XXXVIII.

OR,

SOME ARGUMENTS FOR THE HELPING OF SAINTS TO SUFFER.

'For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world.'—MAT. V. 12-14.

OUR Saviour, in the strengthening of his disciples against persecution and reviling, and in helping them in their suffering, amongst other things tells them that they fare no worse than the prophets that went before them—'For so persecuted they the prophets which were before them;' from whence the point was, That the consideration of what the servants of God suffered heretofore should be a means to encourage us in suffering.

First, To shew the history how all the prophets, disciples, and the saints that have gone before, have suffered great and hard things.

Secondly, Wherein the argument lies of rejoicing under persecution.

Thirdly, What use we are to make of the persecution of the prophets. I could handle but the first. To proceed to the second: wherein lies the power of this argument? There is a fivefold strength in this argument, or rather five arguments in it.

First, The same spirit of wickedness that opposed them doth still prevail, and it is the same spirit of truth that is opposed. You see you are opposed: why, it is but the old spirit of Satan, that spirit of wickedness that hath appeared heretofore; it is that that appears against you.

Secondly, Hence you may see that those that are

dear and precious to God, that they may suffer hard things. You will not say but that the prophets were beloved of God, and yet they suffered as much as you, [were] contemned as much as you, reviled as much as you; therefore be not troubled at it, but rejoice and be glad.

Thirdly, If so be God should deal with you otherwise than he did formerly with others, then it might discourage you; but they are no other things than his servants heretofore have suffered. God will lead you to heaven in the same path that he hath led his servants heretofore.

Fourthly, It is the way that God hath brought all his servants into heaven by. Why should you think that God will bring you in a better way than he did others? For so suffered the prophets; the very prophets suffered such things, and then what is your flesh better than theirs? What are your names better than theirs? It is a most intolerable thing that we that are so vile and mean, and do so little service, that we should think it much to do anything in God's cause; that those that have been better than we, have suffered more than ever we did.

The fifth argument is this, That though the prophets have suffered such things, yet the truth of God prevails. We say, if they be imprisoned and perse-

cuted, what will become of God's truth? Do not take so much care for that, for all the prophets suffered, and did not God preserve his truth? were not they made instruments of good for all their suffering? they were made instruments of the greatest good. Put these five considerations together, and you see the force of the argument.

What uses we are to make of those that went before us.

First, If so be that those that were the most eminent servants of God have suffered such hard things, then, if we be in a prosperous estate and called to suffer but little, we are to examine whether our prosperity be with the love of God or no. Doth God send us prosperity in love? They that were most beloved of him, they did not enjoy their ease and contentment as we do; therefore we had need examine ourselves to see whether that we do enjoy be with God's love or no. Many think that God loves them most because they have most. Oh no; if so be God deals not with you as he hath done with other saints, you had need examine how you do enjoy that. Methinks any man that lives in a high estate, and hath all ease unto his flesh, either when he reads of other of the precious saints of God, and he is convinced in his conscience that they have done more service for God in one week than he hath done in a whole year, doth God love me more than them? It may be this is my portion, this is all that I am like to have.

The second use we should make of this is, Were the prophets called to suffer in former time? The less we are called to passive obedience, let us be more in active obedience. The very hearing of what the prophets have suffered in former time, it would make your heart to ache; if you read the Book of Martyrs, it would be very useful. I shall only labour to make this use of it. When you hear of their suffering, think thus with yourselves: God called them to suffer in a passive way; hence they suffered what rage and tortures wicked men could devise. God doth not call me to suffer in a way of such fearful evil; surely God must have the glory of my strength. Then let me spend it in praying, honouring, and worshipping God, as others did in suffering torments from wicked men. And seeing we owe unto God the glory of our names, the glory of our estates, the glory of our lives—that if God will not take it in a way of suffering, then we should give it to him freely in ways of service. They lay on the cold earth in prison. Think thus with yourselves when you are about any service, in prayer, reading, and hearing, and it begins to be painful to the flesh: Why, shall I then leave off the service of God because my flesh is pained? What did the martyrs suffer in the flesh! It is a shame unto you for to leave off the service of God because it is painful to the flesh.

Thirdly, When we consider of the sufferings of those that went before us, it should be a means to make us abate a little of the contentment of satisfying the flesh. Though we have abundance whereby to satisfy the flesh, why, let us abate a little of it. We read that many times the prophets and martyrs they wanted bread and necessary things, and shall I abuse the creatures of God to excess? And the prophets in Ahab's time were content with bread and water, and shall I be excessive in meat and drink? You that spend whole nights in chambering and wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, surfeiting, and wasting the creatures, and all your delight is for the flesh, and all your care is to give contentment to the flesh in satisfying your lusts, oh, check your hearts in these ways!

The fourth is this: It is to prepare for suffering. We are not now for the present called to suffer, but let us not be secure; let us not conclude that we shall always enjoy that peace we now enjoy. The prophets suffered hard things, and let us think to meet with the same.

The fifth and last use is this: Surely God hath been little beholden to the world from all ages for any maintenance of his truth; for the world hath shewn itself a wicked world in persecuting and tormenting his saints and prophets, and therefore the Lord is little beholden to this world; and the world hath set itself against God, and therefore it will not be long before the Lord breaks this sinful world in pieces.

Thus we have done with that part of Christ's sermon, the Beatitudes—the several blessings that Christ lays down upon the saints doing their duties.

Ver. 13. *'Ye are the salt of the earth.'*

Here begins plainly a new matter. First he tells his disciples of blessedness; they shall come to see their own blessedness. And having shewn them their blessedness, that, whatever the world thought of them, yet in the eyes of God they are blessed creatures. And now he tells them what service they must do in the world, which, indeed, is a great part of blessedness too. From the coherence, note, that those men that God shall put into an estate of blessedness, they are fit men, and may be very instrumental to do great service for his name's sake. When once the soul is satisfied in this, the Lord hath been merciful to me, and God hath cast a favourable look upon me—the Lord hath put me into a frame and condition of blessedness; let the world do what they can do to me, they cannot take blessedness away from me. Oh, how fit this man is to do the service of God! And in the words following, you have the greatest service that the apostles were called to in the world.

Secondly, *'Ye are the light of the world.'* It follows, more especially from what Christ told them of

persecution—you shall suffer so much, ay, and be willing to suffer. Why? for you are called to the greatest work that ever God called any men to. Let men speak what they will, revile what they will, certainly God will reward you. Ye are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; and if you should start aside for fear of suffering, what will become of things then? And, indeed, the consideration of men's employment in the world is a great and a strong argument to carry men through what difficulty soever. Let me go on in the work. As if a general should come to some officers in the army, and tell them the battle comes sore on them; therefore keep your standing, for the welfare of the whole army depends on you, nay, the welfare of the whole kingdom depends on you. This will put courage into any man of the world, when he knoweth the great things which depend on him. Now, saith Christ, what if you be persecuted? go on in your ways; for ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world; therefore go on. 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' I confess that almost all interpreters do carry these words, as to the disciples, to the apostles, those that were sent to preach unto others, 'Ye are the salt of the earth;' but all do not go that way. One learned interpreter saith, I do not see sufficient cause to restrain these things merely to the apostles; and he gives two reasons for it, why it doth belong to Christians as well as to the apostles.

First, saith he, All the former words belong generally to all Christians, as poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and they which are persecuted and reviled. All these belong not only to the apostles, but to all Christians; and why not this as well as the former?

Secondly, The second reason is this, That that follows in ver. 16 belongs to Christians, as appears from Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' You are those that are the lights, that are shining in the world.

Thirdly, And a third reason is in the latter part of ver. 13, 'But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.' Christ apparently speaks to the multitude. In Luke xiv. 25, 34, (compare them together:) 'And there went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them: Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?' Therefore, saith this learned interpreter, both former and latter belongs to Christians; ye are then the salt of the earth.

First, All Christians who have the truth of the gospel, who by their lives and in their ways do shew forth the truth of the gospel, they are the salt of the earth.

In an eminent degree, those that do carry the truths of the gospel abroad into the world, they are the salt of the earth. What is the meaning of that? It is a plain similitude that Christ useth, because that country delighted much in similitudes. You will find a great deal of excellency in this expression of the mind of God therein.

First, We find that in Scripture salt is taken for wisdom: Col. iv. 6, 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.' When you speak, let not your speeches be with any corrupt communication that hath no wisdom in it; but in all your speeches let there be wisdom. And in Mark ix. 50, 'Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' Order all your ways wisely; and this was the common acceptance of the ordinary language. Salt hath been taken almost by all kind of people to signify understanding, wisdom. One saith that the Grecians were the salt of the nations; and the reason was because that Greece had almost all learnings, and that was the salt of the nations. They were wont ordinarily to express the works of man's understanding by it. I have read that in Italy, if any one doth cast salt to another, they take it for a disgrace and mockery, as if such a man wanted wit. And so the Latins saith, 'One that is foolish wanteth salt.' And the Scripture calls that that is unsavoury by want of salt, it calls it folly. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' Job i. 22. Again, in chap. vi. 6, 'Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt; or is there any taste in the white of an egg?' So that by Scripture, and common acceptance of people in former times, and now, by salt is meant understanding and wisdom.—'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The meaning is this, in the first place, you are those that be holding forth the gospel; you are they that are the ministers of the gospel, that are to bring wisdom to the world; you are they that are to declare that that will make them wise to salvation; and without the doctrine of the gospel there is nothing that will make them wise in the world. While † they come to know Christ and the gospel, their foolish hearts are darkened; but now you are sent to declare unto them the counsels of God's will about man's eternal estate,

* Sal optimum et utilissimum est ciborem condimentum, si moderate adhibeatur; transiuntur autem ad sapientiam significandam utpote qua nihil est hominibus utilius in vita.—*Estius*. † That is, 'till.—Ed.

so that they may come to attain wisdom for eternity. Ye are the salt of the earth. The whole world goeth on in ways of folly till the gospel comes amongst them. The generality of men that have not the preaching of the word, what ends do they propound to themselves of their lives? or if they do propound any ends, it is not the right ends they ought to propound. They are far from propounding these ends for enjoying God in his Son Jesus Christ; they are far from using the right means to attain this end. The world is led on in a passion, they hurry it on to what lust their corruptions carry them to; therefore, they have no wisdom to carry it on for what they shall do for eternity. But now ye are the salt of the earth, that shall make men bethink themselves, and to know what they were born for, and what they came into the world to do; they shall come to know what is their last end, they shall begin to muse, and weigh, and ponder things. Now, when your doctrine shall begin to prevail in their hearts, they shall then begin to have wisdom, where before there was nothing but folly in them. And so, when men converse with the saints they shall learn wisdom; then they begin to have salt, and to confer of things, and to have their hearts seasoned with wisdom. All human learning in the world makes not men wise to salvation. The rules of philosophy may shew them wisdom; but the Scripture tells, that the world by wisdom knew not God. That is the first; the gospel, it brings wisdom wherever it comes, it teacheth the world to be truly wise for salvation.

Secondly, Salt, it makes things savoury. That is the second thing to be considered in salt. Salt, it hath such a property to dry up the evil moisture that took away the relish of the savour of the thing. It is salt that savoureth everything almost that we have use for. As if Christ should say, Men's hearts naturally are very unsavoury; though they have excellent parts, yet how unsavoury are their speeches and actions. So that, come to places where there was never any preaching of the gospel heard of, how unsavoury will you find the spirits of people that know little of God! A gracious man cannot endure to tarry long amongst them; and the unsavouriness of their hearts doth make all their duties to be unsavoury. Whatever duties they perform to God, there is nothing but unsavouriness in them. It is as unsavoury meat to you, that all people that live without the gospel, that have not the gospel prevailing on their hearts, all the duties that they perform are as unsavoury to God as unsavoury meat is to you. Now, saith Christ, you shall go and preach the gospel to make their hearts savoury, and then they shall be acceptable to God. The duties they perform shall be savoury unto God; their company shall be savoury to

the saints. Whereas, now a man or woman that had not the gospel prevailing on their hearts, when he came into the company of the saints, then he could not savour them; but now, when the gospel comes to him, then he can savour their discourse, he can pray savourily, and do other duties with savour. Mat. xvi. 23, 'But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' Come and propound the most excellent and glorious truths of God in the gospel, yet they do not savour them; their hearts being unsavoury, they cannot savour the things of God. Rom. viii., about the beginning, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Men before the gospel comes have unsavoury spirits; but when the ministry of the gospel comes amongst them, then they shall savour things in another manner than ever they have done.

Thirdly, Ye are the salt of the earth. Salt, it keeps from putrefaction, and preserves. And that is the reason of that expression we have in Num. xviii. 19, 'All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; it is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee;' (2 Chron. xiii. 5.) A covenant that shall not lose the vigour, virtue, and strength of it by long continuance, therefore a covenant of salt; as now meat, if it be not salted, it putrefies and loseth that nurture it had before, and grows worse and worse till it comes to have no kind of virtue to comfort the body at all. Thus, when we make covenants with God, it may be when we make them at first, they seem to be full of vigour and strength; but after the covenant hath continued a few days it is like flesh or fish—after it hath continued a little while it loseth the temperature of it, and is more unfit for nutriment than others; but if you put salt to them then they will be fit for nurture. And so it is with our covenants; at first they are full of vigour and strength, but let them continue a little while, then the covenant hath no power at all. Oh, it was not a covenant of salt! I fear our covenants that we have made privately and publicly, that they are not covenants of salt. But the Lord, when he makes covenants of salt, he remembers his covenant, and there is as much strength and vigour in it a thousand years after it is made as there was the first day it was made. Many men and women make little use of their souls, but only to keep their bodies from putrefying. 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The meaning is this, Whereas all the world grows to putrefaction; they have such evils in their hearts, as being let alone they grow worse and worse, and perish for ever. 1 John i. 5, 'This then is the message which

we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' God doth expel darkness and ignorance and infidelity by the true knowledge of himself. And here is the great use of the ministry of the word, to keep all the world from perishing by putrefaction; and all the hearts of men and women in the world that have not the doctrine of the gospel prevailing in them, they are unto God stinking, filthy, loathsome meat, that rots and putrefies, and will certainly perish. This is the condition of the whole world. Now when the doctrine comes, it keeps the hearts from putrefying, from rotting. It is called the wholesome word, because it keeps their hearts wholesome. Ye are the salt of the earth, to keep from putrefaction, that ye shall not be unwholesome in your lives; and so to preserve your souls that you shall not be unswcet and unsavoury for the Lord. And put these three together, then you may come to understand the meaning of that scripture, where you shall find that there is a rule given that every sacrifice that was offered up to God it was salted: Lev. ii. 13, 'And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' You think there is little in this expression. Again and again there is argued that salt must be offered in every sacrifice; all must have salt, let the offering be what it will, of meat-offerings, oil-offerings, offerings of flour; every sacrifice must have salt. Mark ix., latter end of it, 'Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' That every sacrifice must be salted with salt, the meaning is this: whatever sacrifice you will offer to God, be it yourselves—Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable sacrifice'—there must be salt in it, spiritual things in the soul. There must be a savoury spirit—that is, savoury unto God, and doth savour the things of God; and then there must be a spirit that is not corrupt or putrefied. Such a one, when he offers up himself to God, is an acceptable sacrifice to him. And in your duties to God there must be a savouriness in them, and no mixture of your own corruptions in your duties; but then because this scripture, having named it, seems hard, I desire to open it to you. From whence is it that Christ here saith that every one should be salted with fire? Before you find that Christ is preaching the doctrine of mortification, mortifying our dearest lusts, what dependence is here? It is better for you that you go to heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The meaning is this, as if

he should say, Though your lusts be never so dear unto you, as dear as your right eye, or as dear as your hand, yet you must be willing to mortify your corruptions and lusts; for, saith he, look to yourselves, God would have every sacrifice salted with salt. If you would be a sacrifice unto God, unto his grace and mercy, you must offer a sacrifice salted with salt, or else you will offer a sacrifice to his justice. You must be salted with fire, with that fire that is unquenchable. Thus you see somewhat is the meaning of that which Christ saith, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The preaching of the gospel, when it comes first to corrupt hearts, it puts to a great deal of pain, till their corruptions be subdued by it, till the gospel hath overcome your corruptions. Read that scripture in Mark ix., the latter end; compare those few verses, with any place of all the Old Testament, and in the time of the law, you never find such a terrible expression of God's wrath against sinners that will not mortify their corruptions as there is in that chapter of Mark. That place of the Old Testament, 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in everything,' hath not such a terror in it as this, that 'the worm that never dieth, nor the fire that never goeth out,' and other texts. For this cause comes the wrath of God on you, and you are the children of wrath. The wrath of God is against all unrighteousness. If a man would preach but one sermon in all his lifetime to make sin odious to men, he should rather choose it out of the gospel than out of the law. The gospel it is that will discover what men are in themselves out of Jesus Christ, what a price is paid for their souls; and, besides, the gospel it argueth mortification of our lusts more than the law. In this sermon of Christ, 'If a man looketh but after a woman to lust after her, he hath committed adultery with her in his heart.' The minister of the gospel hath such a power, that where it comes it prevails over all these: therefore it is called the salt of the earth. Wherefore salt is used in way of physic, in way of medicine: 2 Kings ii. 21, 22, 'And he went forth unto the springs of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.' Salt it is a great blessing of nature; it is called the very balsam of nature.

The first use from hence is, You see what a great excellency the ministry of the gospel is. It is the salt of the world—that is, the very balsam of nature;

* By which words metaphorically may be noted the twofold punishments in hell—the one of the soul, and the other of the body, saith Polycurus Lyserus; but rather the punishment of sense, and the punishment of loss, called *pœna sensus, pœna damna*.

therefore we should prize that, without which all the world would be unsavoury to God. Do but go to such streets where they do not come to the preaching of the gospel, and what rotten putrefaction is there! If the gospel doth not convert their souls, yet it will take away some gross corruptions—it will civilise them. Give me any place where there hath been a ministry of salt in it, you shall find that amongst the greatest part of them that there is not so much wickedness amongst them; but those that oppose them, they grow worse against them. Oh, prize the gospel! I remember, in Isa. lx., the Holy Ghost speaks there of the saints that should flock to the preaching of the word—to the ministry; they are called the doves. The doves should come; and in ver. 8, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' The property of doves is, they are mightily incited to a salt stone, and are in love with salt stones much. The salt stone of the gospel is that that will entice, not birds of prey, as rooks, ravens, and the like, but it will entice all of dove-like spirits. They find that the gospel doth them good; it is the gospel that makes all things savoury to them. Oh, they can say that before I heard the gospel, my heart was unsavoury, and I never had the savour of things so as since the gospel hath come unto me. A foolish speech that is used amongst some, that if the salt falls, there is a sign of ill-luck; but certainly if there be an overthrow of the gospel, that is a sign of ill indeed. This is a great deal of evil to the Christian world, as in overthrowing the salt. All men cannot bear the gospel; they would have nothing but sugared things, though they rot by it. Is it not better to be preserved with brine than rotted with sugar? The ministers of the gospel must apply salt, and sometimes it must be rubbed into them. And so some men's hearts get no good by the word; their hearts are very unsavoury, and they will not take the word into their hearts. The ministers of the gospel had need rub it in by application. The preaching of the word, if only laid before the people, it doth little good, but it must be rubbed in by application.

Secondly, It serves for exhortation. Is the ministry of the gospel of this excellent use? Then take heed you do not refuse it. The preaching of the gospel, when first it comes into a place, if it be received in, it groweth to abundance of good in the soul; but if men let their lusts prevail in them, it doth little good to them; the Lord suffers them to perish eternally. This hath a power to restore those that stink—to restore them, but not usually. Look to it, ye young ones; you are not yet so corrupted but the applying of the salt may heal your souls. When men are intemperate—drunkards, that give liberty to themselves in their sensual lusts, to fulfill the wills of

them—their hearts will not receive the salt of the word. When poor men in the country go to the market, they will be sure to bring home salt for the benefit of their family. Do you do so. The doctrine is the salt; carry it home. You have a great deal of unsavoury words in your family. When you come to hear the word, carry home some salt, and apply it, the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, the parents to the children; and let the servants all say one to another, Are not these doctrines preached this day against these evil ways that we walk in? Surely it will be a means to restrain you from your wicked courses. So if—as soon as a sin is committed, if you would but apply the salt to your heart presently, it would keep it from staining. If God hath applied it once, we must apply it again and again. Every day we must apply it, or else we shall have unsavoury hearts; and remember it, that when flesh comes to be salted, if there be a hollow part of the flesh that begins to be corrupted more than the rest, you will rub more salt there than in another place. And you should observe what are your precious corruptions; and you should think thus: I have some lusts and some sins that are more dangerous than others. There is lust that is like to overcome me; I will apply the word there. I will get some scripture that shall speak most against that sin, and I will be sure to lay that to my heart. As to instance: Suppose some have inordinate affection to satisfy the lust of the flesh. Here is a place in your heart that is like to putrefy; apply some salt to it. I will give you some few grains of salt to apply to that place that is like to be corrupted. Job xxxi. 1, 2, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?' As if he should say, Lord, if I should not make a covenant with mine eyes; if I should let mine eyes wander up and down for satisfying of my flesh, I should have no portion in the Almighty. At any time when I give way to mine eyes to satisfy the lust of the flesh, I will venture to apply salt to that however. And for that sin of uncleanness I will give you another scripture to apply: Prov. xxii. 14, 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' That man that is abhorred of God shall fall into the deep pit. I might have given you many scriptures in the New Testament for it. 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. Those that walk after the lust of uncleanness, rub this salt on your hearts, and it will be a means to take away uncleanness in that place. To

those that give themselves liberty to satisfy the lust of the flesh; Rom. viii. 13, 'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' That is, if there be any man or woman, he or she that give themselves liberty to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, and make that to be the chief contentment to satisfy the flesh, that man or woman shall perish for ever; they shall die. These scriptures have great matter in them to get out the corruptions of men's hearts. You that will attend on the ministry of the gospel, you will find at one time or another, but that the word will find out your particu- lar sins,

and then go home and rub it with salt. Labour to kill and mortify your sins; the ministers of God cannot so well do it as you. Remember this: Christ speaks here by similitudes, because he would have it to be remembered by you; you have occasion when you have salt on your tables, and when you go to salt your meat. If I did not salt my meat, it would be putrefied and unsavoury, and so is my heart. Whatever God lets me have in the world, I cannot relish it or savour it without the gospel, and without salt I cannot offer any sacrifice savoury to God. The doctrine of the ministry of the word is as salt to the benefit of nature.

SERMON XXXIX.

OR,

HOW PROFESSORS ARE SAID TO BE UNSAVOURY.

'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is therefore good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden down under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world.'—MAT. V. 13, 14.

WE read in Scripture that sometime salt makes barren where it is sown: Judges ix. 45, 'And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.' Much salt on the earth will make the earth barren; so it is with many of our hearts. We have so much of the salt of the word sown continually, and there is no fruit at all, but rather our hearts grow barren by it. Certainly there is a curse on that ground that hath salt thus sown on it, and there is a curse on this heart that lives under the ministry of the word, and have these blessed truths preached to them, and yet be barren. Now it follows,

If salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Now this is applicable either to professors of religion, that do in their degree carry about with them the truths of the gospel, Luke xiv. 25, compared with ver. 36, or to ministers. If they have lost their savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

To speak briefly of the words in reference to professors of religion, who have understanding of many truths of the gospel, and for a time do hold them forth and embrace them, and have been of very good

use in former time in the towns, parishes, and in families where they have lived. They have been as salt. Many have received great benefit from them by that knowledge that they have, and by the excellent gifts that they had through the gospel; but yet some of them lose their savour. Where there is true grace in the heart, that will never be lost; but where many truths and gifts come by the gospel, they may be lost; and many that have been professors of religion have lost their savour—that is, they were very full of ferventness and zeal and heat in their duties and performances; none could come amongst them but found their hearts bettered by them than they were before; but now they have lost their savour, now there is no such vigour and liveliness, but now they are grown flat and cold, flat in their duties, formal in their ways. There is little good to be gotten by them, or expected from them. When you do converse with them, many of them are grown unsavoury. They have mingled base lusts with their profession and zeal, and have lost the power of it. They are grown earthly; their corruptions have prevailed over the salt. Though they for a while seemed to be kept down, yet afterward they had got power over those truths that they had in their under-