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The twenty Lecture, vpon the
11. 12. and 13. verses.

- 11 *Let vs study therefore to enter into that rest, least any man fall after the same ensample of disobedience.*
- 12 *For the word of God is lively, and mighty in operation, and sharper than any two edged sword, and entreteth through, euen vnto the diuiding asunder of the soule & the spirit, and of the ioynts, and the marrow, and is a discernner of the thoughts, and the intents of the heart.*
- 13 *Neither is there any creature, which is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open vnto his eyes, with whom we haue to doe.*



IN this 11. verse, the Apostle maketh his last prooffe of Christ to bee our Prophet, because the force of this word of God, agreeth not but with the Maiesty of his person, and so entreteth into a notable description of the vertue and power of this word, making earnest exhortation, that wee would vse the great benefite of it, and therefore he sayth first: *Let vs therefore study to enter*: that is, let vs labour, let vs be carefull, let vs giue all endeouour, let vs care and trauell that wee may enter: thus shaking off all sluggish dulnesse, and quickening them from heavinesse of spirit, as vnto a thing of great weight, he calleth vs with great care and study to giue our selues vnto it. And here, in this word, *let vs studie*: we haue a plaine interpretation of that he said in the first verse, *let vs feare*: for the whole verses, that and this, as you may see, haue one and the same meaning: there hee saith,

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saith, *let vs feare*, least forsaking the promised rest, wee seeme to be frustrate: that is, least by such unfaithfulnesse as was in them, wee also make the promise to vs in vaine; heere hee saith, *let vs studie to enter into this rest*, least we fall into their example of unfaithfulnesse: thus the exhortation being all one, it is manifest, that this word, *let vs feare*, which he vsed first, hath the meaning of this word, *let vs studie*, which he vseth now: so that this is (as I told you then) the feare of Gods children, a carefull studie and endeouour, to walke faithfullie before God. And another good lesson we may here learne: sith the Apostle saith, *let vs studie*: it is plaine wee ought not to nourish in vs, (as the manner of the world is) a carelesse securitie, to speake and thinke of our hope in God, with a secure minde, as if we cared not greatly for it, or longed not much after it: such a carelesse minde is altogether vnmeet for the profession of the gospel of Christ: and it is a thing that we doo all vnderstand, none can excuse himselfe by ignorance, we know the fault by the triall of our owne heart, when we thinke of God, and his heauenly kingdome, what part and fellowship wee haue in it, wee can tell how our hearts are then affected, if it bee our ioy, our comfort, our consolation: if it draw our delight and studie after it, then are we children of that kingdome, then wee obey this calling of the Apostle, which is heere, *Let vs studie to enter into this rest*: but if we can thinke or speake of the kingdome of heauen, as we would speake of far countries, for talke sake, to heare what is said of them, but without any care whether we see them or no; then wee are seduced with the deceit of sinne, and this exhortation of the Apostle is made in vaine vnto vs. And let vs not heere, deceiue our selues to thinke, we haue our cares for the life to come, when we haue no care at all for it: our nature is heere very blind, and beleteth euen her owne vaine fancie: not onely Scribes and Phari-

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Pharises, and such froward sinners, doe presume much of their own righteousness, and glorie in themselves, but even Gods good people are soone beguiled with self-love, the
 3.3. Corinthians talked much that they were wise, that they were spirituall and holy men, but S. Paule saith vnto them; seeing such contentions, emulations, sects, are among you, you are yet children and you are carnall. So we (dearly beloved) if we will say we feare before God, our care, our studie, our heart is in the kingdome of God, and yet we laugh when we talke of his iudgements, make our iests and rimes with his holy words; or if wee be nothing moued in spirit when we speake of it, then are we not studious, but carelesse, secure, negligent, and we heare not this exhortation of the Apostle, *Let vs studie to enter into his rest.* and thus is this exhortation ended, made out of the words of the Prophet: *For if you will heare his voyce harden not your hearts.* *For the word of God is liuelie and mightie in operation, and sharper than any two edged sword, and entrencheth through, euen to the diuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, and of the ioynts, and of the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts, and the intents of the heart, neither is there any creature which is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open vnto his eyes, with whom we haue to doe.* In these words, the Apostle fettereth out the nature of the word of God vnto vs, vpon what occasion, wee may easilie see; hee hath taught that Christ is our onely Prophet, and we haue no other Scholemaster to teach vs, and instruct vs in the waies of God; he hath also earnestlie exhorted vs to heare his voyce, & faithfullie to hearken vnto him, lest we fall into the condemnation of others, who haue been despisers afore vs, and whose iudgement wee should not escape, for the word of God woundeth, euen into the soule of the sinner; thus he cometh to this description of the strength and force of Gods word,

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word, as may appeare by his owne words going before, *lest we fall into the same example of disobedience* thus proving it that we cannot escape, because the word is so strong and mightie. And this doctrine of the Apostle, let it this day be our instruction, if we do belecue: or if we thinke the Apostle sayth true, that the word of God hath so great power in it, let vs regard it, let vs giue our feare, our reuerence, our obediēce vnto it: for how great a sin must it needs be, to despise a thing that is so precious, and how great peril is there in it, to prouoke a thing against vs which is so strong? If it were but the roring of a Beare or Lion, it would make any of vs afraid, yet could it but only pearce into our eares: if it be but the voice of thunder, it seemeth to make the very earth to shake, yet is it but a bodily sound, & the spirit heareth it not awaies; what then? when he speaketh whom the marrow within our bones doth heare, how truly saith the Prophet of him, his voice shaketh not only the sea, and the drie land, *Agg. 1.7.* but the very heauens also? and can we haue yet any excuse, if we heare not him that speaketh so loud? if we belecue not him, to whom our own harts beare witness of his truth? Or if we feare not his word, whose voice shaketh both heauen and earth? Or are we borne of God, if so great vertue and power of God haue no feeling in vs? No, no, be not deceiued, God is not mocked, his sheepe heare his voice, we are not borne of him, but we are borne of hard rocky mountaines, a stonie generation, nourished & fed of cruel Tygers: if such instructiō, such teaching preuaile not with vs. Heare then (dearly beloved) heare & learne, that we may be edified: let our harts be softened, that we may haue the words of God writtē in thē. And seeing we haue so excellēt a prophet let vs be thāksful scholars, & grow vp in the knowledge of his doctrine, that it neuer be imputed to vs, that we haue hardened our harts & would not know his waies. And to the end

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we may take the more heed, let vs marke these words of the Apostle, in which he setteth out vnto vs, the great force of the word of God: the word of God (saith he) is liuelie, and sharper than any two edged sword, &c. This place is well to be weighed of vs; for of purpose the Apostle speaketh to teach vs what the word of God is, and what power it hath, both to quicken the faithfull, and wound the disobedient vnto death: whereunto so euer the Lord doth send it, it shall doo his will; no time, no place, no person, can possibly change it: no creature can breake the force of it; the worke that is appoynted for it to doo, it will assuredly bring to passe. Let soule and spirit, ioynts and marrow, heart and thoughts, striue still against it, it will wound all, and pearce through as a sharpe sword: even as all things are naked and bare before the eyes of the Lord who speaketh; neither let any man euer thinke, who so euer hee bee, that heareth or readeth this word of GOD, but that it worketh in him the will of God. Euen all wee heere present this day, when after this Sermon ended, wee shall returne to our callings, know it assuredly and thinke on it, as you are in your way, that the word spoken is entred into you: if it haue quickned your faith, it is the word of life; if it haue killed your old affections, it is the seede of your new birth: if it haue done you no good, it hath detected your corruption, and accuseth you in your owne conscience: for change it you shall not, make it fruitelesse you cannot: there is no defence against the strokes of it, but it pearceth through to the place, to which it is sent; if it light in faithfull places, it bringeth the power of God vnto saluation: if it fall where infidelitie is, or disobedience, it maketh the heart as flint, or as an Adamant stone. This is the effect of the Apostles meaning in these words, which you haue heard. The Prophet Esay to the same purpose, vseth

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vseth an apt similitude, who speaketh thus in the name of the Lord. Surely, as the raine commeth downe, and the snow from heauen, & returneth not thether, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring foorth and budde, that it may giue seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth: so shal my word be, that goeth out of my mouth, it shal not returne vnto me in vaine, but it shall accomplish that which I will, & it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. This Iohn Baptist taught vs, going before Christ to prepare his way, when he cried to the people: *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountaine and hill shall bee brought lowe,* crooked things shall be made straight, and the rough wayes shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the saluation of GOD; meaning heereby that all offences and stumbling blockes should be taken away, no power in the world should bee so great, which should not giue place to this woord, which is the power of God to saue all that doe beleue.

The Scriptures are full of such testimonies of the nature & strength of Gods word, to teach vs, both to feare before it, and to humble our selues, for it will preuaile: and also to trie our hearts, that it may haue in vs, a good & profitable worke, rather to renue vs in the spirit, than to harden vs in the deceites of sinne: but let vs now come to the words of the Apostle, and examine them all in their proper meaning.

It is sayde first, *the word of God is liuing*, which propertie may be attributed to the word of God, in diuerse respects: first in respect of vs, because it quickneth vs into a spirituall life, and without it wee are in darknesse and in the shadow of death; therefore it is a liuing word, and *the seede of our newe birth*. So Saint Paul sayeth, to the Corinthians, *in* ^{1 Pet. 1. 23} *Christ Iesu I haue begotten you through the Gospell*: and Saint ^{1 Cor. 4. 15.} Iohn sayeth, *of his owne will hath he begotten vs with the word* ^{Iac. 1. 18.}

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of life: expressly calling it, the liuing word, or the worde of life, because it quickneth vs (as I sayde, into a spirituall life; wherein without all doubting wee are taught assuredly to knowe, that if euer wee will become the children of God, that we shall no more liue our selues; but that Christ may liue in vs: thus wee must bee borne, and thus wee must be made a newe, in taking in to vs the seede of the woorde of God, and then as new borne babes desire the sincere milke of it, that we may grow thereby into the fulnesse of our age in Christ. If the Papists did well vnderstand this; they should also vnderstand with it, that themselves were bastards and no children, as being borne of mortall seede of fathers, of counsels, of decrees, of Popes, not of the immortall seede, which is the word of God. Another cause why the word is called liuing, is in respect of it selfe, because it is eternall, and abideth euer, according to the nature of the liuing God, whose word it is: so Saint Peter expressly calleth it, where he sayeth, wee be borne a newe of immortall seede, by the word of the liuing God, and abiding for euer: therefore attributing life and immortality, vnto the worde, because it is of the liuing and immortall GOD; of which we ought to learne, that there is no wisdom, no instruction, no discipline, by which we can apprehend eternall life, but onely the wisdom and instruction of the word of God: for what an absurd thing is it, that the wisdom of man, which is vaine, as man is vaine, which is transitory, earthly, and is abolished, should leade me into that life which fadeth not, but is eternall in heauen? Yea, what an absurd thing (I say) is it, seeing we our selues and all that is in vs, before the presence of the Lord must needes be changed, so that no man possibly can see him and liue, yet to thinke, that our wisdom can leade vs vnto him, or our reason can approach vnto the places where his glory dwelleth. Surely (dearely beloued)

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beloued) this is much more folly, than to seeke to gather grapes of thornes, or figges of brambles; for it is to seeke for light in darkenesse, and for life in death: for out of a corrupt minde and a froward heart, wee seeke for holy obedience and immortality, as many as say, that without the word of God they can please him: the papists do not yet vnderstand this, and therefore they weary themselves with their owne inuentions, and multiply ceremonies in their Churches, which God will cast out as he hath begun, till their madness be made manifest to all nations.

Another cause yet there is, why the word of God is called, *liuing*: and this cause most agreeable to this place; that is, because it entreth with power into euery part of vs: so that, as our life is dispersed into euery part, and wee feele it, both in griefe and pleasure: euen so, the vertue of the word of God pearceth into euery member, to bruse, (as the prophet saith) the very bones, or to fill them with marrow and fatnesse: this sense is plaine, and agreeable to all the words following, and in this same meaning Salomon calleth it also: *A liuing word*, as his wordes are plaine: *The light of the Lord is the breath of man, and it searcheth all the bowels of the bellie*: where also he calleth the *word, light*: because it shineth in mans heart as in a darke place, & trieth out all the secrets of his thoughts. in this meaning, heere the word is called liuely, as I tolde you before, the more to stirre them vp, not to neglect so high a Prophet as the sonne of GOD, whose word came with Maiesty and power vnto them.

The second title heere attributed to the worde, is, *that it is mighty in operation*: meaning, that it hath in it, force and vertue, able to subdue all enemies, and bring vs in obedience vnto Christ: this vertue of the word, Saint Paul notably setteth out to the Corinthians, magnifying his

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Apostleship by this meanes, our weapon (saith he) are strong by the power of God, to cast downe holdes, wherewith wee overcome imaginations, and euerie high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bring into captiuitie, euerie thought to the obedience of Christ, and haue readie vengeance against disobedience: how so euer a man magnifie himselfe, or a man exalt himselfe, in which arrogancy of spirit hee seemeth (as it were) buried in sinne, and his heart hardened against the grace of God, yet let him heare this word, and let it oft fall into his eares, for it is as the Prophet sayeth, a hammer, which breaketh the stone in peeces, and is able in the power of God, to mollifie his heatt; or, if the sinner be suncken downe so deepe, that hee will not rise, it will crush him downe deeper, that he may perish in his sinne, and so God sayeth to his Prophet Ieremy: *I will put my word into thy mouth, and it shall bee as fire, and this people shall bee as wood, and it shall deuoure them.* And this is it Saint Paul expressely witnesseth, to be the onely meanes to glorifie GOD, to preach the trueth of his word vnto all; for so (saith he) we are alwaies a sweete smelling sauour of Christ vnto God, as well in those that perish, as in those that be saued, to the one a sauour of life vnto life, to the other, of death vnto death. I would we that are preachers, could learne and beleue this, it would make vs leaue our vaine babling and much talke of philosophie and prophane thinges, and fill our mouthes onely with the woorde of the Lorde: for this onely is mightie in operation, the other hath at all no strength, no strength at all in this behalfe to glorifie GOD, or to conuert a sinner; but strong to delude the people with idle soundes, strong to tickle our eares with fond delight, strong to puffe vs vp with pride of our wittes, but more weake then water to teach vs true repentance: for prooffe I say, let the sinner come foorth, that hath bene conuerted by hearing

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hearing stories or fables of Poets, I am sure there is none; for faith is onelie by the word of God: or let the preacher come foorth that vseth such things, and doth it not either to please men, or to boast of his learning: for this he knoweth that the word onelie, not prophane things, conuerteth the people; and why then doth hee vse them? The Lord saith, by his Prophet Ieremie: *If they had stood in my counsel, and had declared my words to my people: then they should haue turned them from their euill way, and from the wickednesse of their owne inuentions:* a plaine testimonie why our preachings are vnprofitable to the people, euen because we speake in our owne fancies, and vse exhortations of our owne head. And againe, in the Prophet Malachie, the Lord declareth what couenant he made with Leuie, and how he promised to blesse his labours in the teaching of his people: *The lawe of trueth (saith he) was in his mouth, and there was no iniquitie found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equitie, and did turne many away from their sinnes.* Can any thing be spoken plainer? hold fast the word of God, commit the fruit of thy worke to the strength of it, and thou shalt finde it as is heere said, *mightie in operation,* and thou shalt conuert many sinners. Let them tell me now, all that haue eares to heare, what madnesse is it, to fill the peoples eares with vnknown tales, and sweet words, in which is nothing but a deceitfull sound, and leaue the word of God, mightie in working, to conuert their soules.

And you (dearest be loued) who delight in such vanitie, and make the preacher transgresse for your fancies sake, let mee but reason with you, as Saint Paule reasoned with the Galathians. Tell me, whether by such tales, or by hearing the word of God, haue you receiued the spirit, that is, whereby were you conuerted from your vanitie vnto the liuing God? was it the word of trueth, or els Gentile stories

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ries that wrought this vertue in you? and are you so foolish, that when you haue begun in the spirit, you will now go forward in the flesh? let vs leaue then this great abuse: both you, to turne away your eyes to follie, and the preacher to vse the pulpit like a Philosophers chaire. Wee may alledge sometime a storie, or prophane sentence, I denie it not, but when it is good doing it, when the remembring of the saying bringeth necessarilie into memorie, the word of God also, for which it was alledged, and giueth light vnto it, for a more cleare declaration of the trueth: yet, when the storie is told, and remembered by it selfe, there is then but a foolish delight of a vaine man, to helpe him in his talke, to multiplie idle words; there is no edifying in it all.

The third title of the word, now following, is this, *that it is more sharpe than a two edged sword*: and this similitude is often made in the scripture. The Prophet Esay, preaching the promises of God, he saith: *his mouth is like a sharpe sword*. And Saint Paule giuing armour to a Christian soldiour, by *which he may kill his enemies, he biddeth him take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*.

So, in the first and nineteenth Chapters of the Apocalypse, the Sonne of God is described *with a two edged sword proceeding out of his mouth*: meaning by these speeches, no other thing, but that by the preaching of the Gospel, Christ should get the victorie, and bring all enemies in subiection vnto him, euen as the Prophet Esay sayth: *He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he kill the vngodlie*: by which wee doo learne, that the more we pray, *Thy Kingdome come*: and the more wee wish the prosperitie of the Church, the more wee must strue to make the word of God knowne vnto all: for that is the sword and scepter of his kingdome.

The next title heere attributed to the word, is, *that it en-*
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trench into the diuision of the soule and the spirit, and of the ioynts and the marrow. By soule, heere he meaneth, that part of vs, in which our affections are, as ioy, sorrow, loue, hatred, anger, mildnes, or any such motion in vs of good or euill. By spirit, he meaneth, the most excellēt part of vs, in which is reason, wisdom, vnderstanding, to consider and meditate of all the workes of GOD. By *ioynts and marrow*, hee meaneth all the members of our bodie: and thus S. Paule vseth these words of soule, and spirit, and bodie, where he saith to the Thessalonians, as it is in the fifth Chapter: *The God of peace sanctifie you wholie, that your spirit and soule and bodie, may be kept blamelesse vntill the coming of Christ*: teaching vs, what is a true Christian, when his mind thinketh, his soule desireth, his bodie executeth nothing, but what is faultlesse before God and man.

So, when the word is said to diuide betweene the soule and the spirit, it noteth the mightie worke of it in the reprobate, to wound all their thoughts and desires with feare and terrour, and with astonishment of heart: contrarie in the elect, it crucifieth the old man with all the concupiscences and the desires of it. When it is said to diuide betweene the ioynts and the marrow; it sheweth the worke in all the members of our bodie, to sell them vnder sinne, to worke vncleannesse with greedinesse being hardened, or to sanctifie them in the power of God, that they may bee seruants of righteousness vnto him, being mollified. To bee short, in soule, spirit, ioynts, marrow, the Apostle meaneth, that the word once heard, the whole man is touched, and all that is within him, feeleth streight a change: except a heauier iudgement be vpon him, that he haue eares and heare not: wherein yet the word hath a worke, and maketh him fall deeper in the sleepe of sin: if we wil learne, examples are before vs of good & euill, what to leaue, or what to choose.

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The Prophet Abacuch, foreseeing the state of Christes Church, what danger should be vnto it, euen then to be oppressed againe, when it was not yet halfe growne vp, he saith: *When I heard it, my bellie trembled, my lips shooke at the voyce: rostenesse entred into my bowells, and I trembled in my selfe that I might rest in the day of trouble.* Heere wee see the word diuiding betweene the ioynts and the marrow, how it distempered the Prophets whole bodie, because of the heauie threatning of the Lord, and an excellent blessing was vnto him, for this feare and trembling at the voyce of the Lord, in the day of trouble he had rest. So the Prophet Esay, at Gods threatning against his Church, that euen in the daies of Christ, her peace should be broken off, and her flourishing glorie should againe be shadowed, he crieth: *my leanesse, my leanesse, woe is me: as if he had said, it consumed his flesh, and wore away his beautie, to heare the voyce of the Lord against his people: if thus we feare indeed at Gods threatnings, and as his Saints doo vnfaignedlie reioyce at all his promises, a good worke of his mightie word is in vs, and it is his power to saluation; but if we be despisers, and regard not the word that is brought vnto vs, a while wee may seeme to be in peace, as the sicke man in his sleepe feeleth not his paine, but the word will wound at the last the spirit, and we shall feele it in our flesh, what we haue despised.* Wee reade in Daniel of Belshazzar, a proud King, in the middes of his Princes and all his royaltie, he saw a hand writing, and the word of the Lord was before his eyes; straight his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the ioynts of his loynes were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, such feare and terrour came vpon him, when the voyce of the Lord did pronounce his iudgement. And not onely thus, but wee see it further, the wicked not only wounded, but also slaine with the

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the word of God. When many of the rulers of the people of Israel led the people to most shameful Idolatry, the Prophet Ezechiel was sent to preach vnto them, and when hee prophesied before them, Pelatiah the sonne of Benaiah, one of the Princes which seduced the people, dyed in his presence? A like example, is, of Ananias and Saphira, who at the voyce of Peter, did both fall downe dead: so true it is that the word is forceable, to deuide and enter betweene our raines, that is, to slay the wicked, and to quicken the godly. Last of all, it is heere sayd, that the word discerneth betweene the thoughts and intents of the heart, meaning, that howsoeuer the hart of man is prepared, the word of God directeth it, either more to bee hardened with the deceits of sinne, or wholly to bee renewed to the loue of righteousnesse.

It followeth now: *Neither is there any creature which is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open vnto his eyes, with whom we haue to doe.* These words shewe an excellent prooffe, of all the former things spoken of the word: for, seeing it is the word of God, how should it not haue the power of God; if among men, as every one hath most power, so his word is most feared: how should it not bee, but God, who is the searcher of our hearts and reins, and is almighty ouer all, but that his word should haue of his nature, vertue and power, to make the proud to feare, and to comfort the humbled. Let vs therefore now bee wise in time, and let the word of the Lord fashion all our hearts; if it doe not, yet it worketh still, and wee shall one day know what voyce wee haue despised: for as it is heere, that all things are open vnto his eyes, so wee shall heare his voyce, when in all things it shall shewe his power. It shall speake vnto all creatures, and they shall heare it: the earth and sea shall bring the bodica which they haue consumed: the fire shall

