

## SERMON XIII.

*But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—VER. 4-6.*

THE Apostle had handled in the verses before, and given the most exact description of that wretched and deplorable estate which by nature we lie in; dead in sins and trespasses, and children of wrath. And he ushereth in our salvation, both in the thing and in the causes of it, with this 'but' here: 'But God, who is rich in mercy,' &c. Which is the greatest turn that ever was, that men dead in sins and trespasses, guilty of death over and over, and children of wrath by nature, he that is the just God should not have destroyed them. No, but, saith he, 'God, who is rich in mercy,' or, 'God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us.' There was an ambushment of everlasting love and riches of mercy laid up in him, which that love hath disposed of for the salvation of them he hath chosen; and out of that mercy, and out of that love, when we were thus dead in sins and trespasses, he hath quickened us together with Christ. Take notice of it; saith he, 'by grace ye are saved.'

His scope is to hold forth, and withal to magnify, those two great causes of our salvation that are in God himself. The one is, that act of love wherewith he loved us and continued to love us, which, he saith, is a great love; and, secondly, those riches of mercy which are in him.

The greatness of this love I have endeavoured, so far as this text sets it forth, to lay open to you. I shall only give you in brief the heads of what I have said concerning it, and so proceed to speak of the riches of that mercy which are in God. I told you, the reason why I spake of love first was this: because, as here you see, it is his love, that though it is not the cause of the mercy that is in him, yet it is that which disposeth of all the treasury of mercy unto sinners, because he had first set his love upon them, and so great a love as he had done.

Great, first, in respect of the subject of it, which is God; and if God will fall in love, how great will that love be!

It is great, secondly, in respect of the kind of it; *his* love. The Apostle doth not only say, 'for the love wherewith he loved us,' but, 'for *his* great love wherewith he loved us,' such a love as the creatures bear not; and the love 'wherewith he *hath* loved us,' not the love 'wherewith he did love us' when he did convert us, but loved us from everlasting. 'With an everlasting love have I drawn thee,' or rather, 'have I extended towards thee.'

Lastly, the consideration of the persons upon whom this love is pitched argues the greatness of it,—*us*, us distinct, us by name, and us, not others, though others were children of wrath as well as we. 'We were,' saith he, 'by nature children of wrath, even as others: but God, for the great love,' &c.

These things I insisted largely upon in the last discourse.

I am now to come to speak of the *riches of mercy* which are in God, so far forth as shall serve to open this text, and shall be proper to that which we have in hand.

*But God, who is rich in mercy, &c.*—These are, my brethren, very great expressions; therefore if I shall a little insist upon them, more than I have done upon former things, or than I shall do for time to come, you may pardon me. Yet what belongs to this head of *riches of mercy*, so far as this text holds it forth, I purpose to despatch in this discourse.

The Apostle useth this high epithet, 'riches,' when he speaks of mercy and of grace, five times in this epistle. In the 1st chapter, ver. 7, you have it: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' Then you have it here, in this 4th verse of the 2d chapter, 'God, who is rich in mercy.' Then, thirdly, you have it in the 7th verse of this chapter again, and there you have it with an addition, 'exceeding riches of his grace.' And then, fourthly, you have it in the 3d chapter, ver. 8, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' And then again, lastly, you have it in the 16th verse of the 3d chapter, 'that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory.' I shall not so speak to it therefore now but that I shall reserve matter that shall be proper unto those texts when I come to speak to them.

I need not then stand to give you any parallel scriptures to shew that God is called 'rich in mercy,' or that mercy in God is called 'rich mercy;' it being four or five times in this epistle attributed unto mercy. I shall only name that in Rom. x. 12, 'The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.' The Apostle indeed doth not there say that he is rich in mercy, but he means it; for he would have said else, God is good unto all. But he thought that expression too little, and therefore he comes out with this, he is rich unto all; that is, he is infinite, overflowing in goodness, he is good to a profuseness, he is good to the pouring forth of riches, he is good to an abundance. He speaks of mercy, for he speaks of salvation; and he had said just before, ver. 11, but only this, and it was but a slender expression, 'Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;' but when he comes to prove it, then saith he, 'The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him; for whosoever shall call upon the name of Lord shall be saved.' For the proof of it, when he comes to speak of that, he speaks of the most; though when he speaks of the thing, he speaks of the least.

Now, 'riches of mercy' in God, is a metaphor borrowed from other riches amongst men, and he speaks of God here after the manner of men. Or, if you will, rather other things are called riches, by way of similitude from God; for as God only is good, as Christ saith, so only he is rich: 1 Chron. xxix. 12, 'Both riches and honour come of thee.' He only is good, because he is the fountain of all goodness; and he only is rich, because he is the fountain of all riches. So as indeed other things are called riches because of a similitude to what is in him. But if we take it, as most do, to be spoken by a borrowed similitude from outward riches, alas! still it doth not reach it. Why? Because that outward riches amongst men, they are all outward things, therefore they are said to have wings and to fly away, leave the man still, for they are but accidental to him. You have the inventory of the riches of Tyre in Ezek. xxvii., and they are all of things without. Now the truth is, that thus God is said to be rich too, in respect of outward things, that are outward to himself. 'The earth,' saith the Psalmist, 'is full of his riches,' Ps. civ. 24. Yet these are all outward things unto

God, even as they are unto us, though they are his riches properly, because they all come of him. And, Deut. xxviii. 12, 'The Lord shall open to thee his good treasure;' speaking of God's blessing his people, which is but the blessings of the earth, and the dews of heaven. But, alas! these are not the riches he valueth; but, my brethren, the riches that he valueth are the riches that are in his own nature. 'Let not the rich man glory in his riches,' Jer. ix. 23. God himself glories not in these riches, though the whole earth is his, but that he exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth (ver. 24), that he is merciful and gracious. In these respects he is said to be rich, and rich in mercy.

Inward worth, or inward excellency of any kind, is called riches; as in James ii. 5, men are said to be 'rich in faith;' and in 1 Cor. i. 5, 'enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge.' It is there a metaphor borrowed from what is outward, yet applied to what is inward; and so here in the text riches are applied to mercy in God. Now then to open both the thing and the phrase to you:—

I shall chalk out to you how I mean to handle this thing, in such a way as is most proper to the scope of the Apostle here, and I will not go out of it. There is a double way of handling the riches of this mercy that is in God:—

The first is, to shew forth the eminent *properties* and excellencies that are in the mercies of God, which may be called the riches of this mercy, and the richness of that grace that is in him.

Or, secondly, by shewing that there is *abundance* of these riches in God.

These are two distinct things; and the one will serve and fit the 7th verse, for which I will reserve it, but the other fitteth this verse: therefore I shall speak properly and punctually to what the Apostle here expresseth.

*Riches* is attributed both to *things* and to *persons*, and in a differing respect.

Richness, or riches, is attributed to things, and then it importeth the excellency of them. As, rich apparel, Ezek. xxvii. 24; or whatsoever else you will apply it unto. Yea, it is applied to the excellency in creatures that do not make men rich; as wine is called rich wine, that is, that which is full of strength and pleasantness. It notes out, I say, the excellency of the thing.

But then there are riches ascribed to the persons that possess them, in respect of having an abundance of what is most excellent.

Now, mark it, riches attributed to the thing; that is, unto mercy itself; that you have in the 7th verse,—though the other will come in there too, yet more properly that,—'that he might shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace.' There is the riches of the thing, the riches of the grace itself. And so also all those excellent properties that are in grace, in mercy: the freeness, the worth, the value, the price, the tenderness, the sweetness, or what you will,—for the inward worth or excellency of anything is called, in use of speech, the richness of it, as a rich wine, a rich cordial, whatsoever is pleasant or excellent,—riches are attributed to all the properties of it. Now I shall not here handle the rich properties that are in mercy, which God shews forth in saving us; I shall cut off all those, and reserve them for the 7th verse. I shall now only speak to the second, namely, riches attributed to the person or subject that hath this mercy; for you see the phrase here is, that 'God is rich in mercy;' and so I shall speak of that treasury that is in him, and is an abundance to flowing over. A man may have wine that is rich, and yet not be rich himself; but God is rich in mercy, and hath riches of mercy in him.

Now in handling the riches of mercy that are in God, it may be done two ways :—

First, To handle them as they are the *cause and original* in God of our salvation, as they do move him thereunto, and as they are the spring or mine of all the mercies we receive. Or—

Secondly, To handle them by way of *outward demonstration*, in the effects, which may argue and evidence the greatness of these riches.

Now ver. 4 and ver. 7 share these two between them. The 7th verse runs most upon the demonstration, or holding forth a manifestation of all the mercies that God had vouchsafed. For so he endeth in the close of that verse; ‘that in the ages to come,’ saith he, ‘he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.’ But these words in ver. 4 come in casually, they come in as they are the motive in God which moved him to quicken us. And therefore that of the demonstration of the riches of mercy in the effects, that shall come in at ver. 7, for there it is most proper.

Here are three things which I shall handle in these words for the opening of them :—

1. That mercy is a *peculiar excellency* in God, and he is therefore said to be ‘rich in mercy.’ This I shall speak to in general, and you shall see it will naturally arise from the phrase in the text.

2. I shall open the *abundance of the riches of mercy that are in God subjectively*.

3. I shall shew you *what riches of mercy, as the cause of our salvation, are in God*, and do lie by him. ‘God, who is rich in mercy,’ saith he, ‘for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us,’ &c. And to handle them thus it is proper; all this is natural, it is not to go out of the text, it is but to open it; for we must not fetch in all that can be said of mercy when we come to expound scriptures, which is the work we have now in hand.

*First*, I say, *mercy is a peculiar excellency in God*. He reckons this of all other excellencies the highest and greatest. You shall find this amongst men, though they possess many excellencies, yet they are said to be rich only in what is eminently excellent; they are said to be rich only in respect of something they possess in a more peculiar manner, whether riches be applied to inward excellencies of the mind or to outward. If to inward excellencies, let a man have never so much wisdom, yet his riches lie in faith; ‘rich in faith,’ saith the Apostle. It doth not lie in his human prudence or wisdom, but in his faith, for faith is the superior and supreme excellency in him, in respect of which he is said to be rich, and which makes a man differ from other men, even as reason makes a man differ from a beast. If you attribute riches to outward things, a man is said to be rich only in that which is most eminently excellent; as Abraham, Gen. xiii. 2, is said to be rich in silver and in gold. Therefore you know gold and silver and precious stones are in an eminent manner counted riches, or that which will procure them. Money, saith Solomon, answereth all things, Eccles. x. 19. And in Eccles. ii. 8, speaking of himself as being a king, saith he, ‘I gathered me silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings.’ It was the manner of kings then, and so is now; and if you travel into foreign parts you shall see it used more than with us; they have all the rarities of what kind soever, which they reserve in a treasury, in a closet or study, great pearls and precious stones, and other rarities—these are the peculiar treasure of kings. So it is here. God, though he hath other excellencies in him, and all excellencies and perfections, yet, not-

withstanding, he is pleased to style himself rich in a peculiar manner in respect of mercy; this is the peculiar treasure of the King of kings. As Solomon gathered him silver and gold and the peculiar treasure of kings, so, though God hath justice and power, and all these things in him, yet that which he peculiarly accounteth the treasure of God himself is his mercy; 'God, who is rich in mercy,' saith the text.

You shall not read in all the Scripture, that I know of, that God is said to be rich in wrath, or rich in justice, or rich in power, though all these are inward perfections in him. Indeed you shall find this, that what is the object of his wrath he reckons a treasury for him too, but it is not ascribed to the attribute itself: Deut. xxxii. 33, 34, 'Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?' But what speaks he of? He speaks of men's sins, as in the verses before: 'Their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Is not this,' saith he, 'laid up in store with me?' &c. He speaks of these but as of outward riches to him, which will indeed one day bring in a revenue of glory to his justice. Therefore you see he useth those phrases that belong to external things; 'laid up in store with me,' saith he, 'and sealed up among my treasures.' So that indeed the sinner is rather said to treasure up wrath than God: Rom. ii. 5, 'After thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath,'—that is, the treasury of wrath in him, though God reckons it also his, because it is a prey for his justice to feed upon, and to fetch a world of glory out of it. But now you shall find still that riches is applied unto mercy, and if it be not only, yet this I am sure of, that it is most frequently, and I think indeed it may be said only. The Scripture speaks of riches of glory, Eph. iii. 16, 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory.' Yet eminently mercy is there intended; for it is that which God bestows, and which the Apostle there prayeth for. And he calls his mercy there his glory, as elsewhere he doth, as being the most eminent excellency in God. Saith he, in Jer. ix. 24, 'Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.'

Now, to what doth the Apostle apply this in 1 Cor. i. 30, 31? Unto God's giving of Jesus Christ, out of his abundant mercy, to be righteousness and redemption and all things for us. So that indeed here lies that which God would have us to glory in, and which he himself glories in, that we know him which exerciseth loving-kindness, and makes Christ our righteousness. You know Solomon saith, Prov. xix. 11, that it is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression; herein lies the glory of God. That in Rom. ix. 22, 23, compared, is observable. In ver. 22, where he speaks of God's making known the power of his wrath, saith he, 'God, willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known.' But in ver. 23, when he comes to speak of mercy, he saith, 'that he might make known the riches of his glory;' there riches come in. And what glory doth he mean? Certainly he means the glory of his grace in a more eminent manner, as appeareth by the denomination of the subject; 'upon the vessels of mercy,' saith he. And so in Rom. x. 12, where he is said to be 'rich unto all that call upon him.' By riches there the meaning is, he is rich in goodness; he is, as I said, good to a richness, good to a profuseness, unto all that call upon him. So that indeed, my brethren, it is that peculiar attribute of mercy that riches is ascribed unto. There is one place, and it is in Rom. xi. 33, where riches is

applied to the wisdom and knowledge of God. But believe it, the Apostle speaks there of electing knowledge and wisdom, that contriveth mercy for us, as the very words before shew, and as the conclusion of all his discourse in the next chapter, ver. 1, makes apparent, where, having ended his discourse concerning God's having mercy upon Jew and Gentile, he saith, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God.' So that indeed mercy carries away the name of these riches, at leastwise most frequently in the New Testament.

Now, do but think with yourselves, that I may quicken your hearts a little. There is nothing could be more comfortable to us than this, that God should account mercy, of all things else, to be his riches, and himself to be rich in a more special manner in mercy. You may see the difference between God and men in their riches. Whilst kings and great men account their riches in other things, God accounts his riches in being merciful. My brethren, mercy, if you consider it, what is it? Why, it is that which God himself hath no need of; and therefore, when we say he is merciful, it wholly respects the creature and the good of the creature, and to deliver the creature out of misery. If he had said, 'God is rich in love,' that is unto himself, for he loves himself; but merciful he is not to himself, neither is he capable of mercy from himself. Therefore, when he saith he is rich in mercy, what can be more comfortable unto us than that that which God accounteth his only, or at least his chiefest riches, is that which tendeth to our good and salvation? He himself, indeed, hath a glory out of it; therefore it is called riches of glory, chap. i. 18. But yet take it as mercy, and it is that which peculiarly concerns us and our good.

If his riches lay in anything else, we might not have so much hope and comfort, for he would employ those riches for the good of himself, as we see rich men in the world do. Rich men, though they give away crumbs from their table, as the expression is in the parable, yet the chief of their riches is all employed for themselves and their children. But if any one's riches should lie only in mercy and in grace, and himself were in himself perfectly happy, so that he himself hath no need of all those riches, surely this must be all for poor creatures who are capable of mercy, and are the objects of mercy, and sinners; they have the chiefest share in it. It is an observable thing that in Rom. x. 12, where God is said to be 'rich unto all,' not rich in himself, but rich unto us; so the phrase runs. If there were a man that were rich in all things that the world accounts riches, and that man should account it his chiefest riches to give all this away, how would all the world come to him! My brethren, thus it is with God. He is rich in that attribute that gives all away, for he is said to be rich in mercy. I shall speak a little more to this in the close of all, by way of use; therefore I urge it now no more.

I come to the *second* thing, viz., To open to you *the abundance of these riches of mercy that are in God.*

This phrase in the text, 'God, who is rich in mercy,' take it simply, and it imports—

First, A fulness and *an abundance of mercy in God*, even to superfluity and to flowing over. Any one that is said to be rich in anything hath an abundance of it, or else he cannot be said to be rich. 'Now ye are full,' saith the Apostle, and 'ye are rich,' in 1 Cor. iv. 8. If there be not a fulness, there is not riches. 'O thou that art abundant in treasures,' saith he to Babylon, in Jer. li. 13. A man is then said to be rich when he is abundant in treasures to an overplus. 'Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure,' saith the Psalmist, Ps. xvii. 14, for he calls all these outward things in the world God's treasure; 'and they leave the rest of their substance'—so

we translate it—'to their babes;' they have an overplus, so Ainsworth and others read it. Now God hath mercy in him to an abundance, to an overplus: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.' There is an abundance of mercy in him, even to a flowing over: 1 Tim. i. 14, 'The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant;' it was overfull, it was to a flowing over. In Rom. v. 17, it is said that those that are pardoned receive abundance of grace and mercy. And for our comfort, it is good to compare the expressions of the Scripture one with another. In that Rom. v. 20, it is said that sin doth abound. When sin abounded, saith he, the measure of man's iniquity was brimful; but when he comes to speak of grace, he puts an ὑπερ upon it; ὑπερπερισσεύσασεν, saith he, 'grace did much more abound.' There was a flowing, and a flowing over of grace, as the word there signifies. Grace did not only overflow, but infinitely overflow, it was over-superfluous, there was more than enough of it for the salvation of sinners.

Now it is said to be abundant—

1. In respect of the multitude of the mercies that are in God.
2. In respect of the variety of them.
3. In respect of the greatness of them, the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of them.

1. I say, in respect of the *multitude* of mercies in God. You shall therefore find that the Scripture speaks of mercies under multitudes: Ps. li. 1, 'According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions;' Ps. lxxix. 13, 'O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me;' Isa. lv. 7, 'Our God, he will multiply to pardon,' as the word there is, which we translate, 'he will abundantly pardon.'

2. In respect of their *variety*, they are manifold mercies. Riches lie in a variety. In Ezek. xxvii. 12, Tyre is said to have a multitude of all kinds of riches. Now as God hath a multitude of mercies, so he hath a multitude of all kinds of mercies. Therefore you shall find in the Scripture that mercy still runs in the plural, not only to note out that they are many, but that they are manifold, there is variety of them. Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God.' In Neh. ix. 19, 27, a chapter wherein God and man striveth, as it were, whether God's mercies or man's sin should outvie one another, there is mention made of the manifoldness of his mercies. And in Isa. lxiii. 7, there is 'the multitude of his loving-kindnesses,' which are there called the 'praises of the Lord,' because they are his glory. As our hearts and the devil are the father of variety of sins, so God is the father of variety of mercies, and they are as so many children to him which he begets. And there is no sin or misery but God hath a mercy for it, and he hath a multitude of mercies of every kind too; even like an apothecary that hath an abundance of drugs of all sorts for all kind of diseases. As there is no disease but God hath made a remedy for it, so there is no misery but God hath mercy for it. He hath found out a remedy for sin, the hardest thing to cure of all things else, and therefore he hath provided a remedy for all other misery. And as there are variety of miseries which the creature is subject unto, so he hath in himself a shop, a treasury of all sorts of mercies, divided into several promises in the Scripture, which are but as so many boxes of this treasure, the caskets of variety of mercies. If thy heart be hard, his mercies are tender. If thy heart be dead, he hath mercy to quicken it, as Ps. cxix. hath it again and again. If thou be sick, he hath mercy to heal thee. If thou be sinful, he hath mercies to sanctify and cleanse thee. As large and as various as are our wants, so large and various are his mercies. So as we may come boldly to find grace and mercy to help us in time of need,

a mercy for every need, as the Apostle speaks. All the mercies that are in his own heart he hath transplanted them into several beds, as I may so express it, in the garden of the promises, where they grow, and he hath abundance of variety of them, suited to all the variety of the diseases of the soul.

Secondly, As riches are attributed unto mercy in respect of abundance, so in respect of *hiddenness and unknownness*. We use to say of a rich man that he is of an unknown wealth and estate; so the Scripture calls it hidden treasure. In Isa. xlv. 3, 'I will give thee,' saith he, speaking of Cyrus, 'the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.' Now, the mercies of God, they are hidden, they are unsearchable. As there are curses, written and not written,—as in Deut. xxviii. 61, after the mention of several curses for disobedience, he saith, 'Also I will bring upon thee every plague which is not written in this book,'—so there are also blessings which are not written. He had told them of blessings that he would bestow upon them for their obedience in the former part of that chapter, but he tells them, ver. 12, as the conclusion of all the blessings enumerated before, that he had a treasury to open: 'The Lord,' saith he, 'shall open upon thee his good treasure;' as if he had not mentioned half before, and that those he had mentioned were but a few instances of that treasure of mercy he had by him. And in that respect, because of hiddenness, the riches of mercy in God are called a depth of riches, Rom. xi. 33, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' If he had said, O the depth! it had been enough; but he saith, O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments! For it is a treasury that hath no bottom, it is past finding out. He speaks of mercy, because he speaks of foreknowledge, which contriveth ways of shewing mercy, as the beginning of chap. xi. shews. Now, my brethren, if his judgments be a great depth, as you have it, Ps. xxxvi. 6, 'Thy judgments are a great deep;' his mercies then are much more. For if you compare ver. 5–7 of that psalm, you shall find that by judgments he doth not mean outward judgments of wrath and vengeance; but he speaks of mercy, and but of common mercy there, the works of his providence,—for so 'judgments' is often taken in the Scripture likewise,—for when he saith, 'Thy judgments are a great deep, O Lord,' it follows, 'Thou preservest man and beast,' meaning the mercies he sheweth to man and beast in common: these, he saith, are a great deep. And the Apostle, in that Rom. xi.—which place this of the psalms openeth—saith they are unsearchable, and past finding out.

Now, I say, if these judgments of God are a great deep, these common mercies that are exercised to man and beast, how excellent is his loving-kindness—for so it follows in that psalm—or his grace unto those that trust in him? 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. Oh, continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee!' &c. Clearly this is the meaning of it. If, saith he, thou shewest so much mercy and goodness and faithfulness here in the earth, that thy mercy is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds, and thy righteousness is like the great mountains, and thy judgments and common ways of mercy, whereby thou preservest man and beast, are a great deep; what is that mercy thou hast laid up for those that fear thee! The psalmist breaks out, How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord, to the sons of men that trust in thee! If the earth be so full of thy mercy, as indeed it is, for riches of patience and long-suffering



are the common mercies which all the world live upon; if these mercies reach to the clouds, and are over all his works, what hath he reserved and laid up for those that are vessels of mercy, whom he hath prepared for mercy, whom he hath widened and extended for mercy! The Scripture itself cannot hold them. There are mercies written and unwritten; there is a treasury laid up in heaven, to be broke up at the latter day, which we know not of. And what is the reason? Because God sheweth mercy 'according to his own heart,' 1 Chron. xvii. 19. Now if a king give, he will give as a king, according to his riches; so doth God. In 1 Kings x. 13, it is said that King Solomon 'gave the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked.' So will God do; open thy mouth as wide as thou canst, ask of God what riches of mercy thou wilt, he will give thee all thy desire. 'Besides,' saith the text, 'that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.' So here, God hath mercy to give whatsoever thou canst ask, besides those hidden treasures of mercy which he hath lying by him, to bestow according to his own greatness.

Thirdly, Riches imply, as abundance and hiddenness, so *inexhaustedness*. You shall find, in Isa. ii. 7, mention made of treasures that have no end; for that is riches indeed that seems to have no bottom. Such is the mercy of God, it is riches of mercy, mercy that hath no end, no bottom. He can forgive great sins, and continue to do it: 'Forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,' saith the text, Exod. xxxiv.; and so in Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?' In Matt. xviii. 24, 27, speaking there in the parable of forgiveness, he saith, he forgave ten thousand talents which one that was brought unto him owed him; and he speaks of that common forgiveness of a temporary believer too. Ten thousand talents is a mighty sum. Do but think what they are. Amaziah, in 2 Chron. xxv. 6, hired a hundred thousand mighty men of valour for an hundred talents. What would a thousand talents do then? What would ten thousand talents do then? All this is to express the great riches of his mercy in forgiving. When thou wast first turned unto God, what a world of sin didst thou bring with thee! ten thousand talents! He forgave them all, when he first quickened thee, when he first converted thee, and he doth continue, and will continue, to do so too. 'How oft,' saith Peter, in that Matt. xviii. 21, 'shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?' Thou art a niggard, saith Christ; forgive not until seven times, but until seventy times seven. And Christ there alludeth to that phrase of the Jews, when they would express an unlimited number, they would say, till seven times: Gen. iv. 24, 'Cain shall be avenged sevenfold;' they went no further than to seven to express an unknown number. But, saith Christ, I say, forgive until seventy times seven. And mark, as I may say, the gracious wit of the allusion. 'Until seven times,' is spoken of vengeance; but when he speaks of forgiveness, he saith, 'until seventy times seven;' that is, to an infinity. So that though his vengeance be to seven times, his mercy is to seventy times seven. His compassions are said to 'fail not,' in Lam. iii. 22, and that because they are 'renewed every morning.' But I will not insist upon opening that neither, for I think I spoke more largely to it heretofore, and I would speak those things now which I did not speak then. My brethren, they are mercies from everlasting, and they will continue unto everlasting; it is a treasure that can never be spent, never be exhausted, unto eternity. In Isa. lxiv. 5, 'In thy mercy is continuance.' If God will but continue to be merciful to me, will a poor soul say, I have enough. Why, saith he, 'in his mercies is

continuance, and we shall be saved.' Hath God, or can God pardon thee hitherto, but now thou hast sinned again? Oh, do but stretch them out a little further. Why, he will stretch them out unto eternity, unto everlasting; and if one *everlasting* be not enough, there are twenty-six *everlastings* in one psalm, Ps. cxxxvi. In Isa. liv. 8, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.'

And then again, God is said to be rich in mercy because he is *rich unto all*, unto multitudes; not unto one, or unto some only, but unto all that do come in, that do call upon him, Rom. x. 12; unto the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, as here it is. And indeed, my brethren, when is it that that attribute 'riches' began to be given unto the mercy and grace of God, but when the calling of the Gentiles began to be spoken of, because it is an extensive riches, a riches that serves all the world? I have a treasure of riches by me, saith God, and do you think I will coop myself up to the Jews only? No, he is Lord over all, and rich unto all that call upon him. And this is proper unto the scope here,—it is the observation of Cajetan upon the place,—for you shall observe that the Apostle all along, both in the first chapter and in this, had carried it both to Jew and to Gentile, that God predestinated the Jews, and predestinated the Gentiles also, &c. He sheweth forth his mercy unto all, he doth not do it to a few, but to all sorts of multitudes of men.

And so much now for the second head, namely, the abundance of the riches of mercy that are in God.

I come now to the *third*, viz., To shew you *what riches of mercy, as the cause of our salvation, are in God*. This phrase, 'rich in mercy,' I told you, comes in here as the cause of our salvation. Now God is rich in mercy three ways; he hath three treasuries, as I may so speak, of mercies, that do lie by him:—

1. He hath the riches of his own nature, of the mercies that are natural to him, as I shewed in the last discourse that mercy was natural to him. We were by nature, saith he, 'children of wrath,' but God is by nature 'rich in mercy.'

2. He hath not only riches of mercy in his nature,—for so he might have had, and never a sinner the better,—but he hath laid up riches of mercy in his everlasting purposes and decrees, as much as the elect can spend, or shall spend.

3. He hath acquired riches, purchased riches; he hath all the merits of Christ lying by him, that purchased all the mercies that ever he meant to bestow.

And all these three he had as the causes that moved him to shew mercy to us. 'God, who is rich in mercy,' saith he; rich in his own nature, rich in his everlasting purposes of mercy, rich in respect of that purchase of mercy which Christ brought in to him.

He is, first, rich in respect of a mine of mercies which are in his own heart, which are in his own nature. My brethren, this is the difference betwixt God's riches and man's. Man's riches are gotten by receiving, because they consist in outward things, they are added to a man; and indeed they are, if great, usually gotten by despoiling of others, and others are the poorer for it; but God's riches are all in himself, himself is the mine of them. I shewed you once, of which I will not speak one whit now, the West Indies of all these mercies, and the proceed was this,—and I know nothing more to set forth the mercy of God,—that all the attributes that are in God, all his wisdom, all his truth, all his very justice itself, all that is in God, moves

him to be merciful. To make good this is a great undertaking; but the Scripture is so clear in it, as in nothing more. Now if there were an elixir, a philosopher's stone, as they call it, that would turn all that a man hath into gold, how rich would that man be! Why, mercy in God turns all his attributes to itself, to those that God loves. And therefore, in Exod. xxxiv. it is made his whole name. 'The Lord,' saith he, ver. 5, 'descended in a cloud, and proclaimed the name of the Lord; and the Lord passed by, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, merciful and gracious,' &c.

I come now to the second, how there is a mine of mercy laid up in his purposes and decrees. A man is said to be rich that hath a stock and treasure laid up by him. 'Thou hast much goods laid up for many years,' saith the rich man in the parable. Now God hath so. He is not only infinitely merciful in his nature,—that is the mine,—but in his purposes and decrees. He hath laid by as many mercies for his children as they shall for ever spend, or stand in need of. Mercies might have been in his nature, and reserved to himself. He might have had that treasure, and have hid it. No, but he took what was in his nature, in his own gracious disposition. He found himself to be so and so compassionate to sinners, and he decrees so to be in the manifestation of it to them. If you compare that place in Exod. xx. 5, 6, with Exod. xxxiv. 7, you shall find that the text saith that he reserveth or keepeth mercy, lays it up by him as a stock and as a treasure. And for how long doth he lay it up? What, for one or two generations? So indeed he saith in respect of punishing. 'Visiting,' saith he, 'the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;' but 'he keepeth mercy for thousands of generations of them that love him.' So that, look what proportion three or four have to millions, that proportion hath the treasury of mercy to that of justice and vengeance. God stretcheth the supposition beyond what will ever fall out; for in the succession of men there will not be a thousand generations, there hath not been a hundred since the world stood. But to shew the great stock of mercy which he hath reserved by him, he saith, if there were thousands of generations, and ten thousands of generations, if this world should last so long, he hath reserved mercy enough for them all, and all this mercy he will empty into the vessels of mercy. Therefore mercy is said to be from everlasting to everlasting. How long hath this stock and treasury of mercy been lying up too? It hath been lying up even from everlasting. And therefore David, in Ps. xxv. 6, hath recourse to the mercies of God, which, he saith, 'have been for ever of old.'

And, my brethren, if God have been thinking thoughts of mercy from everlasting to those that are his, what a stock and treasury do these thoughts arise to, besides those that are in his nature and disposition! This is in his actual purposes and intentions, which he hath thought, and doth think over, again and again, every moment. Ps. xl. 5, 'Many, O Lord, are thy wonderful works, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward,' saith Jesus Christ; for it is a psalm of Christ, and quoted by the Apostle, and applied unto Christ in Heb. x., 'How many are thy thoughts to us-ward!'—he speaks it in the name of the human nature,—that is, to me and mine. 'If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.' And what is the reason? Because God hath studied mercies for his children, even from everlasting. And then, 'He reneweth his mercies every morning;' not that any mercies are new, but he actually thinketh over mercies again and again, and so he brings out of his treasury mercies both new and old, and the old are always new. What a stock, my brethren, must this needs amount unto! Mercies

from everlasting to everlasting, so you have it in Ps. ciii. 17. And these mercies always new, fresh every morning. Look therefore for mercy when you come to heaven. You have the phrase of 'finding mercy at that day' in 2 Tim. i. 18. There is indeed a stock of mercies laid up in heaven. 'Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens,' saith Ps. xxxvi. 5. And the mercies that are in heaven are higher and greater, infinitely greater mercies, that we shall have when we come thither, than what we have here. It is a treasury which God hath laid up there in his own everlasting purposes, Col. i. 5.

And, my brethren, let me tell you this, that God, when he laid up mercies for his children, he did not say, I will lay up such a stock, or so much mercy. This he doth indeed to wicked men. He lays by a pittance, an allowance of mercy for them, gives them such a portion of the riches of his long-suffering and patience, which is called riches too, because it is the glory of God, and an eminent excellency in him. Carnal men, I say, whom God means to throw away, he saith of them, I will lay by so much, and when you have spent this, you shall have a treasure of wrath for it; and the truth is, when that portion of mercy is spent, they are undone. But God hath laid by mercies for his saints, without telling of it what his children shall spend. They are called the 'sure mercies of David.' And in Ps. lxxxix., where the covenant with David is mentioned, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;' and suppose they do it, if it may be supposed, never so much, 'nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: my covenant will I not break,' &c. So that they are the sure mercies of David, for God hath laid mercies by him unlimited. Suppose they do thus and thus, and never so much,—and his mercy shall be sure to keep them from the sin against the Holy Ghost,—let them do thus and thus, nevertheless I will be thus and thus merciful to them. He hath laid by in his own purposes an indefinite mercy for them. Therefore now, my brethren, if you could suppose that those whom God loves should live in this world in that mixture of sin and grace we now are in unto eternity, God hath laid by mercies enough to pardon you and to pity you notwithstanding, and to keep communion and fellowship with you. He that pardoned the sin of nine hundred years to Adam, he would have pardoned nine thousand, and nine thousand after that, even unto eternity, if he had continued; such a stock and treasure of mercy hath God lying by him.

The third and last stock which God may be said to be rich in, is in the mercies purchased, and that is by the merits of Christ. For, know this, that all the merits of Christ are called the mercies of God. And why? Because all the mercies that he hath laid by, and meaneth actually to bestow, Christ was to purchase every whit of them. In Isa. lv. 3, they are called the sure mercies of David; but look in Acts xiii. 34, where that place in Isaiah is quoted, and they are called the holy things of David, so you shall find it in your margins, as holding forth the merits of the Lord Jesus. That righteousness of his, all the holy things of Christ, they are called the mercies of David, because Christ purchased those mercies for the elect; God therefore may well afford to shew mercy. How rich must he be in mercy, think you, that besides the mercies of his own nature, and the mercies of his decrees and purposes, hath the mercies purchased by Christ? What a stock did Christ bring into this treasury when he hung upon the cross! How did he fill it, even to an overflowing! That is one reason why God ordaineth that this treasury of the riches of mercy should be broken open after Christ's ascension, when both Jews and Gentiles were to be called in. He is now

rich unto all, because he hath now a stock come in by the purchase of Christ. He may well now keep a great house, for Jesus Christ hath laid in provision enough. They are called therefore the unsearchable riches of Christ; and all those riches are mercies, because they purchase mercy. He hath purchased mercy to pardon all sin, to bestow all good. Nay, let me tell you this, though the merits of Christ are not of that extent that the mercies in God's nature are, yet they are adequate to all the mercies that God means to bestow. God doth not bestow one mercy out of Christ, therefore we have peace and mercy wished from Jesus Christ; and you have them both in Ps. cxxx. 7, 'Mercy and plenteous redemption.' God is not more merciful in his nature by virtue of Christ's death; but look what mercies God meant to bestow, Jesus Christ, that was so rich, became poor to purchase them all. And if we could suppose—as to illustrate it we may—that God were poor in his own nature, yet he hath such a mine brought in by Christ, that he may well shew mercy; yea, it were injustice for God now not to shew mercy, for Christ hath purchased at his hands that he should do it.

I shall give you but an observation or two, which I think are natural to the text, and so I shall conclude.

*Obs. 1.*—The first observation is this: That God so loveth those that he means to save, that, if they need it, all the riches of mercy that are in him shall be laid out for it. God, saith he, being rich in mercy, he hath quickened us, and saved us, and done all things for us. He hath engaged, in his own everlasting purposes, all the mercies in him to save sinners; he hath laid them all to pawn he will do it.

And the reason why God will lay out, if need were, all the riches of mercy in him for those he loveth, is this: because that mercy no way tendeth to profit him, not as mercy. He hath a glory indeed out of it, but the object of mercy is not himself; but the object of mercy, and of all the riches of it, is poor creatures, poor sinners, whom he hath set himself thus to love. God is not said to be rich to himself, but unto us; he is rich unto all, saith the text, Rom. x. 12. Nay, let me tell you this further, as God needs no mercy, so Jesus Christ himself needs no mercy. This goodness extendeth not unto God, nor doth it extend to Jesus Christ. We must not say that he was dealt withal in a way of mercy, for he could merit nothing to himself, as our divines say, much less that there should be need of mercy for him, having right to all that glory which is in heaven, at the very first moment, which he was enriched withal as his due. Therefore all this extendeth not unto him, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all his delight; therefore mercy, and all the whole riches of it, is wholly for them if they stand in need of it.

And then again, as mercy is the riches of God, so he accounts his saints and elect children his treasure. They are a peculiar treasure to himself, and he laid up this treasure for that other treasure. Deut. xxviii. 12, if they will do thus and thus, then, saith God, I will open my good treasure. He speaks in the language of the old law, but he types out all the heavenly blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Those that are his children, he will open all his treasury for them if they stand in need of it. In heaven what a treasury is there to be opened, and we are heirs of all that treasury! Jesus Christ is an heir, but he inheriteth not mercy; we only are heirs of mercy. Abraham was troubled because he had not an heir to inherit his riches. Why, God hath riches, and riches of mercy that lie by him, and he hath heirs to inherit them. He will not heap up riches and have none to inherit them, as those in Ps. xxxix. 6, but he hath those that shall inherit all these riches

of mercy that lie by him. His Son needs not mercy, and himself needs not mercy, as mercy ; therefore he hath heirs, and all these riches of mercy are theirs.

*Obs. 2.*—Again, another observation from hence is this : That the saints do in a manner need all the riches of mercy that are in God. For so the words likewise come in, in such a coherence, after he had so set out our sinfulness. God, saith he, being rich in mercy. Had he not been God and had all these riches of mercy in him, we had never been saved ; but he being rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us and saved us. He is rich unto all that call upon him, Rom. x. 12. It is spoken in respect of salvation, for it is written, saith he, ‘Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ So that to salvation the riches of mercy that are in God are necessary. Less would not serve the turn ; if there were but one sinner, and one sin, let me say that, that sinner for that one sin needed in some respect the riches of the mercy of a great God to save him. ‘I am God, and not man,’ saith he ; ‘therefore ye are not consumed.’ And, ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts ;’ for if my thoughts were as yours, were they not the thoughts of a God, and were not that God rich in mercy, no one sinner for one sin could be saved. My brethren, we need a treasury of mercy to save us. There are two treasures that man hath, which must be taken off and bought out by two answerable treasures in God. There is first a treasure of sin. I told you before of ten thousand talents. How many thousand talents, if they were summed up, doth every man of us bring unto God ? And then there is a treasury of wrath. Every one is a child of wrath by nature ; but he goeth on treasuring up wrath by every sin, if God did not put him into a state of mercy. Now, to take off both these treasures, to outvie them, we need the riches of mercy that are in an infinite God. To forbear a wicked man here till he go to hell, it is riches of mercy ; but to forbear such a man to eternity, what riches will it cost ? But not only to forbear him, but to forgive that man, and to forgive him so as to remember his sins no more, what a world of mercy is there in this ? My brethren, there is a world of mercy in every mercy you receive from God. If thou comest to the ordinances, it is mercy ; thou mightest have been in hell : ‘I will come to thy sanctuary in the multitude of thy mercies.’ If a sin be to be pardoned by God, ‘Pardon me, according to the multitude of thy mercies,’ Ps. li. 1. Wast thou dead in sins and trespasses ? It is the infinite riches of mercy of the great God that quickened thee. It is true indeed the Scripture speaks both ways. It tells us there is more mercy in God than we need. Why ? Because it is the mercy of an infinite God, and no less would serve to save us. They are not crumbs, as the woman in the Gospel said, that serve our turn. If there had not been an overflowing of mercy, if it were not the mercy of an infinite God, we had never been saved.

I shall end only with a use, to quicken our hearts at last. Are there all these riches of mercy in God, and are we the heirs of it ? Never forsake your own mercies, it is a speech that Jonah hath, chap. ii. 8. And are there these riches of mercy in God ? Let us come unto him. Tyre was a rich place, had a multitude of all kind of riches, and by reason thereof she had a world of customers, she was the mart for all nations ; one nation came and traded in her fairs for iron, another for lead, and another for tin, and another for rich apparel. O my brethren, is God Lord over all, and rich unto all that call upon him ? How should this invite us all to come unto him ! And how should we trust perfectly upon these riches ! If a man be rich, he

is apt to set his heart upon them, to trust in them ; do you trust in these riches of mercy that are in God, which are all yours that do come unto him. Riches in other things make men harsh and rough : Prov. xviii. 23, 'The rich answereth roughly.' Riches strengthen men's spirits to be proud, and to carry it scornfully. The rich oppress you, saith James : but if they were rich in mercy they would not be so. Now God is rich in mercy, and therefore the more riches of mercy he hath, the more easy he is to be entreated. Men that are rich must be charged to do good, and to be rich in good works, so the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, for they will not do it naturally. But God is rich, and his riches lie in mercy. If men's riches lay in mercy, as it is a grace, they needed not to be charged to be rich in good works ; but God's riches lie in mercy, therefore come to him, he is easy to be entreated, he giveth richly all things to enjoy, giveth freely, giveth bountifully like himself.

And so much now for the opening this head, which I have not done commonplace-wise, as heretofore I handled it, but so far forth as might open the text, and quicken our hearts.