

SERMON X.

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.

WE have already sailed over one sea, that of man's corruption, a dead sea, as I may so call it : and we are now entering into another, a far vaster and deeper, of God's love and free grace ; ' But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us,' &c.

In opening of these words, I shall pursue that method which I have used from the beginning.

1. To give you the general scope, parts, and coherence of the words.
2. To give you an exposition. And—
3. Observations upon them.

I. *For the main general scope* ; it is to set out the greatness of that love, mercy, and grace that is in God, as it is the fountain of salvation to all his elect, and this in the chiefest outward fruits and benefits of it *ad extra*, towards us, in three several degrees thereof. He doth take all advantages in setting of it forth, to take their hearts whom he wrote to.

He had first presented to them a map and a prospect of their sin and misery, in the former verses ; how they were ' dead in sins and trespasses,' ' children of wrath,' &c., and this to prepare their hearts. Even as, suppose you would prepare the spirits of men condemned to die to entertain with the highest welcome the grace and mercy of a prince that was resolved to pardon them, you would first set out to them all their wretchedness and demerits to the full, and then exaggerate the goodness and graciousness of the prince in his resolutions of grace and favour towards them : so doth he here. A graciousness shewn not only simply in forgiving, pardoning, and pulling them out of that depth of misery, but in raising and advancing them, and setting them up upon the highest pinnacle and top of honour ; raising them up from death, and a death in sin, to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, or with Christ Jesus. Such a story as this, were it told but to standers-by, but as that which concerned other men and not themselves, it would wonderfully affect them, and cause them to fall down in admiration of that superexcelling grace in him that should deal so with miserable and unworthy creatures subjected to his wrath. But when the men the story is uttered of are the persons themselves that hear it, and the objects of all this grace, how must this needs transport them !

Now after he had forelaid and inlaid the description of their misery, he sets out the mercy of God in the most taking way.

He first brings it in with a *but* of some hidden and secret design to remedy all this, that that God whom he had said had elected and predestinated, contrived our salvation according to the counsel of his will, having mercy in him ; a *but* of an admiration and astonishment in himself, of excess and

abundance of grace in God, and reservation of a superabounding happiness intended to them : ‘*But God,*’ saith he.

And at the second word, he names him that is the subject of all this goodness, and the designer and author of all this happiness to them, to the end they might have him in their eye, even from the first : ‘*But God.*’

My brethren, I appeal to you : if you had first only heard the story of your natural condition and the desert of it, from an ambassador sent from heaven, and he had done nothing but laid open to you the woeful, rueful, wretched condition that you are in, with all the punishment God had threatened to inflict and you had deserved ; and his last words had been, concluding you under the wrath of the great God, ‘*children of wrath,*’ as here ; and then should have gone, and further said, ‘*But God,*’ and gone no further, and paused there for a while, your thoughts naturally would have meditated nothing but terror, and have thought nothing but that God, that is so displeased with sin, that is so great a God, he will be avenged, he will destroy us, he will do unto us according to his wrath, and our desert. But what follows ?

‘*But God, that is rich in mercy.*’ Here is a happy turn, a beam of hope breaks out now to poor prisoners of hope. Here is a mine sprung, that neither Adam nor the angels knew ; it is a mine of mercy, a rich mine, and an intimation of an engagement of all that riches : for why else should it come in here for the pardon ?

And this mercy in God—having laid open such a treasure both of disobedience and wrath upon this occasion—he loadeth with as great attributes and epithets. ‘*God,*’ saith he, ‘*who is rich in mercy.*’ And yet God might have been merciful in his nature, and we never the better for it ; he might also have been rich in mercy, of long-suffering and patience, and yet destroyed us at last ; as in Rom. ii. 4, you read of the riches of his patience and long-suffering, to them that treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. No, ‘*God, who is rich in mercy,*’ and hath ‘*loved us,*’ saith he ; special mercy joined with, and rooted in special love. And that love is not a new love, newly taken up, but it is a love which he hath borne : ‘*for the love wherewith he hath loved us,*’ saith he,—loved us that were thus sinful and thus wretched, and loved us while we were thus sinful and thus wretched, yea, from everlasting ; yea, who ordained us, thus sinful, to shew this love and mercy, ver. 7. And he contents not himself barely to mention this love, but he loads that also with a new epithet, ‘*great love ;*’ contents not himself to say, ‘*God, who is rich in mercy, and hath loved us ;*’ but, ‘*for the great love wherewith he hath loved us.*’ So that now, as in respect of mercy there is an expectation of being freed from all this misery ; so in respect of this great love there is an expectation raised of as great an advancement, that shall answer the mention of the love of so great a God, and so great a love in him.

And when he had thus laid this foundation, both of what riches of mercy is in God’s nature and heart, and what great love hath been in the purposes of his heart, in this 4th verse he goes on further to tell them what this mercy and love hath intended and done for them. And, still to take and affect their hearts the more, whilst he is in the midst of doing of it, he winds in the mention of what they were and had been, he minds them of that. ‘*God,*’ saith he, ‘*who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins ;*’ so ver. 5. He repeats no more, but he would have them take in all that he had said in the 1st, 2d, and 3d verses : ‘*when we were dead in sins and trespasses,*’ ‘*walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the*

air ;' when we were ' children of disobedience,' slaves to the devil, ' children of wrath by nature.' He intermingleth, as I may so say, the sense of their sinfulness and wretchedness in the midst of his discourse of God's graciousness and mercy, that they might be sure to carry that along in their eye, have inlaid thoughts of their wretchedness to affect their hearts with his goodness. And then, lest they should not take in and think soon enough of the mercy of God which he had spoken of but even now, he darts in another beam of God's love into their hearts under a new name, with a new memento to set it on. ' By grace ye are saved ;' and grace addeth yet to both love and mercy. It is not only great love for quantity, it is not only rich mercy, but it is grace also, for the freeness of it, and for the peculiarness of it unto them, and not to others. And when he had done all this, he comes to shew three degrees of advancement unto these men that were thus miserable and wretched, that God doth and hath bestowed upon them, and will bestow upon them, which they may be sure of, that they shall attain to and arrive at in the end. He then mentioneth, I say, three degrees of benefits.

He tells them, first, that this God, thus rich in mercy, hath quickened them, quickened them when they were dead, and dead in sins and trespasses,—for if you would restore a dead man, you must first put life into him, you must begin there,—quickened them both with a life of justification, they being dead in respect of the guilt of sin, pardoning all their sins out of the riches of his mercy ; and quickening them with a new spirit, with a new soul, with the Holy Ghost to dwell within them for ever, the same Spirit that dwells in Jesus Christ, and that quickened him, to quicken them, who was himself a quickening spirit. And quickening them also with a principle of life in holiness, even as the soul dwelling in the body quickeneth it with a life. And, saith he, all this he hath done already for you, here in this world. But, saith he,—he means not to rest there,—there are two other benefits in the life to come, which are two degrees more. He will raise you up, saith he, at the latter day. And as a pawn and testimony of that, look upon the resurrection of Christ, and he in rising is the first fruits of them that rose, and ye are ' risen in him,' saith he ; in Christ ye are risen, when he rose. And he speaks of it as done, because he would shew the certainty and sureness of it. As God raised up Jesus Christ's body, so he will raise up yours ; yea, when Jesus Christ rose, ye were reckoned in him : and as God put a glory upon Christ's body when it was risen, so he will do upon yours at the day of judgment. And that is the second degree, that degree of glory the soul shall have when it meets its body, and is raised again at the day of judgment. But then there is a higher degree than this ; for when the day of judgment is over, you shall, saith he, be placed in the midst of a sea of glory, and have a full possession of it, as Jesus Christ himself has. He *hath* placed us, saith he ; still to shew the sureness of it, he speaks as if it were done. All that glory, saith he, which Jesus Christ hath, he hath it as representing you ; look what place he is in, you shall be in ; yea, you are now reckoned to sit there, so as you cannot be frustrated of it ; and your life is hid with God in Christ, and when Christ shall appear, who now representeth you in heaven, you shall be possessed of it.

And so now you have the general scope or meaning of these words opened to you.

Now then for the coherence and the parts of it.

First, For the coherence. You see, they come in next to that of our sinful

state, to that end and purpose to exaggerate and to heighten the riches of the glory of the mercy and love of God in Christ, and also of that glory which in Christ God hath ordained unto us.

Now the scope being an exaggeration of the mercy and grace of God every way, these are the parts of it:—

First, He sets out what in God is the most inward and original cause of all this, which he would have magnified, by three names, *mercy, love, grace*; to which, if you will, may be added, kindness, out of ver. 7.

Secondly, He ascribes unto all these the most heightening epithets. To mercy he addeth ‘riches;’ to love he addeth ‘greatness;’ to grace, ‘exceeding riches,’ ver. 7. ‘God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he hath loved us.’ He sets all these out.

Thirdly, By minding us of the condition we were in, when God thus did shew mercy to us. ‘Even,’ saith he, ‘when we were dead in sins.’

Fourthly, To take our hearts the more, he sets it out by the benefits we are advanced to, which are three. We are quickened with Christ; risen with Christ; sit together with Christ in heavenly places. And—

Last of all, That Christ may be magnified, and have a praise in it, as he is God-man, Mediator, as well as God, he saith that all this is done in Christ, and with Christ, as the instrumental cause, and representative head, and meritorious cause of all this.

And so now you have the parts of these words.

II. I shall now begin the *exposition* of them, and run over every one of them severally and apart.

But.—It refers to that God, chap. i., that had predestinated, &c. Jerome saith that this same *but* is superfluous, and he would have it blotted out, and thinks it crept into the copy, as it were, unawares. But it is a word which ushereth in a great turn, he having mentioned the state of nature before, and sets an emphasis upon all that follows. And you shall find that upon the like occasion phrases akin to this come in, which we all translate *but*. Paul having spoken of his own unregenerate condition and the mercy shewn him by God as then, comes in with the like *but* when he would magnify the mercy shewn him, in 1 Tim. i. 13: ‘I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; *but* I obtained mercy.’ Likewise, Tit. iii. 4, you shall find the like *but* comes in, and upon the very same occasion. He had described our unregenerate estate at the 3d verse, ‘We were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. *But*,’ saith he, ver. 4, ‘after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, according to his mercy he saved us,’ &c. And it is so far from being superfluous that, like John Baptist, it foreruns the manifestation of the richest grace in God.

It is, first, when it comes in thus, a particle of admiration, wondering at God in it. So in that place of Timothy, ‘I was injurious, and a blasphemer; *but* I obtained mercy.’ O wonderful! who would not have made a *but* at me? ‘*But*,’ saith he, ‘I obtained mercy.’ He ushers it in as with astonishment and admiration, and therefore ends his speech with a doxology, ver. 17, ‘Unto the King eternal, &c., be glory for ever, Amen.’ So here, being ‘dead in sins and trespasses,’ and ‘children of wrath;’ ‘*but* God, who is rich in mercy,’ &c.

Secondly, It is also a *but* of opposition to what might have been generally in all men’s thoughts and apprehensions; clear contrary to, and beyond what we could think. So in usual speech we use the particle *but*, when

we turn our speech a clear contrary way. It is therefore a door of hope, and it makes to me the greatest in the Scripture. Suppose that, after the Apostle in speaking this, having concluded man's sinful condition, as here, with this, 'children of wrath,' which strikes into all men's souls inconceivable horror, he had mentioned God next, without this *but*, and there paused, and made a suspense of speech, and left the rest to our thoughts; how would we have wildered ourselves in fears, and have thought thus with ourselves?—God, that is by nature holy, as we are sinful, can behold no iniquity, and a God so just as in punishing and destroying the sinner he shall infinitely glorify himself; a God so powerful in wrath that he is able to revenge to the uttermost; and so absolute in sovereignty that we are the clay, he is the potter; if therefore for our filth he throw us to destruction, we could not reply, Why dost thou so? We being so obnoxious, he could destroy us without an excuse. A God withal so all-sufficient and rich in blessedness in himself, when he had destroyed us according to our desert, and his own provocation in himself thereto, could never find any loss or want of us, or he could have created new creatures. How would all our souls, like Adam's, have melted within us, and meditated terror! But none of all this, but the quite contrary. 'But God, that is rich in mercy,' &c. There is a mine sprung neither Adam nor angels knew of at the first. It doth tend also to usher in all sorts of opposite things to what he had said before; he had shewn how man is sinful, but God is merciful. Instead of sins and trespasses, he is to speak of mercy; instead of men being sinful, he is to describe God merciful; man by nature sinful, but God by nature merciful. There is an opposition of quickening to death. When we were under the power of Satan, and the devil was our prince, the prince of the power of the air, now to come under Christ, to be quickened with him, and to 'sit with him in heavenly places,' so high, even when children of wrath by nature; but 'by grace,' as opposed to nature, 'we be saved.' All these oppositions of aspect of the words that follow to what went before, this *but* ushers in.

It also comes in, when what follows exceeds what went before in a way of contrariety, to shew that where sin abounded grace superabounded much more. Man had done thus and thus, and was thus and thus; but God in his work hath put down man clean in his work. 'But God, who is rich in mercy.' And so much now for that particle, *but*.

God.—It refers to what he had enlarged of God, chap. i., and anew explicates the sense of it. In the second place here, he holds up God to be, as well he might in this case, the sole author of all that salvation that follows. As in Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things,' especially our salvation. In 2 Cor. v. 18, 'All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself.'

He comes in here with God—'but God'—as the subject of all this mercy and love, whom therefore we should carry along with us in our eye to magnify. And 'but God' is a note of specialty. So David, 'Let me fall into the hands of God,'—not man,—'for very great are his mercies,' 1 Chron. xxi. 13. As also, the prophet, 'Who is a God like unto thee,'—there is none else would have done it,—'that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin?' It is only he, being rich in mercy, and having so much mercy in him, and being a God of such mercy, that hath done it. 'I am God, and not man; therefore ye are not consumed.' But God, saith he, being rich in mercy, hence it is ye are saved. And by God, he means likewise the Father, as distinct from Christ. He maketh Jesus Christ the instrumental cause: we are quickened

in Christ: but who quickened us? God, saith he; it was his contrivance and doing. He would have us attribute the first and chief unto God; and his meaning is this, as if he had said, Now that I have shewn you that man hath done his part, and done his worst in that sinful condition he was in, you shall see what part God will act. 'But God,' saith he, 'who is rich in mercy,' &c. As also to shew that it is God alone that doth all in the matter of salvation, which is his scope in the rest that follows, to reduce the creature to nothing, as the Apostle hath it, 'It is not of him that runs, or him that wills, but of God that sheweth mercy.' That as it is in Jer. iii. 5, thou hast sinned, and yet called me Father, and 'thou hast spoken and done evil things, as thou couldest;' this thou hast done; well, now, I will see what I can do, ver. 19, 'Thou shalt call me, My father, and shalt not turn away from me.' So the Apostle here: You were so and so, 'but God,' &c.

God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us.

You see here, he speaks of the causes of our salvation, mercy and love. In opening of this, I shall first give you *the distinction between mercy and love.*

I begin with *love*; his shewing mercy is resolved into it. It is a desire to communicate good, the chiefest good, unto the creature; but mercy is to pull the creature out of a depth of misery. The object of God's love is the creature simply considered; the object of mercy is the creature fallen into misery. So that mercy superaddeth this to love, that it respects the creature in misery. Parents, they love their children simply as they are their children; but if they be fallen into misery, then love works in a way of pity; love is turned into mercy. So that now you see, I say, the difference in a word between these two, that mercy respecteth misery, and hath properly misery for its object. You have that notable place for this, in Rom. xi. 32, 'God hath shut up all together in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Mercy therefore respecteth those that are thus shut up under unbelief.

The second thing that I would hold forth for the opening of these two is this, *why mercy and love are here both brought in?* It is not mercy only, and one would have thought that had been enough, when he would speak of our salvation, but he also mentioneth love; and why?

1. Because *mercy only respecteth misery*, as I said before; it goes no further simply as mercy than the relieving those that are in misery out of their misery. And because that we had a treasury and a depth of misery, he therefore mentions a treasury and riches of mercy. There was a treasury of wrath, which we being children of wrath had heaped up; therefore he mentions a treasury of mercy. But, I say, mercy only respecteth pulling out of misery, and would have gone no further, simply as mercy. But now that, as an addition thereto, these persons delivered out of this depth of misery should be advanced to the same state and condition that Jesus Christ in heaven hath, that they should sit together in heavenly places with him; mercy alone would not have carried us thither, if mercy had not been winged with love, if love had not been mingled with and added to it; yea, a munificence of love, yea, a greatness of love. Mercy causeth a king to pardon a traitor; but if he shall take this traitor and advance him to the highest dignity, place him with him in the throne, as it were, this must needs be from love too; this is a superadding in that respect unto mercy.

Obs.—Let me affect your hearts with this consideration, That God hath done more for us infinitely than for the angels: he shews love to them; they are vessels of honour, whom he hath loved and taken up unto glory; but they are not vessels of mercy: but now in saving of men he brings in

both, mercy and love too ; ‘ God, being rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us.’

2. *Love* is added to *mercy* here, to shew the extent and the greatness of his *shewing mercy*; for that dependeth much upon love. If one be merciful only out of a virtue that is in him, or out of a duty, then so far as that virtue will carry him, he will shew mercy. As now, take a merciful man that is rich in mercy,—if we may so express it of men, as the Apostle doth, ‘ rich in faith,’—that hath a great deal of tenderness of bowels in him ; let him meet with a man in misery, it will draw out his bowels to shew that man mercy, so far as mere mercy, as it is a virtue, will carry him. Mark, for this is a distinct thing to the former; but if it light upon a person whom he loveth, then, besides the virtue or grace of mercy in him, mercy is infinitely more intended, comparatively, to him, than when he shews mercy to him merely out of that grace and virtue ; love then boils up mercy. As for example : if a physician that is a merciful man, and heals out of mercy, and takes a great deal of pains with a sick person even out of that grace and virtue, yet if his wife should be sick, or his child whom he loveth, here now mercy would be intended, here mercy would be heightened. Now, saith the Apostle, this is the case of God ; he is not simply merciful out of mercy, but he is merciful out of love, loving the persons he shews mercy unto. And therefore in the Scripture he is said to be merciful as a father,—Ps. ciii. 13, ‘ Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,’—yea, as a mother. He is merciful, not singly out of a principle of mercy only, but out of love also, which therefore intendeth, heighteneth mercy, draws it out so much the more, makes it the more active. If God hath riches of mercy, and love hath the command of that treasury, how profuse will love be to those that are in misery ! Now, saith he, ‘ God, who is rich in mercy,’ and besides that, he hath ‘ loved us with a great love.’ Yea—

3. For explication, what is the reason, let me add this as a reason why both these are thus joined together here : *That the foundation of God’s shewing mercy is his love.** So, if you mark it, the Apostle lays it : ‘ God,’ saith he, ‘ who is rich in mercy,’ but that alone would not have done it, therefore he adds, ‘ for the great love wherewith he loved us.’ And you shall find the like in many other places, as in that Tit. iii. 4, 5, which I quoted before, where having laid open our natural condition, he comes in with the same *but* that he doth here. ‘ But the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared ; according to his mercy he hath saved us.’ For love, I say, is the foundation in God of his shewing mercy. That I may open and explain this to you, for it is a thing of much consideration and help to us :—

Mercy in God and man differs thus : that mercy in man, go take the inward compassion of it, the inward affection in the heart, it always worketh, whether one love the party, or not love him, so that if he be in misery, and it be in a man’s power to help him, and it be lawful to help him, there is a pity within a man stirs him, and doth as it were command him to help that man, draws it forth to do it. *Homo misericors, semper misericors.* And mercy in man, if he shews mercy merely out of mercy, and out of no other affection joined with it, it works equally, is equally compassionate to men in like condition. But mercy in God, you must know, is drawn out, though it be his nature, by his will ; he pardoneth whom he will : ‘ I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.’ Therefore he pardoneth great sinners, when he lets others that are smaller perish. Nay, the compassion itself doth not necessarily work in God, but it depends upon an act of his will, though

* Vide Sermon II.

mercy be his nature. If God had been merciful to no sinner, but had damned all men and angels that had sinned, and had done it with wrath and revenge, yet he had been as merciful as now he is, take his nature. So that our salvation must be resolved into some other principle than simply his being merciful. And therefore, by the way, when we say that mercy is nature in God, the meaning of it is this, that it is suited to him, it is that which he doth with the greatest delight,—as men do actions of nature,—wherein he hath no reluctance. The meaning is not that this mercy works naturally and necessarily, for had not he set his heart to love, had not his will been set upon it, not an angel or a man that sinned had ever had a drop of mercy from him, though he is thus full and thus rich in mercy. So that though God is rich in mercy, yet there must be love also as the foundation. That which moved him to be merciful to any was his love pitched upon them; and having first pitched his love upon them, then, he seeing them in misery, love stirs up mercy. In that he did resolve to be merciful to any creature, it is not simply an act of his nature, but it doth depend upon his will: though he had in his nature this riches of mercy, yet we had not been saved if it had not been the good pleasure of his will, and that love had been added to all that mercy; all the mercy that is in him would never else have flown forth from him. But—

4 They both here come in, not only to shew that his love was the cause why he resolved to shew mercy; but that those to whom he meant to shew mercy, his *love guides and directs him to it*. His love had first singled out certain persons whom he meant to shew mercy to; and love did guide the channel which way mercy should run. And therefore you shall find in Scripture that election obtains it. ‘Jacob have I loved,’ saith he. And that is the reason why he shews mercy to any, ‘that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand,’ Rom. ix. 11. So as indeed divines do make mercy but the remote cause of salvation, but love to be the fundamental. And this is true, whether we hold that he loved men when they were considered in the pure mass of creatures, or in the corrupt mass, as they are considered since; still, I say, love is that that did guide mercy; why mercy should be conveyed to these souls, and not unto others, it was because he loved them, it was from his love first pitched upon them.

I shall now come to some observations, for I see I must reserve that of the riches of this mercy, and the greatness of this love, to which something must be spoken, to another discourse.

First, you see there is a love which he hath shewn us, which, I say, is the ground of all his mercy to us, though he is merciful in his nature. The first observation then that I make of it is this:—

Obs. 1.—Let the love of God be the greatest thing in your hearts, the nearest thing to your souls of all else, the greatest thing which in your eye you do pursue. It is the first thing in God laid the foundation of good, and it is the highest thing to be attained to, and to be pursued after by us. Of all things in God, value his love, and seek after that; let, I say, the desires of your souls be pointed unto it. God’s love is the greatest thing of all the rest, it is more than all his benefits. The love of Christ was more than his sufferings, and his sufferings were more than his benefits; and the love of God is more than all his gifts, and yet he hath given great things to us, and done great things for us. *Amor est primum donum*; his love is the first gift, as one well saith, in the gift of which all things else are yours. The gift of his Son was a great gift, but it was founded in his love. ‘He so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.’ Though we, being

sinners, need mercy, that is the next thing we want, and therefore we look to it—Oh, mercy, mercy!—because we apprehend ourselves in misery. But do you look beyond mercy, and look to love, which is a greater thing to you than mercy, raiseth and enlargeth mercy, and when mercy hath done with you, will do more, or as much for you as mercy hath done, and guideth mercy. The reason why mercy ran into your hearts, and washed you with the blood of Christ, is because that love guided the channel. To seek after mercy, this self-love and the misery thou art in will make thee do. Oh, but there is somewhat else, saith a good soul; it is the love of God, and the favour of God, that I would see; and it is not self-love that ever will carry a man on to seek that. And what is the reason that this chiefly is the pursuit of a soul spiritualised? One reason among others is this: because grace is always the image of God's heart; now this being the chief thing in God's heart, and the first thing, and the highest thing, hence therefore the soul seeks that ultimately and chiefly.

Obs. 2.—Secondly, if you ask me what love it is that I would have you prize and value, and what love it is that is here meant; it is *everlasting love*. 'For the great love wherewith he *hath* loved us,' saith the Apostle, not wherewith he doth love us. It is everlasting love that is the cause of all the mercies we have. Jer. xxxi. 3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,'—there you have the phrase too; so the Apostle here, 'wherewith he hath loved us;' this *hath* reaches as high as to eternity,—'therefore,' saith he, 'with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' Will you know the reason why God calleth you, why he saveth you? It is this, I have loved you with an everlasting love. It is not a love that God doth begin to set upon you then when you are first called; no, it is a love taken up from everlasting. He had a love in him to you before he gave Jesus Christ,—that is, before the consideration of giving Jesus Christ as to die for us: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' And Jesus Christ had a love in him too; he loved us before he gave himself for us: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' And so, before he calleth us, and converteth us, love, you see, this eternal love of God, is the foundation of all; and so the Apostle resolves it here: 'for the great love wherewith he loved us.'

Obs. 3.—Thirdly, give me leave but in a word to vent that which I think is a truth,—it is a controversy amongst divines, and some take one part, and some another, and what is here said is to me an evidence of it amongst others,—that in the order of God's decrees, for he speaks here of everlasting love in God, he doth set his love upon the creature; that is first, and in that respect chooseth the creatures whom he meant to make and whom he would set himself to love, not under the consideration of fallen, but *in that pure mass as yet not fallen*. And his shewing mercy comes in but to shew how much love he meant to shew to such creatures as he had chosen and singled out; and therefore he lets them fall into sin, that so he might be merciful. He resolved to shew so much love to those he had chosen and set himself to love, with so great a love he loved them, that look what way soever would be best to set forth that love, those ways he would take to choose.

Now, thinks he, if I should simply love them, and take them up to heaven, and there give them such and such a glory, this indeed would shew love, and infinite love. But is there any way else how love may be shewn? Yes, if I permit and suffer these creatures to fall into misery, I shall shew love in a way of mercy to them. So that now our falling into sin, and his giving Christ to die for us, and all these things, they are but to commend that love which he first pitched upon us as we are creatures whom he meant to make

so glorious, and whom he meant so to love. Indeed, in Rom. v. 8, it is true, the Apostle saith that God commendeth his love towards us, that whilst we were yet enemies Christ died for us. But, if you mark it, he doth not say that he set his love upon us in the consideration of our being enemies; but whilst we were enemies he commended his love towards us; so he did in his decrees order it that he would commend his love towards us by this. But now that consideration which he had of us, or that act pitched first, was an act of love. Only let me give you this with it, that at the first he resolved to shew love in a way of mercy. As he resolved to shew his justice upon wicked men in a way of wrath, so he resolved to shew his love in a way of mercy. And therefore, as in the counsels of God all things are at once, so we must conceive it he resolved, at the same time when he thus set his love upon us, to permit our falling into sin, and so mercy be shewn.

But still, if you ask what act it was—whether our election was an act of mercy or an act of love; I answer clearly, as a great divine doth who hath spent much to the clearing of it, it was an act of love. It was his decree to shew mercy; but this act was not out of mercy, it was out of love, and out of good-will; to manifest which love he was resolved to shew mercy, therefore he lets man fall. Election, I say, is an act of love rather than of mercy. Mark the coherence here, ‘God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he hath loved us.’ God being merciful in his nature, having pitched an act of love upon us, when he saw us fall into misery his bowels turned; but he loved us first. That mercy is mentioned first is because it suited our condition; it is not because it was that attribute out of which the act of election proceeded, though in election there was a purpose to shew love in a way of mercy.

The observation of a great divine is this: Saith he, ‘Run over the whole Scripture, and you shall find indeed the calling of a saint is attributed unto mercy. Why? Because God calls him that is fallen into sin, and therefore there is mercy in it: as in 1 Tim. i. 13, “But I obtained mercy;” 1 Pet. ii. 10; Rom. xi. 31, 32. You shall find likewise,’ saith he, ‘remission of sins is attributed unto mercy,—I mean the act of remission, and the exercise of it,—in Luke i. 78, 79, Matt. xviii. 33. So likewise regeneration, as here, and in 1 Pet. i. 3, and in Tit. iii. 5. So the actual bestowing of glory, Jude, ver. 21, &c. There is only one place,’ saith he, ‘and that is Rom. ix. 16, which seemeth to make election an act of mercy. “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” But the truth is, election is not in the text there; he doth not say, election is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but his business is salvation. “It is not of him that willeth,”—that is, salvation is not,—“but of God that sheweth mercy.” And if it be said, ‘He hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy,’ his answer is this: saith he, that is in election. He grants God decrees to shew love in a way of mercy; and because that is the issue, because that they are saved by a way of mercy, therefore they are called also vessels of mercy. But still that out of which election proceedeth is not simply the attribute of mercy. And he gives this exceeding clear and good instance:—‘God,’ saith he, ‘is omnipotent, yet that God decreed to shew his power is not an act of omnipotency: so God is wise, but to decree to shew forth his wisdom is not simply to be resolved as an act of wisdom. So likewise here, God is merciful, &c.; but the purpose to shew all these attributes forth is resolved into his love.’ This must needs be said, which I beseech you to take along with you, that to shew forth riches of mercy was the final cause of his decree, he had that in his aim and in his eye; but it was his will, and it was his love,

out of which this proceeded and which he first pitched upon us, that moved him thereunto.

And so much now for that point, which I have spoken to but briefly, and perhaps more obscurely. It is, I say, a point of controversy, which I will not enter into, to handle all the particulars of it.

A fourth observation which I would make upon these words, which also is of great use to us, is this :—

Obs. 4.—*That there is a love in God to us even when we are sinners*, when we are in our natural estate, out of which love he calls us, and pulls us out of that condition. It is a strange thing that men should stumble at this. Say they, How can any be children of wrath, children of the curse, and yet be at the same time loved by God? Is there any such thing in all the Scripture? Why, it is here in my very text clearly and plainly: saith the Apostle, ‘When we were dead in sins and trespasses, children of wrath, God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us,’ namely, when we were thus. The want of reconciling these two hath been the cause of I know not how many errors in the world, and is to this day. What say the Arminians? This is their great argument, you shall find it in that Anti-Synod of Dort: If that God loved men from everlasting, and if God be reconciled to them, what need Christ have died? And the Socinians argue just the same. To give them an answer, if you will, in a word; and then, secondly, to shew how both these may stand together, that we may be children of wrath, and that yet God love us—

I answer to them, first, thus: Christ died to manifest his love, Tit. iii. 4. We were thus and thus ‘hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared,’ then he saved us, ‘according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration.’ So that now, for the appearing and manifestation of that love it was that he gave Jesus Christ to die; for the appearance and manifestation of that love to the soul it is that he calleth him. And therefore you have that in Rom. v. 8, ‘God hereby commended his love towards us, that whilst we were sinners Christ died.’ It is an express scripture for this. It was not that he did then begin to love us, or doth begin to love us when we are called, but that love which he had taken up in his heart to us was so great, that giving Christ, and all else, is but to commend it, to set it out. So that if you ask, Why did Christ die, and why did God all this, if he loved us already? I answer, He doth it that his love may appear, he doth it to commend his love. I have often said it, that Christ died but to remove obstacles; but the radical love, out of which God did give Christ, was pitched before.

Now, is it not an ordinary thing for a father that his child shall be a child of wrath to him, whilst he goes on in such a course,—that is, consider him as he is in that course, according to his fatherly wisdom he can proceed no otherwise with him but in wrath,—yet all that while so to love him as to set all ways on work to bring him in? Did not David deal so with Absalom? In 2 Sam. xiii., when Absalom was run from him, and entered into a rebellion against him, he, as he was a wise king, could do no otherwise in that condition but proceed against him as a rebel, unless he came in and submitted himself. But what doth David do? He suborneth a woman, at least Joab doth, and David was well pleased with it, for Joab saw the king’s heart was towards him; but suppose David himself suborned Joab to do what he did, that he might have a fair come-off, and manifest his love to his son. If David had done so—why, God himself did so. We were fallen into that condition that we were children of wrath, but yet there was a love to us that

lay hid in his heart all the while, and he goes and suborneth Jesus Christ, if I may so speak; and Christ comes but to remove all the obstacles that lay in the way of justice, that he might be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. If we will have another answer, How can we be children of wrath, and yet God love us? I ask again, How was Jesus Christ a curse when he hung upon the cross, and yet at the same time to be loved with the greatest love? According to such rules as God will proceed by at the latter day, if men remain in their natural condition, they are children of wrath; but according to what his everlasting purposes are, even these children of wrath he loves, and hath loved.

I will give you a distinction which will salve all, and it is a good one. There is *amor benevolentiae* and *amor amicitiae*. While men remain in their natural estate, and are children of wrath, he may bear towards them *amor benevolentiae*—a love of good-will; but whilst they remain in their natural condition, he hath not *amor amicitiae* to them—a love of friendship, in which he doth communicate himself to them. But, I say, he may have a love of good-will, which yet is the foundation of the other, and will in time cause the other to break forth. And what is the reason that he hath not a love of complacency, nor a love of mutual friendship, and that we are not said to be reconciled to God till we do believe? Because it is not fit for God upon those terms to communicate himself to us, to open his heart, and to unbosom himself; but when the time comes, that love of good-will which he beareth to us will break forth into a love of friendship, and he will take us into covenant with himself, and then the kindness and love of God towards man appeareth, as the text saith, Tit. iii. 4.

Obs. 5.—Fifthly, I make this observation from hence likewise: *That God in his love pitcheth upon persons.* ‘For the great love wherewith he loved us,’ saith he. God doth not pitch upon propositions only; as to say, I will love him who believeth, and save him, as those of the Arminian opinion hold; no, he pitcheth upon persons. And Christ died not for propositions only, but for persons; he knows his sheep by their names: Jer. xxxi. 3, ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love;’ and, Rom. xi. 7, ‘The election hath obtained it, and the rest were hardened.’ My brethren, God loved us distinctly, and he loved us nakedly; let me express it so in a word:—

He loved our persons distinctly; that is, singling out and designing whom. Not only so many,—I will love so many of mankind as shall fill up the places of the angels that fell, as some have imagined,—but he sees who they are distinctly. The Lord knows who are his; the text is express: ‘Jacob have I loved,’—he names him,—‘and Esau have I hated.’ ‘Rejoice not,’ saith Christ, ‘that the spirits are made subject unto you, but that your names are written in heaven.’ In Exod. xxxiii. 19, where God saith, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,’ he speaks it upon occasion of having peculiar mercy to Moses; and therefore the Apostle pertinently quotes it in Rom. ix. 15, for election of persons.

And, secondly, he loved us nakedly; he loved *us*, not *ours*. It was not for our faith, nor for anything in us; ‘not of works,’ saith the Apostle; no, nor of faith neither. No, he pitcheth upon naked persons; he loves you, not yours. Therefore here is the reason that his love never fails, because it is pitched upon the person, simply as such. I will love such a one, let his condition be what it will be; if he fall into sin, I will fetch sin out of him again, that I may delight in him. The covenant of grace is a covenant of persons, and God gives the person of Christ to us, and the person of the Holy Ghost to us; he chooseth our persons nakedly and simply as such.

Obs. 6.—Lastly, *All the attributes in God are subjected to his love*, and that is the great prevailing attribute that sways all. You see in the text that it sways mercy; for the reason that God is merciful to one man and not to another is, because he first loved this man and not the other. It is love, I say, that is the prevailing attribute; and what way love goes, all attributes else go, mercy and power, &c. And therefore it is observable that when in the first chapter, ver. 19, he had begun to speak of that power that wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead, and said that the same power worketh in us; in this chapter, where he comes to make up the reddition of his speech, he should according to the common course have said, God, being *great in power*, hath quickened us, and raised us up together with Christ. No, he mentioneth mercy and love, rather than power. Why? Because power is at love's beck in this. So that here our salvation lies, that God pitcheth an everlasting love upon men; and when he hath thus loved them, if they fall into misery, he is merciful, and love sets that on work; if there be a difficulty, then love sets power on work: and so, look which way love goes, all attributes else go; and if you have love, you have all things else in God, they are all swallowed up in love. And therefore it is observable, that God in a peculiar manner is said to be love, 1 John iv. 8. I know not that the like is said of any other attribute; and the reason is this: because that to one that he doth love, he is nothing else but love; for mercy, and power, and justice, and wisdom, and all, they all work together in a way of subordination to love, that when a man looks upon all these attributes, they all appear in love, that God is nothing but love to that man. If I look upon his wisdom, it appears to me set on work by love, to exalt and magnify his love. If I look upon his power, it is all swallowed up in love, in respect of his manifestation of it to me; for I take it, when he saith in that place of John that God is love, he speaks not essentially of that attribute, but of the manifestation of it.

And so much now for the opening of this, why mercy and love are here joined, and why that love is made the foundation of his shewing mercy, with such observations as arise out of it. There are two things yet behind, which are the glory of all the rest in this text, and that is, that this mercy that is in God, set on work by love, it is *a rich mercy*; and that this love wherewith he did from everlasting love us, and that is the foundation of all, it is *a great love*. 'God, that is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he hath loved us.' But I must refer that to the next discourse.

SERMON XI.

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 in the former verses having given a full and exact description of man's misery by nature and in the state of nature, both by reason of sin and the wrath of God that is due thereunto, begins here to set out the greatness of that love and that mercy in God which is the cause and the fountain of our salvation. And he sets it out, as I shewed you the last discourse, when I ran over the series of all these three verses, in the most taking and most advantageous way, and in the greatest truth. I shall not repeat what I then delivered.

I came to the exposition of the words, and what I shall now say will be some little addition, as I go along, to what then was said.

But God.—Besides what I said of this particle *but* in the last discourse, I only add this, indeed as the main thing, that it serveth to usher in, not only a great turn, the greatest turn that ever was,—it doth not only usher in the notice of a remedy to misery, that there is balm in Gilead that may be had, because that God is merciful, and that is his nature, and that therefore he may be merciful to us, and so that there is hope concerning this thing,—but it ushers in and gives the intimation of a forelaid intention in God, of a contrivement and design beforehand taken up and set upon, whereby God had beforehand prevented all the mischief and all the danger that was like to arise from the misery and sin which the elect were fallen into. He had laid such a design as all this misery and sinfulness that the elect ones had fallen into should be so far from undoing them, that it shall but serve to set out that love the more; and so the words that follow do evidently shew. 'But God, for the love wherewith he loved us;' he hath loved us and chosen us out of love from everlasting, and hath shewed it in this, by triumphing over all that misery, that even 'while we were dead in sins and trespasses, he hath quickened us,' &c. And it is a love not only which mercy and pity stirs up, after he had seen us thus miserable; but it is a love that having been so great, and so long borne to us, and first pitched on us, that it stirred up mercy and bowels to us in this misery; for so, if you mark it, the words run: 'God,' saith he, 'who is rich in mercy,'—there is his nature,—'for his great love wherewith he loved us.' And not only so, but this love being seated in a nature infinitely rich in grace and mercy, had conspired with mercy, and contrived the depth of misery, to extend that riches. On them so great a love had set itself, even to this end, as in the 7th verse, 'that in ages to come he might shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in kindness and love to us.' And thus also in Titus iii., that *but* even now mentioned ushers in, upon the like occasion, the like reserve or design beforehand laid, to glorify love and goodness. But when the kindness of God and love

to man appeared ; namely, when that love, taken up by him long before this sinfulness he spake of in the verses before, hath lain hid as it were in ambushment, letting you march on in sinful ways under Satan's banners ; that in the end appears and prevents all that misery, and rescues you out of it. There is, I say, a kind of ambushment, if I may so express it, a way-laying of all that sin and misery the elect fell into.

And how many such *buts* of mercy, lying in wait to deliver and save us out of great and strong evils, did we meet with in our lives ? And this *but* here, of this great salvation, is the great seal and ratification, or *Ante signamus*, of all the rest. To this purpose you may observe that oftentimes in the New Testament, when mention is made of God's ordaining us unto salvation, this phrase is used, he did it 'from the beginning.' So it is in 2 Thess. ii. 13 : 'God,' saith he, 'hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation ;' that is, he had beforehand, even from the beginning, set his love upon you, so that all that sinful estate you have since run into should be no prejudice nor damage to you. And it comes in here, as if that a company of men, whom a king or a prince loveth, or children whom a father's heart is set upon, are permitted and let alone to run into the highest rebellion, to do as evil as they could, as the phrase is, Jer. iii. 5, so that by the law they are dead men, men undone, men of death and condemnation, there is no hope for them : *but*—but that the king, as he is merciful in his nature, and so apt to pardon any, so besides he hath had his heart set upon it, and it is but his design, to shew his princely grace the more in pardoning them and advancing them to higher dignities upon it.

But God.—And God cometh in also here, besides what I mentioned in the last discourse, to shew that all salvation is from him, he is the sole author and founder of it ; as in Rom. ix. 16, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy :' so here, 'But God, that is rich in mercy.'

I came in the next place, for the opening of the words, to shew you the difference between mercy, and love, and grace ; for you have all those three in these three first verses. Love is a desire to communicate good unto us, simply considered as we are creatures ; but mercy respecteth us as we are fallen into sin and misery, as we are dead in sins and trespasses. And then that of grace, as I shall open in its due place, adds but this, a freeness unto both. Love and mercy freely bestowed, that is called grace in either.

Also, for explication's sake, I shewed you why the Apostle doth not content himself to name mercy only, or love only, as the cause of our salvation, but that he addeth love to mercy. I gave you two reasons for it, in a word. If he had named mercy only, that respecting misery, it might be thought that that would but relieve us out of misery. But because he mentioneth not only a deliverance out of the misery we lay in by nature, which mercy doth, but the highest advancement besides, to sit together with Christ in heavenly places ; therefore he mentioneth love. It comes in likewise, in the second place, to intend and make mercy the greater ; for when mercy cometh out of love, and not simply out of a virtue of mercy, if a father be of a merciful disposition, he will pity any one out of a virtue of mercy in him, but he will pity his son out of love.

Then again, for the further explication and understanding of this, I told you, that of the two, the main and the primitive cause is love ; for so, if you observe it, the text implies. 'God, being rich in mercy,' saith he, 'for his great love :' it is resolved into love. To explain this—

In the first place, you may observe here, that God's being merciful is men-

tioned but as his nature and disposition, which may be wrought upon ; but love comes in, as having passed an act of his will, set upon us. For, my brethren, had God had never so much mercy in his nature, never so much goodness and lovingness as he hath, yet if it had not been a full act of love, through his will pitched upon us, we had never been the better. Our salvation doth not only depend upon mercy, but upon love ; and not only upon the love of his nature, but upon an act of love, a love set upon us with his will and heart. It is not an indefinite disposition of mercy in him, as it is said of the kings of Israel that they were merciful kings ; but that which our salvation depends upon—though upon that also—is this, that an act of love hath determined this mercy, engaged this mercy.

I shewed you likewise that it is rather an act of love than of mercy. That first act of election is indeed to shew mercy, but not so properly out of mercy.

Then, thirdly, love is said to be the cause for this reason also, because that love is it which directs mercy to the persons ; love singles out the persons, and so they become vessels of mercy.

The next thing I explained and observed in the last discourse was, the circumstance of time here. He doth not say, God that doth love us, as he that began to love us when he first called us, or loveth us now he hath called us ; but, God that *hath loved* us. I gave you a like scripture for it, in Jer. xxxi. 3, ‘I loved thee with an everlasting love ;’ which, I told you, hath two things principally in it, and both are intended here in this ‘hath loved us,’ which is a love before conversion, and causeth conversion. 1. For the time, for the beginning of it, it is a love from everlasting ; and, 2. it is a love continued all the while, from everlasting, even till the time of one’s calling.

The last thing I came to in the last discourse is this, *us* ; ‘hath loved us.’ He hath not only put forth an act or purpose of love at random, indefinitely, that he would love some of us, or that he would love mankind, but *us* determinatively. As it was not merely the natural disposition of love and mercy in God that was the cause of our salvation, but an act of his will put forth ; so is it not an act of mere velleity, or an indefinite act, that he would save some, but it is *us* ; he resolved upon the persons whom he would save, he resolved upon them distinctly and nakedly : loved them distinctly, by name ; and nakedly, that is, loved their persons, without the consideration of any qualification whatsoever.

And so now I have done the explanation of these words in a plain and brief manner. I reserved two things to be handled, which I shall now despatch. The one is, *the greatness of this love* ; and the other is, *the riches of this mercy*.

I made observations from the words thus explained in the last discourse. There is only one observation which I shall at this time handle, and that is this :—

Obs.—That the foundation of our salvation is an act of love, it is out of love ; ‘for the love,’ saith he, ‘wherewith he loved us.’ I shewed it in the last discourse, in distinction from mercy ; that it was rather an act of love (the primitive act) than of mercy, which I will not now prosecute. My brethren, election is an act of love. I mention this because it is fundamental to what shall afterwards follow. The Apostle in the former chapter had expressed election to be an act of God’s will ; ‘being predestinated according to the counsel of his will,’ saith he, ver. 11. And he calls it also an act of God’s good pleasure ; ‘according to his good pleasure that he purposed

in himself;' so ver. 5, 9. But to take their hearts the more, when he comes to make application to them of the misery they lay in, he terms it now an act of love. To make it an act of his will and good pleasure was but a more general thing; for by his will he worketh all things, his will is pitched upon everything; and that it is an act of his good pleasure, imports rather the sovereignty and majesty of God, out of which he did it, and aiming at himself therein: but love is a condescending virtue. When a king will speak as a king, he saith it is his pleasure, and he makes it an act of his will; but when he calls it love, his majesty comes down then. Love doth import not so much the sovereignty of God in it, though it was joined with an act of sovereignty, aiming at his own glory; but it imports especially a respecting us in it; for *amare* is to communicate good things for the sake of him we love rather than our own. Now I find that election is especially expressed unto us by love, indeed the one is put for the other usually in the Scripture, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

Take the Old Testament. When he would say he had chosen Jacob and refused Esau, how doth he express it? 'Jacob have I loved,' saith he. So in Rom. ix. 13; it is quoted out of Mal. i. 2. And afterwards, when he cometh to speak of the choice of the people of Israel and of their fathers, both Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in Deut. x. 14, 15, how doth he express it? 'Behold,' saith he, 'the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's; the earth also, with all that therein is.' He had choice enough: 'Only,' saith he, 'the Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love them; and he chose their seed after them.' That is, as the Septuagint there hath it, 'He chose to love them.' Mark it, he expresseth his choice, and sets it out by those sweet words, love, yea, and a delight to love them; a love unto their persons, and a delight in that love. So you shall find that love and choice go together; as Ps. xlvii. 4, and Ps. lxxviii. 68: He chose the tribe of Judah, the inhabitants of Mount Sion, which he loved. And thus in the New Testament also, when our Lord and Saviour Christ, who was elected by his Father as he was Mediator, as we are, as you have it in 1 Peter i. 20, where it is said that he was 'foreordained before the foundation of the world;' how doth Christ himself express it? In John xvii. 24, speaking of the glory given him, (therefore he speaks of predestination.) he saith, 'Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;' that is, thou gavest me this glory by a choice, by an election; and you see he expresseth it by love. And, Rom. xi. 28, they are beloved according to election. You shall therefore not only find election called the counsel of God, and the purpose of God, and the will of God; but grace joined to it, purpose and grace both put together. So in 2 Tim. i. 9, 'He hath saved us, and called us, according to his own purpose and grace, before the world began.' And you have a more express place for it in Rom. xi. 5, where it is called the 'election of grace,' or love, for grace there is taken for free love; the soul, the spirit of election lies in that act; and therefore we are said to be chosen in Christ, which is all one and to say we are loved in Christ; for to love is to choose.

And so now I have despatched that observation, which is previous to what I am to deliver afterwards.

Now I come to those two things which I said I reserved in the last discourse to be now handled; for there is nothing remaining to be spoken to in this ver. 4, but, first, to shew you *the greatness of this love*; and, secondly, *the riches of this mercy*: two of the greatest subjects, if one would handle them as subjects,—that is, in the whole compass of all that might be said of them,—that the whole book of God affords. Now where is it that I must

begin? The truth is, riches of mercy offers itself first in the words; but we must give the prerogative to the greatness of love, because, as you heard before, it is the foundation of mercy. 'Riches of mercy' are brought in here as subserving his love, commanded and disposed of by his love; for the reason why God lays forth riches of mercy to these and these persons, is because he loveth them. So then that stock, or that treasury of love, which the will of God was pleased to set apart first for his elect and children, and lay up in his own heart, this is that which I am first to speak unto; you see it is in the text. And let me say this of it: we can never search enough into this; we may pry too much into the wisdom and counsels of God, to seek a reason of his doings, but we can never pry enough into the love of God. It is a sea of honey, as one calls it, and if in wading into it, we be swallowed up of it and drowned therein, it is no matter. And let me likewise profess this about it, that of all subjects else, it is of that nature as cannot be set out by discourse or in a rational way. It is part of the meaning, I think, of that of the Apostle in Eph. iii. 19, where he calleth it a love that passeth knowledge; that is, the human way of knowledge by way of reason and discourse, whereby we infer and gather one thing out of another in a rational way, and so come to the knowledge of them. But it is more fully the meaning of that in Rom. v. 5, 'The love of God is *shed abroad* in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' He doth not say, the love of God which he hath told us of, and spoken so great things of in the Scriptures,—and indeed you shall upon search find the Scripture to speak little of it,—but he saith, 'the love of God which is *shed abroad* in our hearts.' So as he doth not speak of a love which a man's understanding, by collecting one thing out of another, or by laying one thing to another,—as reason, yea, spiritual reason, in other things useth to proceed,—and so may argue to be great: but the way to apprehend it is, by its being shed abroad, and the report and taste of it the Holy Ghost makes. As the seat of God's love is his own heart, his will, so the receptacle thereof is not so much the understanding as the heart of a Christian. The conscience of a man is the proper receptacle of Christ's blood, when it sprinkleth it from evil works; but the heart of a man is the seat of God's love, to be shed abroad there. And to this purpose he addeth, 'by the Holy Ghost,' as being solely and immediately his work; for he in one moment can speak more to the poorest man, of the lowest and meanest understanding, of the greatness of God's love than all that the Scripture says of it, or than all that all the divines in the world out of Scripture can say of it. The truth is, all discourses of God's love are in themselves dull and flat, compared with what representations and impressions thereof the Holy Ghost makes. As, take an excellent song, when it is set in prick-song, what a dull thing is it to what the music itself is? My brethren, so is it here. Therefore still you shall meet with such expressions as these in the Scripture: Come, see, and taste how good the Lord is: and, if ye have tasted how good the Lord is, &c.; for the greatness of God's love is only known that way.

Now to shape out a little the subject I am to speak unto; for it is a great point, and would swell into many sermons if I should speak all that which in a discursive way may be said of it. Neither do I purpose now to say all that may affect your hearts and take you with this love. No, the thing that I must keep to is this, to speak of that love borne to us before calling, before quickening, as it is the cause of our salvation; I say, of the greatness of it in that respect, which is proper to what the text here saith,

and confine myself merely to such things as are held forth within the compass of these three verses.

The first whereof is this : *It is great in respect of the subject and rise of it.* It is God that loveth us, and it is called 'his love.' For if you mark it, there is that little particle in the text, 'but God,' saith he; he puts an emphasis upon that; and likewise, 'his love,' saith he, 'wherewith he loved us.'

Secondly, The greatness of it may be set forth by what may be taken from the *persons* mentioned here upon whom this love is pitched—*us*; and that either simply considered in our persons nakedly; or else, secondly, in the condition that we were in, that we were dead in sins and trespasses: 'even,' saith he, 'when we were dead in sins and trespasses;' that though he did not make choice first of us when we were dead in sins and trespasses, yet he ordered in his decrees that that should be our condition, to shew forth the more love. The Apostle puts an emphasis upon it, both upon *us*, not others, and upon *us* in that condition, dead in sins and trespasses.

Thirdly, From what those words will afford, 'the love wherewith he loved us,' which to me holds forth these three things: Here is first an *act of love*; 'loved us.' Here is the *time*, and that is the time past; 'hath loved us.' And here is, thirdly, an intimation of a *special kind of love*; 'his love wherewith he loved us.' He contents not himself to say, 'for his love,' or, 'for that he loved us;' but you see he doubles it, 'for his love wherewith he loved us.'

Fourthly, and the greatest of all shewn before calling, is in *giving Christ*. The Scripture runs most upon that, and indeed instanceth in almost nothing else, for that is enough. But you will say, this is not in the text. Yes, it runs all along, through every verse mentioned. For he saith, we are quickened with Christ, and in Christ, who therefore out of that love was given unto death for us, as chap. i. 19. And we are raised up together with him, and we sit together in heavenly places in him.

Lastly, Here are the *fruits of this love*, which, you see, are quickening, raising up with Christ, sitting together in heavenly places in him.

And these, I say, are the particulars which I shall confine myself unto, as those which the text suggesteth.

Let us begin *first* with the *subject, and rise, and original of this love. He loved.* 'But God, for his great love wherewith *he* loved us.' My brethren, all that I say of this is but this, that if God will fall in love, and is pleased and delighted to set his love on creatures, how great must that love be! And whomsoever's lot it falls to, they shall have enough of it. God that is infinite hath an infinite love in his heart to bestow, and whoever it be that his will is pleased to cast that love upon, of whom it will be said, 'he hath loved us,' it must be a great, yea, an infinite love. The fountain of love in God being, as was said, his goodness; for it is in all rational creatures, that which makes them love is a goodness of disposition in them; the fountain of love, as was said, is goodness, and so far as any are good, so far are they apt and prone to love others; and according to the proportion of the goodness, so will the love be also, and accordingly the greatness of love in any. Now God, he is so good, as he is said only to be good. 'There is none good but God,' Matt. xix. 17; that is, with such a transcendency of goodness; and therefore answerably thereunto, God is said to be love, so 1 John iv. 8. As none is good, so there is none that loves but he—that is, in comparison of him. The goodness and kindness in God, yea,

and all the goodness that is in him, (as ver. 7,) moved him to love somebody besides himself, that he might communicate his goodness to them. And so his will resolved to love such and such persons, for he would not communicate his goodness to those whom he did not love; rational, wise men will be sure to love those whom they do communicate much to, and so did God. He also resolving to communicate all his goodness to some, resolves also to love them first, and his love shall be proportionable to his intent of the communication of his goodness, and that to the greatness of that goodness in him. He meant to communicate his goodness to the creature to the utmost; for if he will do it, he will do it as God, or he will not do it at all, he will shew himself to be the chiefest good; why then he will love them to the utmost, and love them like the great God too.

There is this difference between God's loving and ours: we must see a goodness in the creature that we love, to draw out love from us; but all the love that is in him, he had it in his own power to set it where he would, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will be gracious unto whom I will be gracious.' We can but love so far as our love is drawn out; our will doth not intend love to the height, unless it runs out in some natural way; but so can God say, I will have such and such, and I will bear such and so great an affection to them. And when he doth so, his will shall not only cause him to communicate all his goodness to them, but cause him also to do it with the highest love, with rejoicing over them, with delighting to love. So you have the phrase in that place of Deut. x. 15. Men may, and do, do good to others, beyond the extent of their love, for other ends; a man's will may cause him to communicate good to others beyond what the proportion of love is in his heart. But it is not so in God: as is his goodness, so is his love; therefore God is good to Israel, and he loveth Israel; it is all one, as in Ps. lxxiii. 1.

In one word, then, will you go and take the rise and the original of love in God, the genealogy of it, and so by that the proportion of it?

First, His goodness putteth him upon communicating himself, and then he loveth those proportionably unto whom he communicateth himself; and so he sets himself to love, singles out the persons. This you have in ver. 7, 'In his kindness towards us.' Tit. iii. 4, 5, when he shews the causes of our salvation, as he doth here, he begins first with the same word used in ver. 7, a goodness, a sweetness, a pleasantness of nature in God, an heroic disposition of being good unto others, from whence ariseth a *philanthropeia*, a love to mankind; which, though there it be expressed indefinitely, yet as here and elsewhere, he pitcheth upon particular persons. Or, to give perhaps a more clear place for it, Exod. xxxiii. 19; when God there would express his heart to Moses, and intimate to him that he loved him, and how dearly he valued him,—and therefore this Moses his choice is mentioned as an instance of the grace of election, in Rom. ix.,—what saith God to him? 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' So he begins to him; his scope was to shew what love he did bear unto Moses, by the effect of it, and that proportioned to its original in God, and he would have his heart taken with it; how doth he begin? I have, saith he, all goodness in me, and I mean to communicate it unto thee. And what follows? 'I will be gracious unto whom I will be gracious;' he pitcheth upon persons, as in Moses' instance appears, and love upon those persons. And those, saith he, whom thus I resolve to be gracious unto, they shall have all this goodness; I have cast out of my goodness, my love and grace on thee, and therefore 'I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee.' He that hath my love, he hath

all my goodness ; and the rise of all is that his goodness, and the manifestation of it. Now as love thus ariseth from goodness, and the desire of communicating of it ; so mercy ariseth from love : for what follows ? ‘ I will be merciful unto whom I will be merciful.’ First he says, ‘ I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious ;’ there it is taken for favour and acceptance freely ; and if they be fallen into misery, ‘ I will be merciful,’ my mercy shall do as great wonders as my love. In Eph. iii. 18, he prays that they ‘ may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ And what follows ? ‘ And be filled with all the fulness of God.’ Why ? For whoever God hath pitched this love upon, all the fulness that is in God is coming upon that soul ; for it is the love of the great God, it is a love proportionable to his goodness ; they have and shall have all his goodness, all his fulness.

To cause us therefore to set a value on this : of all dispositions, good nature, as we call it, and love, in whomsoever it is, is the best, and God himself values it most as in himself ; he takes more unkindly the despising of his love than he doth the slighting of his wisdom. And love, in whomsoever it is, is the most predominant of all dispositions ; whatsoever is good and whatsoever is excellent in any, love hath the command of it ; and so it hath in God. All his goodness, the whole train of it must pass before Moses, because God had loved him, and resolved to be gracious to him. So that now, look how great the great God is, so great his love must needs be ; for, as I may so speak with reverence, it commandeth all in this great God. In John x. 29, saith Christ, My sheep, no man shall pluck them out of my hand ; for, saith he, it is the will of my Father that gave them me that they shall be saved ; and he is greater than all. He hath set such a love upon them that all the greatness in this great God is interested in it. It hath commanded and set on work all in God ; it hath set on work all the persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to bear several offices in our salvation. It hath set on work all attributes, mercy, justice, power, wisdom, wrath itself to fall upon our Lord and Saviour Christ, his only Son. Why ? Because love is the most predominant, wherever it is it commandeth all ; and that which commandeth all that is in God, must needs be great. In other dispositions, he shews forth but one or two attributes : if he throw men into hell, he shews his justice and the power of his wrath ; but where he loveth, he draweth forth all. The poets themselves said, that *amor Deum gubernat*, that love governed God. And, as Nazianzen well speaks, this love of God, this *dulcis tyrannus*,—this sweet tyrant,—did overcome him when he was upon the cross. There were no cords could have held him to the whipping-post but those of love ; no nails have fastened him to the cross but those of love. And hence—to confirm this notion more to you, that love is the predominant thing that commandeth all—you shall find that God is every attribute of his ; he is his own wisdom, his own justice, his own power, &c. Yet you have him peculiarly called *love*. It is not said anywhere of God, that I know of, that he is wisdom, or justice, or power, &c. Christ indeed is called the wisdom and power of God, that is, manifestatively, as he is Mediator. It is true, indeed, all God’s attributes are himself ; but yet love in a more peculiar manner carries the title of him. ‘ God is love,’ saith he, in 1 John iv. 8 ; and he saith it again, ver. 16.

Let us expound the words a little, because we are now upon them. ‘ Beloved,’ saith he, ver. 7, ‘ love is of God.’ He is the fountain of it, and if the

fountain will love, if he that is love itself will love, how great will that love be! We use to argue thus, that God is therefore the highest good because whatsoever is good in any creature is eminently found in him. Truly thus doth the Apostle argue. Love, saith he, is of God. All the love that is in all creatures, in all angels and men, that is in the heart of Christ himself, it is all of God, he is the fountain of it; therefore whosoever hath his love, his love from whom all love is, it must needs be a great and an infinite love. As the Apostle saith, ye need not be written to, to love one another, ye are taught of God so to do. It is nature in you, so it is nature in God. Now what follows in the next words? 'Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God.' It is such a phrase as this: if you be ignorant of what is the greatest excellency of any one, you do not know him; the man is thus and thus, this is his character, and his chiefest character, if you do not know that, you do not know the man. So saith he of God, 'God is love,' and there is no man that doth know him, but he finds so much love in him towards him, that he must needs love others; and he that doth not love, knows him not, for love is his genius. And as to love one another is the great commandment that Jesus Christ gave us; so for God to love us is the greatest and most eminent disposition in the great God. Will you have a definition of God? Why, saith the Apostle, 'God is love;' and he contents not himself to have said it once, but he saith it again, ver. 16. Now then, great must needs that love be which is his love. Mark that emphasis: 'for his great love wherewith he loved us.'

It is great also in this respect, as in God,—for still I am arguing from its being in him as he is the subject of it,—because there is no other rise of his love, besides that of his goodness mentioned, but his love; his own love and goodness is a rise to itself. All love in us is of God, but all love in himself must needs be much more of himself; this argues it great, wherever he pitcheth it. For if he loved us for anything in us, it is too narrow: for the truth is, so he loves all creatures; so far as there is any goodness in them, so far he loves them; but that he should love his saints thus, it would be too narrow, too scanty a love. He loved Adam but thus, plainly; it was but a providential love wherewith he loved Adam, take him in that first estate. God saw all that was in the creatures to be good, and he loved them; so he saw that which was in Adam to be good, and that was the cause he loved him. But when love in the great God is the predominant thing, that which commandeth all in God, when this shall be a fountain to itself, then it will overflow, it knoweth no bounds, nothing is so diffusive. It is a saying of Bernard, and it is an exceeding good one: 'That God,' saith he, 'loveth his children, he hath it not elsewhere, from anything out of himself; but it is himself from whence that love riseth, his own love is the spring of his own love, and so is the measure of the extent of it, and that knows no measure. And therefore he must needs love strongly, saith he, when he is not said so much to have love, as that he is love. And therefore this love, which is the fountain of love itself, how great must it be!'

Again, the end of his love is but to shew love; it is the great end of it, and so large as his end is, so large must his love be, and his desire to love. *Appetitus finis est infinitus*;—What a man loveth for an end, he loveth infinitely. 'That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace,' saith ver. 7, that is, of his free love; there is his end. As he hath no reason why he loveth but because he willeth, so he hath no higher end to love

but because he will love, and because he doth love, and because he will shew love. If so great a love will make itself its end, how unsatisfied will that love be ! And so much for the subject of it.

I will only add this. Do but only take a scantling of it by the love that is in the Mediator, Jesus Christ, who is God-man. ‘That ye may know,’ saith the Apostle, ‘the breadth and length, the depth and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ What need I stand to set out that love to you ? It drew him from heaven to the womb, and from the womb to the cross ; and it kept him upon the cross when any great spirit in the world would have been provoked to have come down ; it was his love that held him there. But now that love that was in the heart of the man Christ Jesus, and as he was Mediator, is less than God’s love. ‘My Father,’ saith he—and he speaks as Mediator—‘is greater than I ;’ and so also is his Father’s love greater than his. And yet if there were infinite worlds made of creatures loving, they would not have so much love in them as was in the heart of that man Christ Jesus. ‘All love is of God,’ so John saith ; and the truth is, all the love that Christ had was of God ; he spake to his heart to love us. ‘Thine they were,’ saith he, ‘and thou gavest them me ;’ and therefore he loved them. Great therefore must this love be, because it is the love of God ; it is ‘his love.’

I should also add under this head, that as it is great in itself, because it is the love of the great God, so therefore it is greatly endeared to us. For love, be it never so small, is always heightened by the greatness of the person that loves us. The greatness of the person doth not heighten mercy, it shews a nobleness in him indeed, as for a king to be merciful ; but for a king to love, this is a heightening, and endearing of it to us, for *majestas* and *amor* do seldom *convenire*,—majesty and love seldom meet,—because it is a coming down, a debasing of majesty. But I shall not speak much to this head, because I am not to speak things that may endear the love of God to you, but as it is the cause of salvation. Only I will give you that scripture in a word : Ps. cxiii. 6, ‘He humbleth himself, to behold the things that are in heaven and in earth.’ Why is God said to humble himself in this ? Is it a stooping and condescending in God to take all things into his omniscient knowledge, and to guide and govern the world ? Truly he were not God, if he should not do it ; if any creature should escape, any motion of a fly should escape the knowledge of the great God, he were not God ; yet he calls it a humbling, a condescending. O my brethren, what is it then for him to condescend to love !

The *second* thing in the text here by which the greatness of this love is set out to us, is *the persons whom he loveth* ; ‘us,’ saith he. And this setteth out the greatness of his love to us, by way of endearment, which therefore I shall more briefly pass over. He loveth us, not others ; that is clearly the Apostle’s scope. ‘We were by nature children of wrath, as well as others ; but God, who is rich in mercy, loved us,’ not others ; and out of that love he ‘hath quickened us.’ Others are not quickened ; the whole world lies in wickedness, but we know we are of God ; and a few are quickened, it was because he loved us ; a special love, that argues greatness too.

To set out the greatness of it in this respect, and to endear it to you :—

In the first place, the great God, when he meant to love, he did not go and say, I will love somebody, or I will love *indefinitely* ; no, but he pitched upon the persons. That way of the Arminians doth exceedingly detract from the love of God, viz., to make him a lover of mankind, and that that is

the thing out of the consideration whereof he gave his Son; and that he loves them in common, and loves them indefinitely; and if they believe so, God will then shew love to them. God might delight himself in heaven, though men had never been saved; he might there have upbraided them with their unthankfulness. No, God goes another way, he directly sets up the very persons whom he meant to love, and he lays forth all the contrivances of his love, having them distinctly in his eye; as a father that lays out portions for every one of his children by name, legally and distinctly, hath them in his eye; so doth God. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' That same *on whom* implies that it is not indefinite. I will only give you that observation, upon comparing two places that are both known, and I will bring them both together by paralleling of them. Saith Christ, in John xiii. 18, 'I know whom I have chosen.' The parallel place directly to it is in 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'God knoweth who are his;' that is, distinctly knoweth them, he had them in his eye, viewed them, and under the viewing of the persons, on them he would bestow all, did lay the whole plot, all the contrivements of that salvation he intended. Which he did to endear his love the more, having the persons to whom in his eye; he did not do it indefinitely, that he would love mankind, and love some in an indefinite way. Dare any man say, that he did not know the man Christ Jesus, and pitch particularly upon that man that was in the womb of the virgin? Did he only say, I will have a mediator somewhere out of mankind, fall as it will? No, he did ordain that man; so Acts xvii. 31. And he was foreordained, saith 1 Peter i. 20; that very man that is now in heaven, that individual nature, and no other. And so he did do with the members likewise: for there is the same reason of both.

But then, secondly, as his love is thus set out to us, that it was not indefinitely pitched, but as having all the persons in his eye and having them all in view; so by this also, that he hath not pitched it upon everybody. This is distinct from the former; for an indefinite is not knowing whom he pitched it upon. Now as he knew whom he pitched upon, so he hath pitched but upon some, not on every one. He might have pitched upon all, but the text saith otherwise; *us*, not others. So then here is another thing that sets forth this love, it is a special love, and that greateneth it also. My brethren, if God would love, it was fit he should be free. It is a strange thing that you will not allow God that which kings and princes have the prerogative of, and you will allow it them. They will have favourites whom they will love, and will not love others; and yet men will not allow God that liberty, but he must either love all mankind, or he must be cruel and unjust.

The specialness of his love greateneth it, endeareth it to us. You shall find almost all along the Bible, that when God would express his love, he doth it with a specialty to his own elect, which he illustrates by the contrary done to others. In 1 Thess. v. 9, he is not content to say, he hath 'appointed us to obtain salvation,' but he illustrateth it by its contrary; he 'hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation.' Not to wrath, for it might have been our lot, for he hath appointed others to it. In Isa. xli. 9, 'Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee.' And he doth not content himself to say so only, for if he had said no more, it implies only that he had taken them out of the heap of others that lay before him; but he adds, 'I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away;' that is, I have not dealt with thee as I have done with others. And you shall find frequently in the Scripture, when he mentioneth his choice of some persons, he holdeth up likewise on purpose his refusing of others. When he speaks of Jacob, and

would express his love and set it out to himward, he saith, 'Jacob have I loved;' that might have been enough for Jacob, but he sets it out with a foil, 'Esau have I hated.' And in Ps. lxxviii. 67, when he speaks of an election out of the tribes, he contents not himself to say he chose Judah, but he puts in the rejection, the preterition at least, of Joseph. 'He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Sion which he loved.' So among the disciples; how doth Christ set out his love to them? John vi. 70, 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' and, chap. xiii. 18, 'I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen;' and, chap. xv. 19, 'I have chosen you out of the world;' and, chap. xvii. 9, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me,' &c.

I will give you but one eminent place, which indeed concerns us in these times. In 2 Thess. ii. 11, speaking of the times of Popery, and the apostasy thereunto, he saith, 'God shall send among them strong delusion, that they should believe that lie,' that great lie of Popery; and among other things why he mentions this, what use doth he improve this to, his hardening the Popish and apostate world that would not receive the truth in the love thereof? 'That they all might be damned,' ver. 12. But that, in ver. 13, to set out his love to his elect: 'But we are bound always to give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation,' though he hath done, and will do thus with others. The thing I quote it for is this, that he setteth off, enhanceth the greatness of God's love to them, in regard of the specialness of it, that he hath not dealt with them as with others: thanks be given to God always for you. Now this concerns us, for we live in the times of Popery; the Christian world began to warp towards it then, and we and our forefathers have lived in the height and ruff of it. Now what saith Rev. xiii. 8?—it is a parallel place,—'All that dwell upon the earth shall worship the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb.' You see the reason why many men now are set against Popery, and embrace the truth in the love thereof, and are savingly kept from believing that great lie; and that these parts of Europe fell off from Antichrist. It is because God hath here multitudes of men 'whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb.'

Now that God doth thus set his love upon some and not on others, of purpose to set off his love and make it greater, I will give you a place for it: Deut. x. 14, 'Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that is therein. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.' If I would choose, saith God, I have choice enough, I have the heaven of heavens, I could have filled all those with creatures; and there were angels that fell, I might have chosen those, and fixed them as stars, never to have fallen; but I let multitudes of them tumble down to hell. And I had all the earth also, and all the nations thereof, before me; but, to shew my love in a special manner, I have chosen you above all the people of the world. So that, I say, the greatness of his love is set off by the specialness of it. Therefore he doth call the people of God upon all such occasions to consider, the one with the other, that their love of God may be heightened also. Rom. xi. 22, 'Behold, to them severity, to thee goodness.' He would have them to eye both at once; why hath he shewn severity to others? That his goodness to thee might the more appear. He calls them to behold it; behold, saith he, to them severity, and to thee goodness; the one setteth off the other.

And I might shew you that God hath shewn his special love, not only in choosing you out of all the rest of mankind, and angels, and the like, whom he refused and threw down to hell, but out of all creatures possible, or which he could have made. Believe it, brethren, there came up before him, in his idea, infinite millions of worlds; all that his power could make were as makeable as we were, and he chose us out of all that he could make, and not only out of all that he did make, or did decree to make.

And let me say this: the greatness of his love, in respect of the specialty of it, is mightily enhanced to us, the elect, in the latter ages of the world, in this respect, that God had all the great heroes of all ages that are past before him, the great worthies of the world, all the wise, gallant, brave men in Rome and Greece, and in all nations, in all the ages before,—he might have filled up thy room in heaven with some of those; there were men enough amongst them that might have had places in heaven, and thou mightest have been let alone. No, all these could not win away his love from thee that livest in this age; he passed over all them, suffered them to walk in their own ways; they are perished, they are gone; and, as the phrase is in 1 Pet. i. 5, he hath reserved heaven for thee. The love of God to thee, I say, is not only magnified by those out of whom he hath chosen thee in this age, but in all ages past; and when all mankind shall meet together, it will infinitely greaten the love of God to that remnant whom he hath chosen out of all the rest of the world. It is special love that makes his love great love.

Obs.—I will give you this observation, which I find in the Scripture. He calls his church his love; so Cant. v. 2. And he himself terms himself by the name of the lover; so Rom. viii. 37, and Rev. i. 5. It is his title, and became his style. The church is his love, so as he hath no love but the church, it is not scattered to other objects; therefore, Rom. xi., they are said to be ‘beloved according to election,’ even as they are said to be ‘called according to his purpose.’ It is by way of distinction, noting out a specialty of love that accompanies election.

And then, if you add to this, in the third place, the fewness of those upon whom this love is pitched, it doth exceedingly greaten it; for the fewer that all the love of the great God is pitched upon, the greater the love is. And this, in the coherence, though not in express words, we find in the text; for the rest, whom these ‘us’ were called out of, were the world, the world lying in wickedness: ‘among whom we had our conversation, according to the course of this world.’ When God hath betaken himself to a few, to love them, oh, how will he love them! He will be sure to lose none of those, because they are so few. When a great rich man shall have but one heir, or a few in his will, to divide his goods amongst; so when God, that is rich in mercy, and hath great love, shall have but a few to enjoy it, how will his heart be intended more in love! Isa. x. 22, ‘Though Israel be as the sand of the sea,’—he speaks of election,—‘yet but a remnant shall be saved.’

And yet let me add this, in the fourth place, that he loveth every one whom he hath chosen as if he loved none else; lest any of his children should be jealous of it, he doth so dexterously manage his love that every one may say, None is loved as I am. As he said, I am the greatest of sinners; so may every one of his children say, I am the greatest of beloved ones. So loving is God to those he chooseth, that all sort of natures speak this of him, be they of what condition soever.

There is also this to be added to this head, the condition wherein we were when we were called, even when we were ‘dead in sins and trespasses.’ But I will reserve that till it comes in order in the text.

And so much now for that second head here in the text, which doth illustrate the greatness of the love of God,—us, and not others.

I come now to the *third*, which contains divers particulars in these words, *for his great love wherewith he loved us.* There is—

1. *Acts of love* mentioned. There is—
2. *The time when he loved us*, viz., before calling. And then—
3. *There is a special kind of love*; ‘his love wherewith he loved us.’

To begin with the first—

There are *two great acts of love* which God hath shewn to us. The one was that from everlasting; the other, when he gave Jesus Christ. I will not speak of the latter now, because it comes in afterwards at ver. 5. But let us take in that act of love in God which here certainly the Apostle hath a more special recourse to,—that is, *his electing love*, which is eminently the love which this same *hath loved us* referreth to, and which is the foundation of all the rest, and let me in a word or two shew you the greatness of this.

First, Let me say this of it, that take it as it was an act in God, it can never be expressed what it was, nor how great it was. And therefore God himself, as I may so speak with reverence, is fain to manifest that love which he took up in his own heart, by degrees and by effects. The Scripture itself doth not know how to give you the greatness of that love which God did pitch upon us from everlasting, but it is still fain to do it by the effects. In 1 John iv. 9, when he had said before that God is love, and therefore he hath thus greatly loved us, he is fain to fall upon speaking of the effects of this love: ‘In this was manifested,’ saith he, ‘the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.’ And, ver. 10, ‘Herein is love,’—it is manifested in this,—‘not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.’ And after he had spoken of his love, what saith he? Ver. 12, ‘No man hath seen God at any time;’ the meaning whereof, I think, is clearly this, as if he had said, I am fain to tell you this love of God which I am discoursing of, merely as it is manifested in the effects; for if you would have me speak of it as it is in the fountain, it is not to be expressed, for no man hath seen God at any time; he is not able to know what love is in the heart of God but at the second-hand. It may be illustrated by the gift of his Son, by making of us happy and glorious in heaven, by his communication of himself to us there; but what, and how great it is, can never be expressed. And I will give you the reason why I interpret it thus, because in Exod. xxxiii. 19, &c., when God hath spoken of his love to Moses, and said, ‘I will be gracious to those to whom I will be gracious;’ he adds, ‘No man can see God, and live;’ for you cannot see into this love, as it is in him.

And let me likewise say this second thing of it: That that love which God did first take up, in the first act of it, it was as great as all acts transient for ever can express or vent to eternity; it is great love therefore. I say, all the ways and acts that God doth to eternity are but mere expressions of that love which he at first took up. Christ, and heaven, and whatever else God shews you of love and mercy in this world, or in the world to come, they all lay in the womb of that first act, of that love he took up, ‘wherewith he loved us.’ God was not drawn on to love us, as a man is, who first begins to love one, and to set his heart upon him, and then his heart being engaged, he is drawn on beyond what he thought, and is enticed to do thus and thus beyond what he first intended. No, God is not as man herein, but as ‘known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world,’ so is all his love that he meant to bestow. And he took up love enough at first, as he

should be venting of all sort of ways that he hath taken to do it, unto eternity. For there is no new thing to God; if there should be any one thought or degree of love rise up in his heart afterwards, which was not there at first, there should be some new thing in God. And the reason is clear by this too, that he doth love out of his own love, therefore his love at the very first dash, when he first began to love us, was as perfect as it will be when we are in heaven. When Adam fell, God was not then drawn out to give his Son; no, we are not so to conceive it, God had all before him from everlasting.

And this, I say, is easily manifested; for the first act of his love was the womb of his giving Christ; 'God so loved the world that he gave his Son. Therefore the Scripture makes all the grace that ever we shall have to be given us at the very first, when God first loved us, 2 Tim. i. 9, 'According to the grace of God, which was given us before the world began.' And in Rom. xi. 29, speaking of election, as he had done all along the chapter before, he saith, 'the gifts of God are without repentance.' He gave all in the first act, when he first chose us, and never repenteth of it. Election, I say, is expressed to us by all that God means to bestow upon us actually to eternity, for ever and ever, which he 'hath prepared for them that love him;' so the phrase is, 1 Cor. ii. 9. And, ver. 12, 'We have received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things which are freely given us of God;' that is, given us when he first set his heart upon us. My brethren, when God first began to love you, he gave you all that he ever meant to give you in the lump, and eternity of time is that in which he is retailing of it out. 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.' And then all the goodness that he means to communicate to them unto whom he is thus gracious, is a passing before them even unto eternity. First, the giving of his Son, he came first in the train; and then the giving of his Spirit; and then grace and glory: and whatever variation of glory there is that is to come, it is all but the passing on of the train, it is all but the communicating of that goodness of his which he did ordain the first time he thought on thee to love thee.

There is an emphatical word in the text, this word *πολλὴν ἀγάπην*, great love,—as your great critics observe, and so the Septuagint constantly useth it,—which doth not signify that God loves us often, or that his love is reiterated, but that he loves us with one entire love. The Arminians would make the love of God incomplete, and never complete till one comes to die; but it is not a matter of that nature, it is not as sanctification, that admits degrees in us, but it is of the nature of those things that consist in *indivisibili*. I will give you that place for it, Ps. cxxxviii. 8, 'The Lord,' saith he, 'will perfect* that which concerneth me.' What God did intend to David from everlasting at once, he is perfecting of it in him. There is, saith he, a great deal of mercy yet to come, God hath not half done with me, he will perfect that which concerns me, and he is perfecting of it to everlasting; for so it follows: 'Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever.' God hath set up, as I may so speak, an idea in his own heart, what a brave creature he will make thee, and how he will love thee, and all that ever he doth or will do, it is but a perfecting of that idea, and of that love wherewith he loved thee from everlasting. The mercies of God are said to be many, ycu read often of them in the plural; but his love is said to be but one, because he loved us with one entire act, even from eternity.

Yea, he took up so much love at the first, that his wisdom and all in him is set on work to study and contrive ways how to commend that love. And

* In 2 Thess. i. 11, it is 'fulfil,' *πληρώσῃ*.

therefore that word in Tit. iii. 4, which we translate ‘kindness,’ as it signifies *benignitatem*, so it signifies an heroic study, as it were, in God, all sort of ways to deserve well of mankind. It was so great that he knew not how to express it enough; for do but consider a little with yourselves. He began to love Adam upon the terms of a providential love, but that was not good enough, he must have those of mankind he loves to heaven. He was not content with direct ways of loving,—that is, to love them in their head Jesus Christ, as he loveth the angels, and so no more ado,—but to shew the more love, lets them fall into sin, become enemies to him, and then sends his Son. And, my brethren, the truth is, this cost Jesus Christ dear, merely that God might shew forth the more love; for we might not have been sinners; and though sinners, yet we might have been saved without any satisfaction. But it was a digression of love, as I may truly call it, it was an excursion of love, that as man being sinful sought out many inventions, so God being loving, he sought out a world of inventions for to shew his love. Now, do but think with yourselves, that the very first thought of love that God had towards you, the very first glance of love he took up, should be so much, as that all sorts of ways that his wisdom can invent, and that in an eternity of time too, should be little enough to vent and retail that love which thus in the lump he took up. My brethren, this must certainly be a great love.

And I will add but this to it: that his love was so greedy,—mark what I say unto thee—when he first began to love thee, that the next and main thing that he thought of, that he had in his eye, as I may speak, in order and degree, though all was but one act, was that happiness he meant to give thee in heaven. He doth as it were overleap, so greedy was his love, all the means between; they come in, as I may say, in a second thought. If, I say, they do allow an intention of the end before the means, if God intended the end before the means, he intended that happiness which thou shalt have first. Therefore observe what the Scripture speaks; though it saith that God ordained us to believe, and ordained us unto sanctification, yet ordinarily it expresseth it thus—he hath ordained us unto life. And the place is emphatical, 2 Thess. ii. 13, ‘God hath from the beginning ordained you to salvation;’ mark, he joins *you* and *salvation* together, and then comes in the means, ‘through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.’ But, I say, his eye was so intent upon thy good, that look what is thy chiefest good, what he means to make thee in heaven, that he pitcheth first upon.—And so much now for that act.

Let us next consider the time. ‘He loved us;’—this carries us to the time past. So that if you ask me when this love did begin, the truth is, if I may so speak with reverence, he loved thee ever since he hath been God. Jer. xxxi. 3, ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love;’ and unto everlasting there can be nothing added. God is from everlasting, and his love is from everlasting. He may be said to have loved thee ever since he loved himself, or ever since he loved his Son in whom he chose thee. As he was God from the beginning, and as Christ was the Word of life from the beginning, John i. 1; so he hath ordained thee unto salvation from the beginning, 2 Thess. ii. 13. And the school-men do rightly say in this, that the liberty of God’s will doth not lie as man’s doth, that it was a while suspended, no, not for a moment. There was never an actual suspension, for then there were an imperfection; only there was *libertas potentialis*, he might have cast it otherwise; but there never was any time in which there was in his heart a vacuity of love to thee, or unto any one whom he loveth. How infinitely

doth this endear the love of God to thee, and make it great ! If one have loved you from his infancy, that no sooner he began to have a thought of love, or to love himself, but he loved you, and pitched his heart upon you, how great will you account his love ! John makes a great matter of it, 1 John iv. 10 : Herein is love, speaking of the love of God, that we loved not God, but he loved us first. We did not begin, but he began ; and when did he begin ? Even from eternity, when he loved himself, and loved his Son.

And as he hath loved you from eternity, that is the first thing considerable in it, so let me add, in the second place, which this *hath loved* doth also evidently import,—comparing it with ver. 7, ‘that in ages to come,’ and here ‘hath,’ that is, from everlasting to everlasting,—he hath continued to love his children with a reiterated love. That act of love which he hath first pitched, he hath every moment renewed actually in his own mind. He doth but think over and over again thoughts of love to thee, amongst the rest of his elect, unto eternity. Saith the Psalmist, and it is Christ that speaks that psalm, who knew the love of his Father, and knew his heart, Ps. xl. 5, ‘How many are thy thoughts towards us, O God !’ Many indeed, for they have been from everlasting, therefore they cannot be numbered. And not only that first act, that first thought he had, but the whole lump of that love is still renewed every moment, and shall be unto eternity. I could give you a multitude of places. He is therefore said to have us in his eye, and to write us upon the palms of his hands, &c.

And, lastly, it is to everlasting, which though it be not in this verse, yet we meet with it in ver. 7, ‘that in ages to come.’ As he loved us from everlasting, from the beginning, as it is in that 2 Thess. ii. 13, so he loveth us unto the end, John xiii. 1.

SERMON XII.

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 scope of the Apostle in these words, as I have told you, is to magnify these three attributes in God—his love, mercy, grace, towards us; and these as they are the causes of our salvation.

In opening of these words, I have—

1. Shewn you the difference between love and mercy.
2. Shewn you why that the Apostle, when he would speak of the causes of our salvation, contented not himself to have said that God is rich in mercy, but that he addeth ‘for the great love wherewith he loved us.’
3. Shewn you likewise that a great love, and an act of love, or a purpose of love, taken up towards us, is the foundation of his shewing mercy to us; and that act of love is especially that taken up from everlasting, which he took up to us before we were, and therefore prevented the misery we were fallen into; for he had engaged himself to us by so great a love, which stirred up his mercy.

The next thing I came to was this, the greatness of this love. I did profess not to handle this argument in the vastness of it,—which by the grace of God might arise to a volume, if it should be so handled,—but so far forth as the text doth give bottom to anything about it, so far I professed to handle it, because I would explain the text.

First, therefore, we considered the subject of this love, who it is that loved us. It is God, whose love therefore is as great as himself; and if God will be in love, how deep, how great will that love be! What a love will they possess with whom God professeth himself to be in love! Love, it is of all attributes the most commanding; it commandeth all in a man, and it commandeth all in God.

Secondly, we considered that this God, though of a loving nature and disposition, yet he took up an act of love. ‘He loved,’ saith the text.

There are two sorts of acts of love which God hath put forth towards us:—

1. That immanent act, as it is called; that is, which is in God himself only, abideth in himself, in his own heart, that first act from eternity, which is the foundation of all; and this the Apostle here mainly intended in this 4th verse. But—

2. There are transient acts of love, which are the fruits of that first, which in the text here, as afterwards I shall shew you, are mainly these three:—

(1.) Giving Jesus Christ to be a head for us, and to die for us; that is couched in these words, ‘He hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together with him;’ which importeth both him to be a head for us and him to have died for us, as a fruit of this love.

(2.) The act of calling us to himself, which is expressed in these words : 'Even when we were dead in sins hath he quickened us.'

(3.) The glorifying of us hereafter, we being already 'set in heavenly places in Christ,' as an engagement of all that glory we shall have hereafter.

These three transient acts I must handle in their order, as I open the fifth and sixth verses ; therefore now, in this fourth verse, I shall only speak of that immanent act in God, 'the love wherewith he loved us.' And concerning that, two things—

1. The greatness of that love in itself. And—

2. In respect of the time when this love began ; for he speaks in the time past, 'he loved us.'

First, For the greatness of this act of love taken up towards us. It is so great, as all the acts of love, all the manifestations of love, the transient acts of love, the fruits of love, that God shews and manifesteth to eternity, they are not all enough to express that love which he took up in the first act, when he began to love us, and all serve but to commend and manifest that love. And then—

Secondly, For the time. If you ask when he first began to love,—which also sets out the greatness of it,—it was from everlasting. This word in the text, 'hath loved us,' or, 'he loved us,' reacheth to eternity ; so in Jer. xxxi. 3.

And then for the continuance of it ever since ; he hath continued it every moment. Though we were children of wrath, and dead in sins and trespasses, yet he all that while, since the first time he began to love us, hath continued to love us with the same love ; he hath reiterated the same thoughts again and again. And for this great love, wherewith he loved us from everlasting, and wherewith he hath continued to love us ever since, from everlasting, as we may so speak ; 'for this great love,' saith he, 'he hath quickened us.'

I also opened in the last discourse the greatness of this love from the persons, 'us.' *Us*, saith he, not others. We were children of wrath as well as others, but 'for the great love wherewith he loved *us*,' and not others,—for he hath not quickened all, but he quickeneth all that he loveth,—he hath 'quickened us together with Christ.' He loved *us*, not ours, nor for anything in us. He loved us, not indefinitely,—that is, 'I will love some of mankind,'—but he hath loved us distinctly, pitching upon those persons he pitched his love upon, and laying forth all the mercies and all the fruits of love upon them, eyeing their persons.

There was likewise, I told you, another thing which sets out the greatness of this love, and that is the condition of our persons, 'dead in sins and trespasses,' and that follows in the fifth verse. But as I said then, I going over these words in a way of exposition, and not handling them as a subject, will not insist on everything in that artificial method, as if I were to write a tract upon it.

There is but one thing more, and it is a great thing, and I confess I did not observe it a long while in the text, but still took the words to have run thus, 'for the great love wherewith he loved us ;' but I find it is, 'for *his* great love wherewith he hath loved us.' There is a great emphasis in that word *his*. He saith not simply, as he might have done, because that God greatly loved us, or, because of a great love he bore us ; but he doubles it, 'for the great love wherewith he loved us ;' and not only so, but, 'for *his* great love wherewith he loved us.' My brethren, there is a love proper to God, which is a differing kind of love from that in all the creatures ; *his* love, as the text hath it here. As his goodness is another kind of goodness than

what is in the creatures, so is his love. There is none that hath tasted of this love of his but say that it is a differing love from the love of all the creatures ; and the difference is found more by tasting and by feeling of it than it is by setting of it forth ; as it is in wines, ‘Thy love is better than wine, and thy loving-kindness is better than life :’ both of which are better discerned by taste and feeling than set out by any expression. Indeed, God doth compare his love to what is in the creature, to set it out to us, because we apprehend it by such comparisons ; as when he saith, ‘Like as a father pitieth,’ or loveth, ‘his children, so the Lord loveth them that fear him.’ And, ‘If a mother forget her child,’ &c. But yet, notwithstanding, ‘the love wherewith he loved us’ is of another kind from all these. In 1 John iii. 1, ‘Behold,’ saith the Apostle, ‘what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us !’—he speaks in respect of one fruit of it,—such a love, for the kind of it, as no man, no creature, could bestow upon us. In Hos. xi. 9, where, giving the reason why that he loving his people they are not destroyed, he saith, ‘I am God, and not man.’ It is spoken in respect of his love clearly, for it comes in there upon a conflict with himself ; when he had been provoked beyond the bounds and measure of pardon, yet when he comes to punish, he finds his love not to be as the love of a man. ‘My heart is turned within me,’ saith he, ver. 8, ‘my repentings are rolled together : I will not return to destroy ; for I am God, and not man.’ My love is of another extent, of another kind, than the love of man. And so when he speaks of mercy, in Isa. lv. 8, 9, ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord : for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ It is *his* love, so saith the text here.

Now to speak a little of this, for it lies in the way in the text :—

First, *His love* ; it is a love *for nothing in us*. The love that one creature bears to another is still for something in them ; but the love of God, if it be his love, a love that is proper unto him, must needs be free : and that not only for this reason, which is usually given, and is a true one too, because that his love is from everlasting, and nothing in the creature in time can be the cause of what is in God from everlasting ; but for this reason likewise, because that only God can be moved by what is in himself, he can love no otherwise but from himself. The creatures love because things are lovely, and there must be motives to draw out that love that is in them ; but when God loves, he loves as from his own heart. There is nothing in us, no, not in Christ, that should move God to love us ; though indeed to bestow those things that God bestows upon us, so Christ is the moving cause. ‘Jacob have I loved,’ saith he, and that before he had done any good or evil. So that, as no evil in him did put God off from loving him, so no good did move God to love him. In 2 Tim. i. 9, there is one little particle that I found this upon, ‘Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to *his own purpose* and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.’ Mark, ‘according to his own purpose,’ which is the thing I pitch upon in that place ; that is, as the Apostle explains it, Eph. i. 9, ‘which he purposed in himself,’ or ‘from himself’—a purpose merely taken up in or from himself. And therefore you shall find the phrase in Scripture to run, that as he loves us out of his own purpose, so for his own sake. ‘Not for your sakes do I this, but for my own name’s sake.’ My brethren, there was a love which God did bear to man in innocency, the terms of which were such as, in a way of justice between the Creator and the creature, it became God, if he made him holy as he did

in innocency, to bestow upon him. But because that this was a love that seemed to have a kind of justice in it, and something in the creature which it was founded upon, therefore he destroys that condition, that he might make way to manifest the love that was according to his own purpose and grace, and merely from himself. And that now is his love; for if God do love like God, this is the love that is his, that is proper unto him. And saith he, 'not according to our works'—that is, it is founded upon nothing at all in the creature. For by 'works' there, he understands all habitual dispositions of goodness, of what kind soever, as the Scripture usually doth; as when it saith, 'he will judge every man according to his works,' it is not only meant of the outward acts, but of the inward frame of heart. He looks to nothing in the creature, but to his own purpose. It is *his love*, therefore it is free.—That is the first.

Secondly, *His love*; it is a love that is firm and peremptory, *unchangeable and invincible*; and such a love it became God to bear us, if he would love us, for that properly is his love. 'Put not your trust in princes,' saith the Psalmist; they will all fail; the men perish, and their thoughts perish; yea, sometimes their thoughts and affections die to their greatest favourites, before they die themselves. But his love is firm and peremptory, it is unchangeable and invincible, and this because it is his love. Mal. iii. 6, 'I am the Lord, I change not;'—that is, If I be God, and whilst I am God, I will not cease to love you, I will not change;—'therefore it is that ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' His love is as immutable as his being. I will not be God, if I be not your God, and love you; he pawns all his God-head upon it. 'I am the Lord,' saith he, 'I change not; therefore ye are not consumed.' In Rom. ix. 11, speaking of the election of Jacob, he saith, 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand:' it is a great word that; he fixed it upon such a basis as might stand for ever. It is a true thing that all God's counsels do stand fixed and firm; look how he purposeth them, be they of what kind soever. That Adam should be holy, that counsel did stand firm; but how? It stood firm for so long as he purposed it, which was till such time as he fell; it was but for a moment in comparison. And so, that Saul should be king, he purposed it, and it stood firm so far; but he repented that he made Saul king. But when he cometh to speak of election, he speaks of that as of such a counsel that not only standeth as all other his counsels do, but as that which is perpetuated to eternity. His purpose to love Adam was a firm purpose, for so he did; but how? Whilst he was in that state of innocency, and had the image of God upon him. But his purpose according to election, as the distinction is there, that stands, and it stands for ever. Therefore it is not of works, but, as was said before, of his own purpose, that it might stand, that it might have a rock of eternity, for the basis of it to stand upon. It is therefore, as by way of distinction from all purposes else as it were, called the 'purpose according to election.' If you will have this further confirmed, take that place also, which loadeth it with more epithets for the firmness of it, in 2 Tim. ii. 19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.' He speaks of God's purpose in election, and of the persons elected; for he saith it is that which hath this seal, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.' You have here all sorts of words to make it firm—

1. It is called a foundation; 'The foundation of God,' saith he, 'standeth sure.' There are two great foundations, and of the two, if we may make comparisons, this is the greater. Jesus Christ is a foundation, but the eternal love of God, that is the first foundation; it was the womb of Christ him-

self: 1 Cor. iii. 11, 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' There you see Christ is a foundation, but here is a higher foundation,—'The Lord knoweth them that are his,' loved them and chose them, and so he did Christ himself.

2. It is not only called a foundation, but a sure foundation.

3. It is called the foundation of God, it is founded in him, it is founded upon him, it is as firm as himself; as he is God, he will stand to it, and therefore it must needs stand.

4. It is a foundation that remaineth, it standeth, it is steady.

5. It is sealed: 'having this seal,' saith he; so that it is never to be broken and altered. If the decrees of the Medes and Persians, when they had set their seals to them, were such as were not to be altered; much more God's. His seal is in this respect more than his oath. 'Him hath the Father sealed,' saith he, speaking of Christ. Now you have both his oath and his seal to this; that is, to the invincibleness and unchangeableness of his love. You have his seal in this place, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his;' and his oath you have in Heb. vi. 17. And what doth this oath serve for? To shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel; and the immutability of his counsel respecting persons, and not things only, for it is an oath that God made to Abraham, when he swore concerning Isaac. And therefore the text hath it in Timothy; it 'hath this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.' If you will know whence the words are taken, that I may open them a little, you must observe this, that the Apostle handleth the doctrine of election and reprobation in the New Testament out of the speeches and types of the Old: as, 'Esau have I hated, Jacob have I loved,' in Rom. ix. And so, 'I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful;' it was spoken of Moses, in Exod. xxxiii. 19. And so likewise those words in Timothy, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his,' are spoken of Aaron and Moses in Num. xvi. 3, when Korah and his company gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy,' and they may be all priests. No, saith he; God hath chosen Aaron and Moses to go before his people, and to-morrow the Lord will shew who are his. So we translate it, and the Septuagint reads it, and it comes all to one; 'The Lord knoweth who are his.'

Now this that was said in this respect of Moses and Aaron in a typical way, and indeed in a decree of election too,—for that God singled out Moses and Aaron, it was his everlasting love,—I say, these very words doth the Apostle here apply, and pertinently too, to the same occasion; for, speaking of divers that seemed to be holy, and yet fell away, however, saith he, 'the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.' And the word 'knoweth who are his,' it is, whom he hath pitched upon to love; it is a knowledge of approbation. Exod. xxxiii. 12, 'Thee have I known by name,' saith God unto the same Moses, which is all one and to say, 'Thee have I chosen;' for, ver. 19, speaking of Moses also, he saith, 'I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy,' which the Apostle quoteth in Rom. ix. as spoken of election. Now in respect of his love that is thus firm, and firm in respect that it is his love who is God and not man, and therefore changeth not; it is therefore said of the elect that it is impossible that they should be deceived. As I told you there are two foundations, so there are two impossibles made in Scripture; I know there are more, as it is impossible that God should lie, &c., but I speak of impossibles that relate to God's decrees. The one is, Matt. xxvi. 39, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' It was not possible. Why? Because God's

eternal love to his saints had decreed it otherwise, and God stuck firm to it. The other impossible is in Matt. xxiv. 24, 'Insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect;' that is impossible too. And the truth is, the reason of this firmness is because it is the love of God, and because it is so great a love; that is the foundation of it. And, my brethren, it is well that love made God's decrees for us; no attribute else would have fixed them so unalterably upon the same persons, in themselves so changeable. Would wisdom alone have gone and obliged God to so fickle a creature as we are! No. But love knew what it did, for it meant to manifest itself to the uttermost; therefore it pitched upon no conditions why God loved us; and if he requires conditions before he saveth us, love shall work those conditions in us. Therefore out of his infinite love and wisdom, he was able to make absolute promises to love, and to love firmly. It is love that commandeth all in God, and if love will do it, it shall be done; for if all that is in God can keep us and preserve us, and work in us what God requires to make him love us, and continue to love us, it shall be done. It is firm love.

And let me add this to it, which may illustrate it more, it is *invincible* love. You will say, this is the same thing with being unchangeable. I confess it, but only with this difference, that to shew his love is unchangeable, he would have a world of difficulties to run through, which yet his love should overcome. Saith he in Cant. viii. 6, 7,—and he speaks of his love, having set us as a seal upon his arm, having this seal, 'The Lord knows who are his,'—'Love is as strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' They are therefore called the sure mercies of David. And you know how David put them to the trial, and how he put God to it. What difficulties doth the love of God overcome? Do but consider. The purposes of his secret will toward us do overcome all the difficulties of his revealed will, and those were enough. He had given a law of his revealed will, and he had said that heaven and earth should pass away before one tittle of that should perish; and that the soul that sinned should die; and all had sinned and transgressed this law. But now though all were fast locked up under this, yet love breaks open all, for it is an invincible love. That secret purpose of his, I say, overcomes that revealed expression of his, which had so many bolts and bars to it,—all the threatenings and curses of the law,—and finds out a way to reconcile all.

And the way whereby he did it, it was an infinite difficulty. For God to overcome his own heart! Do you think it was nothing for him to put his Son to death? When Christ came to die, what a difficulty did he overcome! Do you think it was nothing for him to give up himself and his soul to the wrath of his Father? 'Father,' saith he, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass;' save them, if it be possible, some other way. Why, God's love overcame it, and Christ's love overcame it; his love would not permit him to think of any other course; it was an invincible love. When he comes to call us, hath he no difficulties which love overcometh? A man hath lived twenty thirty, forty years in sin; love overcomes it. We were dead in sins and trespasses; yet for the great love wherewith he loved us, he quickened us. When we have been dead, and dead forty years in the grave, that 'lo, he stinketh,' then doth God come and conquer us; it is an invincible love. After our calling, how do we provoke God! What a world of difficulties do we run through! Such temptations that, if it were possible, the elect should be deceived! It is so with all Christians. No righteous man but he is 'scarcely saved;' and yet saved he is, because the love of God is invincible, it overcomes all difficulties. Still, as the Apostle saith, in Rom. viii. 35, 37, 'Who

shall separate us from the love of God? shall life or death?' &c. In all these, saith he, 'we are more than conquerors.' There is an invincibleness; but how? 'Through him that loveth us,' so it follows; and mark that particle, it is because his love is an invincible love that doth thus make us to be conquerors: because that love is as strong as death, therefore neither death nor life,—it is as strong as hell, therefore neither hell nor devil, shall be able to separate.

Nay, where there is but a mention made by way of supposition, or by way of query, whether God will part with or cast off any of his people or no; you shall find that he throws it away with the highest indignation, his love is so great. Paul doth but put the question because he knew men would put it, in Rom. xi. 1, 'Hath God cast away his people?' How doth the Holy Ghost answer it? 'God forbid,' saith he. He speaks with the highest detestation that there should be any such thought in God. Even as in another place in the same epistle, chap. vi. 1, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' Oh, God forbid! He throws it away with all the indignation that can be; and God may allow the one as soon as do the other. He throws it away, I say, with the highest indignation that ever such supposition could be made, that God should have such a thought. He is so possessed with love to his people that he will hear nothing to the contrary. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' saith the Apostle; 'it is God that justifieth,' and it is their being elect that carries it. Yea, his love is so strong that if there be any accusation,—the Apostle makes the supposition, 'Who shall lay anything to their charge?' sin or devil?—that if at any time sin or devil come to accuse, it moves God to bless. His love is so violent, it is so set, that he takes occasion to bless so much the more. In Deut. xxiii. 5, when Balaam would lay something to the charge of the elect people of God there, and accuse them and curse them, what saith the text? 'Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam,' he would not hear of it; and, not only so, 'but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee.' And why? 'Because the Lord thy God loved thee.' His love was so strong as it overruled all the accusations Balaam could make, and all his curses. Even as a king that loveth his favourite, if any one comes to accuse him, it provokes him—his love doth—so much the more not only to pardon him, but to shew his love to him. My brethren, if that God be angry with us for our sins, it is for our good; and in the end they do provoke him to bless us so much the more. This must needs be invincible love. 'Who shall separate us from the love of God? who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? In all this we are more than conquerors.' And so much now for the second thing which is proper to this love in God, which the Apostle calls *his love*, and to no creatures else in the world as it is in God, namely, to love thus invincibly and unchangeably as he doth.

Thirdly, *His love is the same love wherewith he loveth his Son; yea, wherewith he loveth himself.*

It is the same love wherewith he loveth his Son. For that you have a known place in John xvii. 23, 26. At the 24th verse, saith Christ, Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world, and hast therefore given me a glory, and thou hast united me unto thyself. Thou art in me, and I in thee, so ver. 21; and thou hast united a company of thine—so he calls them, ver. 6—unto me, I in them, and thou in me, so saith the 23d verse; and then what follows? 'That the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.' As he is united to God, and we to him, so God loveth us with the same love wherewith he loved him.

And then again you have the like expression, ver. 26, 'That the love where-

with thou lovest me may be in them,'—that is, towards them, set upon them, derived to them. It is a phrase of kin to that in the text; 'the love wherewith he loved us,' saith the Apostle; 'the love wherewith thou lovest me,' saith Christ, to note a special love: but that which I quote it for is this, 'that the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them,' or 'on them,' also. God loved all his creatures. He loved Adam, but not with that kind of love wherewith he loved Christ; but he loveth his elect with the same kind of love wherewith he loved him, the same love is set and pitched on them. He loveth him as his Son, and them as daughters married to him: as a father loveth his son, and a daughter married unto him, with the same kind of love, and differing from his love to the servants, or to any else that are about him. And therefore you shall find that still this love comes in with a distinction: Rom. viii. 39, 'Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.' Mark it, he distinguisheth; there is a love indeed which men have been and are separated from, even Adam in innocency; but, saith he, if it be a love in Christ Jesus, if God loveth us with that kind of love wherewith he loveth Christ, nothing shall separate from that. For as we are said to be chosen in Christ, so we are said to be loved in him; for election, or the act of choosing, is expressed to us still by an act of love,—it is all one, they are convertible. Now, he is said to choose in Christ, so to love in Christ; and saith the Apostle, nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ. He speaks it by way of distinction from other love which men may be separated from; but from this, saith he, there is no separation.

Yea, let me go higher. God loving us in Christ, his love is in a manner *the same wherewith he loveth himself*. There is a union betwixt Jesus Christ and us, and there is also a union between God and us: John xvii. 23, 'I in them, and thou in me.' As our Lord and Saviour Christ loved his people so as that if his people be hurt, he takes it as if it were done to himself,—'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'—so you shall find that God himself speaks as if his people and he were all one. It is not only, as in John, 'thine they were,' and, 'God knoweth them that are his,'—and these are great words, they are deep words, and deep expressions,—but you shall find that God in the Old Testament speaks in the person of his people, as well as Christ doth in the New. Ps. lxxxi. 5, 'This he ordained in Joseph, for a testimony,' speaking of God, 'when he went out of Egypt,' meaning his people. And therefore, in Exod. xi. 8, saith he to Pharaoh, 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born shall die,' &c. 'And after that I will go out,'—that is, my people shall go out. So that now, as the union between Christ and his people is such, and his love such, as that what was done to them, he reckons done to himself; so between God and us also. 'Thine they were,' saith Christ, 'and thou gavest them me.' They are more God's therefore than Christ's, or first God's, and then given unto Christ. Therefore, in Isa. lxiii. 9, in all their affliction he is said to be afflicted. Yea, the salvation of his people God accounts his salvation, Isa. xlix. 6: 'Thou shalt be,' speaking of Christ, 'my salvation unto the end of the earth.'

And though God loveth himself with a natural love, yet this his love to us is now in a manner naturalised, because he is become a father to us. He was happy in himself, and might be so without us for ever; yet now he speaks as if that the want of us would make him imperfect: 'Who shall separate us from the love of God?' The word implies a separation, like the rending of the soul from the body; and as the soul would be imperfect without the body, so the love that God bears us would make him so too, if there

could be a separation. Therefore in Zeph. iii. 17, he is said to 'rest in his love;' if he enjoyed us not, he would never be at rest else. To these kind of expressions, my brethren, doth the Scripture rise.

And so much now for having opened this, 'his great love wherewith he loved us.' *His love*, a love that is proper unto God, which therefore must needs be thus great, as you have heard it opened to you. The greatness of this love, in respect of his giving Christ to be our head, and carrying us to, and giving of us heaven, and the like; that follows after, and I shall speak to them in their season and order. I have done, you see, with that which is the main foundation, viz., 'for the great love wherewith he loved us.' I should have first handled the first clause in the verse, viz., 'But God, who is rich in mercy;' but you may remember, I told you that love was in this to have the pre-eminence, because it was an act of love first taken up, and this great love is that which guides and stirs up, manageth, and spends, and draws out all the riches of mercy that are in God towards us, when we were 'dead in sins and trespasses.' Now then there must be something said to that, that he is rich in mercy.

But God, who is rich in mercy.—These words, for the opening of them, may be considered two ways:—

1. In their relation or reference, in the Apostle's scope here.

2. Simply as they are in themselves.

1. *In their relation or reference*, they do, first, hold forth, that to save us all the riches of mercy that are in God were necessary. Had not God been thus rich in mercy, and borne so great a love to us, we had not been quickened, such was our misery, and such was our condition. They do imply, secondly, that all the riches of mercy that are in God, and all in God, did move him thus to be merciful and to be gracious to us. And then, thirdly, that where God doth love, there he will shew forth to the uttermost all those riches of mercy that are in him, he will spend them all to save us, he hath engaged them all. 'God,' saith he, 'who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins and trespasses, hath quickened us, and saved us.'

2. If you take the words simply in themselves, they import two things:—

(1.) That God is of a *merciful nature and disposition*.

(2.) That there are *riches of mercy* in that nature of his.

The words imply both.

First, I say, that he is merciful in his nature and disposition; which I argue from two things in the text and in the context.

First, if you observe it, when he speaks of his love, he speaks of it as an act taken up by God, though he is of a loving nature, which is the foundation of that act. 'The love wherewith he loved us,' saith he. But when he speaks of mercy, he speaks of it as of a disposition which love stirred up, which love expendeth and commandeth, guideth and directeth. God, saith he, being in himself rich in mercy, and in his own nature, and having pitched an act of love upon us, for that great love wherewith he loved us, setting aside that nature of mercy that is in him, hath saved us, and quickened us. Secondly, though I do not much urge the participle, *ὢν*, God being rich, which being in God is his essence; for though that word *ὢν* is not always taken for *participium essendi*, yet notwithstanding, look upon the words just before, he speaks of what we were by nature: we were by nature, saith he, and by our natural disposition, children of wrath; and so on the contrary, speaking of God: God, saith he, *πλούσιος ὢν*, who is in his nature, in his disposition, merciful and 'rich in mercy, even when we were dead,' &c.

So that, I say, the words simply considered in themselves import, first, that God is in his nature and disposition merciful, which is the foundation of our salvation. And then, that the mercy that is in him is a rich mercy; there are riches of mercy in him.

I shall speak a word or two to the first. *It is his disposition thus to be merciful.* You have an expression in 2 Cor. i. 3, where God is said to be the 'Father of mercies;' which imports that as he is the spring of all mercy, so it is natural to him, as it is to a father to beget children. He is not only said to be a father unto us, and like a father to be merciful to us; but he is said to be the Father of all the mercies which he doth bestow upon us, more the Father of mercies than Satan is said to be the father of sin; yet he is said to be the father of sin, and when he sinneth, he sinneth of his own, John viii. 44. I say, it is his nature, it is his disposition. 'God,' saith he, 'who is rich in mercy;' it is his being. We are by nature children of wrath, he is by nature merciful.

Mercy is his delight, and therefore natural to him, as in all acts of nature you know there is a delight. Micah vii. 18, 'He retaineth not his anger for ever, because,' saith he, 'he delighteth in mercy.'

The mercies of God are called in Scripture his *bowels*; now there is nothing so intimate or so natural to a man as his bowels are. And they are called his bowels because they are his inwards; and all that is within him, his whole being and nature inclines him to it. Luke i. 78, 'Through the tender mercy of our God;' so we translate it, look in your margins, it is the 'bowels of God.' So in James v. 11, he is called *πολύς πλάγος*, full of bowels. You know the bowels are the most inward and the most natural, more than outward members. A man may lose an outward member and be a man still; but he cannot lose his inwards, his bowels. They are said to be his bowels, because all the mercy he sheweth, he doth it from within. Hosea ii. 19, 'I will betroth thee unto me in loving-kindness and in mercies;' in the original it is, 'I will betroth thee unto me in mercy and in bowels;' yea, in the womb of mercy, as the word signifies. Now, as Sanctius well observes, he doth not only make a covenant to be a husband to us and to betroth us to himself in mercy; but, saith he, thou shalt have my bowels, thou shalt have the womb itself that conceives them, thou shalt have the mother of mercies, as he himself is said to be the Father of mercies, because that mercy is his inwards, and he begets it, he conceives it; he is both the womb of mercies and the Father of mercies. All these expressions the Scripture hath, to shew how natural they are to him as himself. 'God, who is rich in mercy,' saith he.

And then again; it is his nature and disposition, because when he doth shew mercy, he doth it with his whole heart. 1 Chron. xvii. 19, 'According to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness,' saith David, when he speaks of God's shewing mercy; that is, thou hast shewn mercy like thyself, like the great God, 'according to thine own heart.'

My brethren, though God is just, yet his mercy may be in some respect said to be more natural to him than all acts of justice itself that God doth shew, I mean vindicative justice; in them there is a satisfaction to an attribute, in that he meets and is even with sinners; yet notwithstanding there is a kind of violence done to himself in it, the Scripture so expresseth it; there is something in it that is contrary to him. And so many interpret that place, 'I will not the death of a sinner;' that is, I delight not simply in it, I will not do it *animi causa*, for pleasure's sake, because I delight in the thing, as those that are of the Remonstrants' opinion slander the other

party, that they make God to delight in the death of a sinner. No ; when he exerciseth acts of justice, it is for a higher end, it is not simply for the thing itself ; there is always something in his heart against it. But when he comes to shew mercy, to manifest that it is his nature and disposition, it is said that he doth it with his whole heart ; there is nothing at all in him that is against it, the act itself pleaseth him for itself, there is no reluctancy in him. Therefore, in Lam. iii. 33, when he speaks of punishing, he saith, ‘ He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.’ But when he comes to speak of shewing mercy, he saith he doth do it ‘ with his whole heart, and with his whole soul ;’ so the expression is, Jer. xxxii. 41. And therefore acts of justice, you know, are called *opus alienum*, his ‘ strange work,’ and his ‘ strange act,’ in Isa. xxviii. 21. But when he comes to shew mercy, he rejoices over them, to do them good, with his whole heart, and with his whole soul ; as it is in that Jer. xxxii. 41.

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 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; *ὑπερπερισσεύσεν*, 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 treasures, 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.