

# SERMONS IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION

William Guthrie

Text Source:

<https://www.truecovenanter.com/>

File Conversion:

[www.digitalpuritan.net](http://www.digitalpuritan.net)

## Table of Contents

1. A Sermon on Psalm 73:28.....	I
2. A Sermon on Matthew 16:26.....	15
3. A Sermon on Isaiah 44:3.....	24
4. A Sermon on Isaiah 11:18.....	36
5. A Sermon on Isaiah 68:17.....	51
6. A Sermon on Mark 11:24.....	62
7. A Second Sermon on Mark 11:24.....	78
8. A Sermon on Isaiah 26:18-19.....	98
9. A Sermon on Psalm 69:6.....	116
10. A Sermon on Isaiah 55:1-2.....	126
11. A Second Sermon on Isaiah 55:1-2.....	141
12. A Sermon on Galatians 2:20.....	156
13. A Sermon on John 6:36-37.....	180
14. A Sermon on Matthew 15:27.....	197
15. A Second Sermon on Matthew 15:27.....	212
16. A Sermon on Matthew 15:28.....	228
17. A Sermon on Isaiah 8:17-18.....	251

## SERMON I.

*“But it is good for me to draw near to God.”*

Psalm 73:28

THESE words are a part of the result of a very strange exercise, which a godly man had, being much stumbled and troubled in heart at the prosperity of the wicked, because they got so much of their will in the world. But now having surmounted the temptation, and got a second view of all things, relating both to the prosperity of the wicked, and to the afflicted condition of the godly, in contemplation of which he resolves to draw near to God. “It is good,” says he, “to draw near to God.” As if he had said, “I trow I am neither wise nor happy to intermeddle so much with these things, and I wot well it is my best to ‘draw near to God.’ It is good for me to flee in unto Him, and, as it were, to look out at my windows, until I see how all things here will roll.” Now there is no great difficulty here, in the words now read, but what we may reach in the doctrine. We may consider them either —

1st, Simply or absolutely; or,

2nd, As they have a reference unto what goes before in the same place or portion of Scripture.

First, Consider these words simply or absolutely, from whence for doctrine we observe.

DOCT. *That IT IS GOOD TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD; or good by way of eminency; it is truly and really good. It is an advantageous good. And it is enough for confirmation of the doctrine, that it is not only positively asserted here in the text, but it is also commanded as our duty by the Apostle James. “Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you.”*

Now, in speaking of this we shall,

1. Show you what it is to draw near unto God.
2. Show you what are the advantages of drawing near to God, or how it is good to do so.

I. To show you what it is to draw near unto God. And,

1. A man should make his peace with God in and through the Mediator Jesus Christ; for until once that be done, a man may be said to be far from God, and there is a partition-wall standing betwixt God and him. It is the same with that advice given by Eliphaz to Job: "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace with him, and so good shall come unto thee." Be friends with God and all shall be well with you. Ye must come up unto some measure of conformity to the blessed will of God, and quit that life of estrangement from Him, as is evident from that fore-cited text: "Draw nigh unto God and he shall draw nigh unto you." And this is explained in the words following: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded:" that is, Quit that filthy life of estrangement from God, in being more conformed unto Him and His will, as He hath revealed unto you in His word.

2. It is to seek more after communion and fellowship with God, and to pursue after intimacy and familiarity with Him, and to have more of His blessed company with us in our walk and conversation; according to that word: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." This is to walk through the day, having a good understanding between God and us; and so to be always near unto Him in keeping still up communication with Him. And,

3. As it stands here in the text, it is the expression of one who hath made up his peace already, and is on good terms

with God, and doth differ a little from what the words absolutely imply; and so we may take it thus:

(1.) It implies the confirming, or making sure our interest in God, and so it supposeth the man's peace to be made with God; for whoever be the author of this psalm, it supposeth he hath made his peace, and therefore in the following words it is subjoined, "I have put my trust in the Lord," &c., that is, I have trusted my soul unto God, and made my peace with Him through a Mediator. It is good whatever comes; it is always good to be near unto God that way, and to be made sure in Him.

(2.) It implies to be more and more conformed unto the image of God, and therefore his nearness to Him is opposed to that of being far from God. "It is good," says he, "to draw near to God in my duty, when so many are far from Him."

(3.) It implies that which I was hinting at before, to lay by all things in the world, and to seek fellowship and communion with God; and to be more set apart for His blessed company, and to walk with Him in a dependence upon Him, as the great Burden-Bearer, as Him who is to be all in all unto us. In a word, to draw near unto God is to make our peace with Him, and to secure and confirm that peace with Him, and to study a conformity unto Him, and to be near unto Him in our walk and conversation; in our fellowship, and whole carriage and deportment to be always near unto Him.

II. We come to the advantages, or how it is said that it is good and advantageous to draw near to God. We say, "It is said to be good to draw near unto God." It is good to take good in that way. It is good in itself, and it is good in respect of the happy consequences that follow upon it.

1. It is a pleasant good. “Wisdom’s ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” And although many of you think that the people of God have a sorrowful and sad life of it, yet this flows not from their nearness unto God; but it is because they depart out of His way, or step aside from following Him.

2. As it is good in itself, and a pleasant good, so it is a creditable and honourable good. Is it not good to be at peace, and in good terms with God, to be conformed unto His will, which is the supreme rule of all righteousness, and to have intimate fellowship with Him? We would think it a very honourable thing to be in favour and on good terms with a man that ruleth over all nations, supposing him to be a good man, and that our intimacy with him were not scandalous and offensive. But it is quite another thing to be in favour and on good terms with Him who ruleth over all laws and all men as so many insects; under whom the inhabitants of the earth appear as so many grasshoppers in His sight.

Oh, but it is good in respect of the circumstances and consequences of it, and so it is also a profitable good! Yea, it secures a man’s soul and eternal well-being. It keeps him in perfect peace. It has many testificates and outlettings of God’s countenance, which is better unto him than barns full of corn, or cellars full of wine and oil. Yea, He is all good. “The Lord will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.” And who are these? Even such as are near unto God; so that it is a good thing to draw near unto Him.

USE. Would you be for ever happy in the enjoying of that which is supremely good? Well then, draw near unto God. Everyone readily follows after something that he thinks to be good. There are many that say, “Who will show us any good?” The most part would be at some visible or seeming

good. Yes, but this is a more sure and permanent good, that will fill your hand. Then go and acquaint yourselves. Seek to have communion with Him, and to be confirmed and conformed unto Him. In prosecuting of this use we shall speak a word unto these two sorts of people:

1. To some who are wholly estranged from God, although I know there are many of you that will not take this charge, go and acquaint yourselves with Him, if you would be for ever happy. And what is this but to know Him, and make an offer of yourselves unto Him? How is it that ye make your acquaintance with one come from France, or so, having some knowledge of him, and expecting great favour at his hand? You offer your service unto him, if it should be unto the tenth generation. But have you done so unto the God of heaven? You will make your court to man in such a manner, and will you not draw near to God? You will do it the better when you know how far heaven and you are from one another. For your better understanding of this, I will give you a few marks of those who are far from Him.

(1.) Have you known anything of His voice? Ye will say, "If I were near such a one, I would know his voice." If you do not, you are yet far from Him. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." What God speaks in this gospel is foolishness unto many; but those who are His sheep know His voice, and unto them this gospel is the wisdom and power of God. Could ye never lay claim unto that word, "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh"? I know whose voice it is. Were ye never persuaded that this gospel was the most wise of all devices that ever was contrived, or thought upon to save sinners? This is to know His voice. You that count the preaching of the gospel but babbling, ye are far from God in hearing of His voice, and cannot but expect to stumble upon what ye hear concerning Him.

(2.) Know ye His face? Who is he that says, “Stay till I be near unto Him, and then perhaps I shall know Him”? But if ye do not know His face, ye are far from Him. And yet I am persuaded that there are many hearing me, that know not what I mean. But pose yourselves. Know ye anything of the difference betwixt the smiles and frowns of God; or what it is to have your hearts and souls warmed with the heat and light of His countenance? Hath ever your soul been made to weep within you with His love? If not, it is a bad token; for the people of God know His face; and whenever they hear Him named, their affections go out after Him.

(3.) What dealings have ye in your ordinary way and walk with God? Do ye acknowledge Him in all your ways? He knows the wicked afar off, and hath no dealings with them. Do ye venture upon nothing without God’s counsel? Do you keep your eye upon Him in your ordinary business? And do ye give an account thereof unto Him? If it is so, it is well. But if ye have no mind of God; only when ye put on your clothes, and wash your hands, it may be ye retire a little in secret, and then lose any thought you have had of Him all the day long; that is a bad token that ye are yet far from God: and if death shall meet with you in this situation, your hearts shall be roughly handled by it.

2. The second sort that I would speak unto are those who are truly godly. Would you be happy and good in the land of the living? then draw near to God in all these respects formerly noticed. And that ye may do it, it were good for you, that,

(1.) Ye were convinced of your being in a great measure far from God; and in that respect unlike what I formerly spoke of. I trow there be many of you that are not well seen yet in your interest in God. Then if you would be clear in this, “Draw near unto God,” and resolve on what will be well



pleasing to Him. And what is that? It is even to remove whatever stands betwixt Him and you. When ye go unto prayer, or when you would lay claim unto any promise; then “do not regard sin in your heart.” Put away all idols of jealousy. Let none of them come in with you before the Lord; for if ye do, He will never regard your desires in prayer: and this is a time wherein there are many loose hands in this respect. Therefore it were good for you to step home, and be sure where ye are to take up your lodging at night.

(2.) Study to be convinced, that ye are by nature far from God, and in your walk and conversation, from that communion with Him that ye might attain unto, even while here. And if once ye were at that, you would think it your unquestionable duty to “draw near unto God,” in all these respects before mentioned. But where is that labour of love, that unweariedness in duty, and that disposition to suffer everything for Christ? Are not all these, in a great measure, gone? What fainting, failing, and scaring at the cross? So that but scratch the clothes of many Christians, and they will be like to go beside themselves. Where is that appetite and desire after Christ, and His righteousness, which folk sometimes so vigorously pursued? Where is that estimation of, and enquiry after, marks of grace in the soul, that hath sometimes been? How perilous hath a mark of grace sometimes been, and how did it alarm you when it was observed? And where are that sympathy and longing for the discovery of duty, submission unto reproof, that were wont to be amongst you? Are ye not rather afraid to hear your duty laid out before you? And where is that simplicity of the gospel, or that happiness people had in hearing the gospel, when they had not such skill to shift, or evade the word, and to put all by, except those sentences that pleased their own fancy; and when they durst not entertain a challenge of conscience all night but it behooved them to mourn for it before the Lord, until it was removed? Hath not many

of you got the devil's wisdom to lodge a challenge all night, and not be troubled with it? And where is that tenderness of conscience, that would have made people abstain from every appearance of evil, and would have made them walk circumspectly in regard of offences, and mourn for them before God? And where is that true zeal for the interest of Christ that was once in our corporations in these dominions? Is not that gone, and are there any rightly exercised when they see the matters of God going wrong? Now ye should draw near unto God in all these things. Now,

(3.) Is there any pursuing after this nearness unto God that was wont sometimes to have been a case of conscience? But now to mend our evil faults, of all cases this is the most remote from us. I say, so to speak, it is far to the sheaf here. The time hath been when ye would not have been satisfied, if God had not been drawing out your hearts after Him, or lying, as it were, all night, "as a bundle of myrrh, between your breasts." But, oh! is not this almost gone? Oh! therefore draw near to Him. Again, it is good as we commonly say, to come to old use and wont again, if ye come no farther. But,

Secondly, I come to speak of the words as they have a reference unto what goes before the text. And,

1st, They turn upon this: he had seen the wicked prosper and get much of their will in the world. When he beheld this, he was made to stumble at it; but after recollecting, and considering it a little, he recovers himself, and begins to speak of what he had formerly said concerning it. And here, says he, "It is good for me to draw near unto God." Whence I observe,

1. That a godly man's heart should satisfy itself, over all the prosperity the wicked hath, or can have in the world; and therefore the word in the original imports a gaining of God

unto me. It is good for me; it is an only good for me, to draw near to God, and that is enough to satisfy me, over all and beyond all the prosperity of the wicked in the world. And so much is insinuated of the wicked that prosper in his way. What should we then do? Why, trust in God! Be satisfied in Him as your blessed choice and portion. And the grounds on which a godly man's heart should satisfy itself over all that he sees in the lot of the wicked, are these:

(1.) The fountain itself is better than any drops that come to the wicked. God Himself is better than the creature, He is better than ten sons, yea, He is better far than any good thing that proceeds from Him. Therefore, he says, in the words preceding the text, "Whom have I in the heavens but thee, and there is none on the earth that I desire besides thee." When he has counted all, this is the sum of the whole reckoning.

(2.) He goes further on the same ground, as if he would say, "I see that all this folk, viz., the wicked, stand in slippery places. I would not be in their place for all that they enjoy, and as much to it. But as for me, 'Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me unto glory.'" No other good thing is so good as God. God is good in Himself, and He commands all that is really good unto that man that draws near unto Him, even from his shoe latchet unto the salvation of his soul, and makes everything turn to him, as it were, in the hollow of His hand. "The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." And may not that satisfy us fully?

For USE 1. This reproves the godly, who grudge and fret at the prosperity of the wicked. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers." "Simple poor folk, simple fools," would he say, "they will have little enough yet to leave." But the believer's portion is far preferable unto theirs. It is an only good. It is better than many portions. Oh! learn to compare your lot

with the lot of the men of this world. Count, and count on, and see whose number exceeds. Tell, and tell over, and see who tells longest, for there is much counting in your lot compared to what is in theirs. That is a strange word, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountain and heritage waste." Esau had the dominion for a time, yet the headship or superiority belonged unto Jacob. And that might satisfy him, though he had not so much worldly substance as Esau. Believers may sing that song with David, when near his end: "Although my house be not so ordered with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure."

USE 2. Although there be a party of wicked men, men of Belial, that we have to do with in the world—a party that are like briers and thorns, so that the people of God had need of gauntlet gloves when dealing with them, yet the covenant is enough for that also, for "this is all my salvation, and all my desire," although: He make it not to grow.

2. Observe, That the more the wicked get their will, the people of God should still draw the more near unto God. And this is imported in Psalm 37.3, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; delight thyself also in the Lord." This is opposed unto fretting at the prosperity of the wicked. This is the duty of all the godly when the wicked get most of their desires in the world, and that for these reasons:

(1.) Because they may be satisfied in so doing. Do the wicked get much of their mind in their lot and portion? Well, the people of God should fill themselves full of their portion, for there is a reality in it, but there is none in the portion of the wicked. What are houses, lands, gold, silver, or ease, to eternal life? Oh, take a good draught thereof by drawing near unto God. And

(2.) Because your trials and temptations are coming. And if the wicked get up and have the dominion, as it is likely they may, then the godly may make for their sheet and their shoes, if they can come at them.

(3.) Because this is the way to preserve you, and to guard your hearts from mistakes, when you meet with the temptation this man met with. A sad temptation, when godly folk get not their will in what they would be at, for God and His interest, and godless folk get their will and design. Then they are ready to misrepresent and mistake the voice of Providence. You see this godly man accounted himself as a beast under this. But a drawing near unto God will prevent every mistake in this case. And

(4.) Because whenever the wicked get most of their will, that prognosticates some great revolution in the land. But at the same time it is also true that it is “that they may be cut off and destroyed for ever.” Then may the Lord save the innocent, for there will be stirs. Therefore flee into your windows. Draw near unto God.

USE 1. Ye hear what is your duty when wicked folk get most of their designs and commands over all. Here it is; draw near unto God, and thus hold you out of harm’s way in an evil time.

USE 2. See how ye may be put into a capacity for a day of trial and be creditably carried through. And if ye would be even with wicked men, and guard against mistakes, and be enabled to be faithful, and forthcoming for or to God, then draw near Unto Him in all He has commanded you.

USE 3. This reproves those who are resolving to take another way, and cast about to the leeward, and row to the shore, to see what friends they may have at court, to curry the favour of great men, to get their own business well

managed, and to tell ill tales of the godly. Be sure ye shall meet with a mischief. It is good at all times, but especially at such a time, to draw near unto God. And if ye do not this ye shall never have safety in any other way. But,

2ndly, Take the words as they are, an inference from these words before the text, in the 25th verse; “Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee: my heart and my flesh faileth me,” &c. Here we see the Psalmist very near unto God, and yet in the text he says, “It is good for me to draw near unto God.” Whence

I observe, Let a man be as near unto God as he can imagine, yet it is good to draw near unto Him, and to seek to have nearer fellowship and more intimate acquaintance with Him. This man was near, yet he seeks to be nearer unto Him; even to have his arms full of God, so to speak. And the reason is

1. Because the life of true religion in the world is but a strong appetite, and a heart hungering after God. And therefore folk should still be hungering and seeking after more from Him. And

2. Because even that which ye have got ye cannot keep, unless you be still in the pursuit of more. You lose what ye have got, and scatter as fast as ye have gathered, if ye be not still making progress and increase. Therefore, “Hold up my going in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.” That is, hold a grip of me, otherwise I will suddenly go wrong. Ye will come unto a small reckoning, if ye draw not near and more near unto God.

USE 1. This serves for trial of your reception of God. Try if ye be still pursuing after more. Ye that think ye have got something from God, and are sitting down upon that, I am

in doubt whether that reception of God be at all real. For where it

is real it still puts the soul upon looking for more. If your reception of God put you not upon working for more it is a bad token, and says that either ye are not sure, or else there is some dead fly in the pot of ointment.

USE 2. And ye that have really got anything of God, work fast for more. Study to go forward; otherwise I defy you to keep what ye have already gotten. The devil will get his hand upon it, and then ye wilt be in hazard of losing what ye have once gotten.

USE 3. "Open your mouths wide, and the Lord will fill them abundantly." There are treasures of good things with Him, that ye never yet beheld, or lighted upon; sweet fills of love, peace, joy; perfect victory over sin; self-denial, and dying to the world, being alive to nothing but Christ, being filled with all the fullness of God. All these, and much more are to be had for the seeking after.

3rdly, Consider the words, as they are connected with these immediately preceding the text. "Thou hast destroyed all that go a-whoring from thee." Hence observe,

That it is good to draw near unto God; the only way in all the world, to secure a man from the dreadful judgments that are coming upon men, is to draw near unto God.

USE 1. It were good that folk considered, and were oftener thinking upon those judgments that are to be poured out upon wicked men. There was a generation of ungodly men in Scotland that were enemies to the people of God; and many of them are yet alive. God has dropped dreadful judgments on some of them, and yet continues to drop them upon the rest; and it is likely the dregs of the cup will be

the bitterest. Ye may believe it, you that are the people of God have no other way to escape the judgments of God but by drawing near unto Him. Fancy not an immunity from judgment another way. There is a sword of the Lord that will cut off the wicked; and the righteous have no way of escape, but by drawing near unto God. And if ye would set yourselves seriously to it, God would meet you mid-way, and more; as it is evident from the forecited text.

USE 2. It were good for all God's people in times of temptation and trials, to follow this godly man's example here. He hath been in a temptation, and he wrestles with it and carries off the spoil of the temptation, as it were, upon the edge of his hat, and comes off the field honourably.

Finally, Study to carry in this way whenever a temptation comes upon you, and ye are engaged in it. Thus bring some of the honourable spoil of the temptation with you, "It is good for me to draw near unto God."



## SERMON II.

*“For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Matthew 16:26

CHRIST had been pressing the company that were hearing Him, and His own disciples also, to lay out themselves for the truth, at all hazards. In these words that I have read in your hearing, He uses a double argument. The one is, What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul for that worldly gain? The truth is, he is a perfect and an absolute loser. It cannot be told what loss he hath, and how bad a bargain he hath made. The other is, if a man lay his soul as a pawn, or pledge for this, he will not set it free again at his own pleasure. The text says, “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Now, from these words, I shall hold out to you the following doctrines.

DOCT. I. *The souls of men are highly valued and esteemed by Jesus Christ.*

Christ Jesus hath valued the souls of men at a very high rate; for He hath so computed that He sets the whole world at nought in comparison to one soul. He says, “Though a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he is a perfect and an absolute loser.” “Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.” Christ said this to the man that had enlarged his barns, and had provided nothing for his soul. Christ values the souls of men very much. And,

Here I offer you the following evidences of the doctrine, Christ highly values and esteems the souls of men. And,

1. That glorious contrivance of the gospel speaks forth

what a high esteem God puts upon the souls of men. Great has been the work and business of its contrivance, in order that His will may be revealed and made known to men: all is done with a design to save the soul. And if there were no more to speak of Him than the Bible, it sufficiently shows how He values and esteems the souls of men. He can make thousands of worlds at one word; and yet He has taken much pains in contriving a way how to deal with men's souls, and about that great and glorious business of man's redemption.

2. This also says that Christ values the soul much, that He took on Him our nature, and subjected Himself very low, for such unworthy worms of the earth. None knew how to value the soul except Christ. He knows what it cost Him. In all the great revolutions of the world, He has a principal regard to the soul. There is not an up or down; a dethroning of kings, or protectors,<sup>1</sup> or princes, but it is done with an eye to the good of the soul. He carrieth on some things in order to the good of the souls of men. If there were no more but the keeping up a standing ministry, and the vindication of that ordinance which He keeps up at a great expense, it shows that He values the souls of men at a very high rate.

3. Let us come and take notice of another evidence just at hand. Consider the particular care that He takes of particular persons; even a poor boy or girl. He will be speaking unto them, rebuking, exhorting, comforting, instructing them particularly, and singularly; waiting upon their ups and downs; to ratify the thoughts of their hearts, as if He had no other thing to do; though He has great kingdoms and sceptres besides to rule. All this shows how highly He values the souls of men.

Now what are the reasons of this doctrine? It is not because of any good works we can do unto Him. But,

1st, It is because He values the souls of men, at least comparatively with other things, as more glorious pieces of His handy-work than any other thing in this lower world. These glorious luminaries, the sun, moon, &c., are nothing to the soul. All the pleasant things that you ever saw, even heaps of gold, and silver, and streets garnished with pearls or precious stones, are nothing in comparison to a rational soul. There was never anything made upon earth that bore the image of God so eminently and singularly as the soul. And this is one reason why the Lord values the soul so much; because it doth represent Himself more than any other creature upon earth.

2ndly, The Lord values the soul of man very much, because He carrieth on His work by the soul more than by any other thing. He gives the most glorious displays of His power and mercy, by the souls of men. He proves Himself Lord over heaven, earth, and hell, by the souls of men. And,

3rdly, I may say, the Lord values the soul much, because it is of the highest concernment. And this is one of the reasons God lays so much weight upon it; "For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever."

What use then can we make of this doctrine? God loves the soul so much, and we value it so little. It holds forth this unto us:

That we differ exceedingly in our thoughts from the Lord. He hath put an high esteem on the soul, and we do not esteem it much. And therefore it holds out our disconformity unto Him; since He values the soul so much, and we value it so little. But you will say, "I value the soul very much, and will do anything for it." Well, if ye will put a high price upon your souls, it will appear. And,

1st, Try whether ye have any serious thought concerning

your souls. Do ye value your souls much, who have never a thought of them to see in what case and condition they are, and what will become of them in the end? Dare ye say, in the sight of an all-seeing God, that ye had serious thoughts of your soul, and what would become of it in the end? If ye dare not say that, your value for your soul is a fancy indeed. And I pose you all, this day, that hear me, if ever you had deep thoughts concerning your soul's case and condition, answer me to that. You that cannot answer in the affirmative, ye are not far from the wrath and vengeance of God. Ye that cast your souls at your heels, and undervalue them, and spend more time and pains on the poor perishing things of the world, would ye be called Christians? Nay, rather limbs of the devil, worldly worms, and moles of the earth.

2ndly, Do ye value your souls much, who make no endeavours for your souls. Ye can tell every year how far your labour is advanced at such a time; that you have now got your oat-seed, or your barley-seed into the ground. But what have ye done for your soul? Surely everyone must give an account unto the God of heaven for their souls. I dare boldly say, that some of you lay more weight on six or seven steps of a rig's end to sow a little flax seed on, than ever you did upon your precious and immortal souls.

3rdly, Do ye value your souls much, when for a thing of nought, for a very little, or frivolous thing, ye will venture upon the wrath of God; when ye will swear and profane the name of the Lord for a thing of nought; when ye will lay down your soul against twopence; as if I were to throw down my gold ring, and play it against a few pennies Scots. And so you venture upon, the wrath of the Almighty for a trifle.

4thly, Another evidence of it is given, when other things come in competition with the soul. Here is something that

concerns the soul; there is something that concerns the world; I will refer it to your own conscience, which gets the first place. Here is a thing that concerns the soul; but ye are called to yoke the plough. Now lay your hand to your heart, and judge ye whether ye value your soul or the world most, and look which of these gets the priority.

5thly, Do ye value your souls much? Ye can hear threatenings concerning the destruction and ruin of your souls, and yet never be affrighted or alarmed. There is no need of greater evidence that thou valuest not thy soul, when thou sayest, "Let threatenings go their way as they came," when thou art never alarmed, nor affrighted, and when thou canst hear thy soul's ruin threatened a thousand times in one day, and never be moved more than the timber or stones of these walls. Thou that dost so hast no reason to think that thou valuest thy soul much, and thou hast need to be laying thy soul's case and condition to heart.

DOCT. II. *Though the soul of man be a precious thing, and much valued by the Lord, yet He hath committed it unto man's keeping for a certain time; and it is the business God has put you upon, to look to your souls.*

But ye will say, "We have no leisure for this." But tell me, when get you time to go about any other business? What is your work? Is it about your soul; or is it about other things? When got ye leisure to eat, drink, and sleep, and to go about your other worldly affairs? Remember that the Lord hath committed the soul to your keeping, as your principal work and business. And,

1st, In some respects, God hath allowed you more time to go about your other business. Yet in other respects, God has allowed you to take more time about your soul's case; much more, at least, than probably you do.

2ndly, Know, there are few in all the world that can give a faithful discharge of their souls as well kept. Look if ye be of the number of those few. But if ye can find no good reasons that ye are of these few, there is little hope of you. Are ye not afraid of these words, "Many are called, but few are chosen." There are but few that enter in at that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leads unto life. There are but few to whom God discovers the worth and preciousness of their souls. Ye would do well to remember that a very little thing will wrong or injure the soul. We commonly say, and I wish it were more noticed by us, "That a little thing will harm the eye." But a far less thing will harm the soul. A thought will put the soul out of case for many days. And a wrong word spoken will put the soul out of order, so that perhaps it may never afterwards get the comfort of its peace with God in this life.

USE. Now, ye should be making your peace with God; for ye know not if ever ye shall get another day after this. Yea, there is a day appointed when the Lord will take back again the souls of men; "o fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." There shall be no delay. It shall be taken from thee this same night. As thou doest, so shalt thou receive according to thy works. If thou hast dealt well with thy soul, the Lord shall deal well with it also. And if thou slightest it, He will slight it also. And do not think that because the soul is a precious thing, and the Lord values it much, that He will not assign such a precious thing unto eternal torment. No, He shall not regard that much. He has thrust many a soul as precious as it into hell already. Therefore, think not so. Oh, then, will ye bethink yourselves? What reckoning can I make with God for my soul? I ask in reality, "What account can ye give to God, if He should require an account of you before ye sleep this night?" Can ye not answer? Are ye speechless? And how much more shall ye be speechless when God shall put that question unto you, and shall command you to be taken and bound

hand and foot, and cast into hell-fire, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

DOCT. III. *The Lord cares little for the world.*

He values the souls of men much; and we value them little. He values the world little; and we value it much. Although a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he is but a fool, and he hath made a very bad bargain. Christ values the world very little. I offer you these evidences of the truth of this doctrine.

1st, When Christ was in the world, He made a very mean purchase of it for Himself. He had not where to lay His head; and sometimes He could not command a drink of water therein. He made a very poor purchase of it to Himself. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

2ndly, He usually gives least of it to His dear friends and followers. I do not say but some who have much of the world may be gracious folk; but ordinarily God gives least of the world to His own people. Where ye will get one rich man that is godly, ye will get ten that are atheists. "He hath not chosen many mighty men of the world, not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

3rdly, The Lord has given a considerable portion of the world unto His avowed enemies, who fight against Him, and improve it against Him. He gives much of the earth to profane atheists, profane beasts, and renegades, who are His avowed enemies; for "the earth is given unto the wicked."

4thly, And ere long He will set it in a flame, He will burn it up with fire. The earth is, as it were, withered already, and ready for burning. And what makes the Lord care so

little for the world? “The earth also and works thereof shall be burnt up.” But what are the reasons for this doctrine?

It is because by man’s transgressions it is made subject unto vanity “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.” All things are properly diversions from God, from the living God, and there is not a dumb beast, but it is for man’s sake plagued of him, and so made subject unto vanity.

For USE of this doctrine, as I said formerly; it points out a disconformity betwixt God and us. And we differ very much from Him in regard that He values the soul so much, and we esteem it so little. He values the world but little, and we esteem it very much, and care for perishing things, even trifles of the world. But ye will perhaps say, that ye do not value it much. But this will appear in these few things following.

1. A man values that much on which he spends his strength voluntarily, and with complacency and delight. Ye say the world pulls the life out of you. But yet ye suffer it to do so willingly, and with delight.

2. A man does that most willingly on which the affection of his heart is most bent. And do not your hearts run out most after the things of the present world? Hence your fear, love, hope and delight run out after a present world. What makes you glad and cheerful, but something in the world that prospers, and is going well with you? And what makes you afraid, or sorry? Is it not because the world seems to frown upon you?

3. This proves that you value the world much, that ye will not take a rebuke, but will eagerly follow on in the pursuit of it, although it has failed you often, and given you many



a disappointment; and although the Lord has blasted that which ye have been following after.

4. A fourth evidence is, That ye will venture to lose the friendship of God for a very frivolous thing. Ye will venture to wrong the God of heaven for a little worldly enjoyment. But I go no further at present, only I shall notice these two things following:

(1.) Although the soul be very precious, yet we value or esteem it very little: and although the world be a poor ambulatory thing, we put a very high price or esteem upon it. And,

(2.) Although your souls be threatened with utter ruin on that account, yet ye are not afraid, which shows that ye care not much for them. You cannot be put off the cutting and carking cares of this world, even though God has corrected you, and given you as it were, over the finger ends for them. And yet do your best ye cannot take delight in serving God half an hour. Look then to your souls in time; slight them not; otherwise God will slight them, if you mind them not in time. “For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

---

Footnotes:

1. This sermon seems to have been preached about the time of Oliver Cromwell.

### SERMON III.<sup>1</sup>

*“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”*

Isaiah 44:3

WE have heard of the two commands that make way for the promise, and ye have heard of the grounds on which they are pressed. When His professing people hear of their danger, and try not to seek after a remedy, but turn their back upon God, He cries, as it were, after them, and says, “Hear another word, and take not away an ill report of God and His ways.” But may we say, “What is that word?” Why, it is just to hold by the covenant. The covenant is given, not only to satisfy all your desires, but even to hold by until ye hear a better word come forth from the Lord.

But, say ye, “If ye knew my condition, ye could not bid me but fear.” It is true I know not your condition, but He that formed you from the womb says, “Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and Jeshurun whom I have chosen.” “Our iniquities are like to take hold upon us,” say ye, “but sink them into the covenant,” says He. “Lean down your burdens there,” says He; “and speak a word to Me, and if I answer not your condition, then take it up again, if ye be able, and go your way.” “Well,” say ye, “we are content to lean down our burden upon the covenant. Now what hast Thou to say unto us, Lord?” “Then,” says He, “I know ye want much, and I know the chief of all your wants. I know ye want My blessing. Then stay and take it, and ye shall prosper the better. I know that ye would have drink, although ye will not grant ye are thirsty. Can ye not say dry ground? Then come and set to your mouths here, and I will let out waters unto you. But know ye what I say?” says He. “Not very well,” say ye. “Then,” says He, “I will tell you in plain terms. ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon you; for I will pour

water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” “But there are many,” ye may say, “that get that, who do not bear much fruit.” “But,” says He, “I will bless it and make it grow, and ye shall avow your profession before the world; you shall not hang down your heads when ye meet with a professor, but ye shall avouch your interest in God, while He allows His Spirit and good-will to do you good.”

I. The first point of doctrine. The Lord allows the pouring out of His Spirit, to answer and satisfy the soul that is almost made deaf with the challenges of conscience, and the threatenings of a broken law; and He will have His people to satisfy themselves with it as their portion.

For proof of this see Isaiah 41.18: “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” And so (Joel 2.28) when He has forbidden them to fear He says, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” The Lord holds out the covenant to a trembling soul, or people. And He says, “Lean down your burden there, and hear what I have to say to you.” The man is content to stand and hear, but is not content to lean down his burden, lest he be not able to raise or lift it up again, till once he hear the covenant branched out to him. “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, and thou art mine.”

Now, the reasons why the Lord allows His Spirit for the satisfying of His people who are thus afraid, are:

1. Because the Spirit can answer all ye can object. There is nothing ye can want, but His Spirit makes way for it, and follows all your doubts and fears. And

2. The Spirit differences the godly from the wicked. For there are many who would rather have an outward delivery, than a delivery for their soul. And therefore the Lord takes this way to satisfy His own people.

USE. Then try what ye take up with, when ye are afraid and in trouble. And if ye be spiritual, ye will desire the Spirit; but if otherwise, ye will desire an outward delivery. I say, "Take hold of this promise to satisfy all your doubts and fears." But ye may say, "Ye know not what ye want." Ye must have this much, and that much. I answer, "If it be offered unto you to satisfy, and solve all your doubts and fears, take not another way of it, for God will not be mocked. If ye will take it, it will satisfy all your desires; for there is in Scripture to satisfy them all, be what they will." But ye may say, "I want faith." "Then welcome," say I. "He is the Spirit of faith." "But I want a promise." "Well, He is the Spirit of promise." "I want holiness." "Then He is the Spirit of holiness." "But I trow, I want all grace." "Well, then, He is called the Spirit of all grace and supplication, yea, and glory too." "But I have an ill-natured, passionate spirit." "Then He is called the Spirit of meekness." "But I have no understanding." "Then He is called the Spirit of understanding that searches all things, even the hidden things of God." "I am a fool, and destitute of counsel; and I know not what to choose." "He is the Spirit of counsel and direction." "But I cannot pray." "Then He is the Spirit of prayer and supplication." "I cannot love." "Then He is the Spirit of love: God is love." "I am dead and lifeless in all performances." "Then He is the Spirit of life." "I cannot unite with the people of God." "Then heard ye never of the Spirit of unity in the bond of peace." "I cannot mourn over my sins and wants." "Then He is the Spirit that makes one mourn as for an only son, or first-born."

Then what do ye want? He is the Spirit that worketh all

things in all cases in all His people. Therefore has He not good reason to offer His Spirit to answer all their doubts and fears? It is like Fortunatus's purse, to use the similitude; ye shall always find something in it. Sit down, then, and devise wants, and He has something to answer them all; therefore seek the Spirit above all things. Those who esteem not the Spirit above all things, know nothing of the Spirit of God. This Spirit teaches humility, and teaches to call God Father. But ye may say, that ye find it is elsewhere said, "Grieve not the Spirit;" "and that," say ye, "we do continually." Well, to satisfy you in that, He not only promises His Spirit, but He promises His blessing also with His Spirit. "Thy blessing is upon thy people." So John vi., when He blessed the five loaves, then they were enough to satisfy all the multitude. And at the word, "Take up the fragments," who could bear that which was blest? The Spirit and the blessing answer all doubts and fears.

II. The Spirit is called water. Then observe that God's Spirit is compared unto water. Now would ye know the reasons why God's Spirit is called or compared unto water. They are these,

1. Because water is of a cleansing nature. It cleanseth; and so doth the Spirit. "Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee." He makes them clean and holy, that is, by the Spirit of truth.

2. The second reason wherefore the Spirit is compared unto water, is, that as it cleanses, so it cools. It is of a cooling nature; and so is the Spirit of God. Know ye what it is to be scorched with a spark of hell, so to speak, and to have the hot displeasure of God burning in your bosom. Then this Spirit cools and quenches this. "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well springing up into everlasting life." It quenches terrible threatenings. Then whenever ye have terrible challenges for sin, take the Spirit and quench them.

3. The third reason wherefore it is called water, is, because as it cleanseth and cooleth, so it also makes fruitful, as water makes dry barren ground fruitful. So where the Spirit comes, and the blessing with it, then the soul grows in grace. Now the fruits of the Spirit are peace, love, &c. And if ye would know wherefore, He says, "I will pour floods upon the dry ground," it is just because God's Spirit is all in all; and I defy you to step this or that way, if ye have got the Spirit and the blessing with it, but it will still make you fruitful, grow, and increase.

4. A fourth reason why the Spirit is called water, or floods on the dry ground, is, because it carries down all before it, and carries captivity captive. It carries all opposition in the way down like a flood. "He comes skipping like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."

USE. Are ye unclean, and would be cleansed from sin; or would ye be cooled from the heat of God's wrath? Are ye fruitless, and would ye grow? Then come and lay hold of this promise. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." By faith we hear that word, that He bids all come that would be cleansed. "But to whom is that promise made?" say you. Even unto those that are thirsty. "Then that cuts us off at the web's end," say ye; but I say, "Ye shall be knit or cemented to again."

III. The next point of the doctrine answers your objection. The Spirit here is promised to be poured forth upon the thirsty, and on the dry ground. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Then we see the party that He pours out His Spirit upon. They are those that are thirsty, and the reasons why they are called thirsty, are:

1. Because a thirsty man is pained; he is pained at the heart with drought. Say ye, "That cuts me clean off." Now this

is the pained man, that is pained with fear of challenges, and the threatening of God's holy law. "That is not me," ye may say. Well then; the thing that one will not, another will, as we commonly say. Some will take hold of this word of promise, because they are pained at the heart for sin indeed.

2. It is a reason wherefore he is called thirsty, that he is not able to delay drinking. So in like manner those who are pained with the threatenings and challenges of a broken law, are not able to delay the taking hold of some promise answerable to their condition. "But," say ye, "that belongs not to me."

3. Bring water unto a thirsty man, and yet give him none of it to drink, and he is just like to faint, or die away for thirst. In like manner, a man pained at the heart with challenges, when a day of the promises comes, and he gets none ready to answer his case, then he becomes almost faint.

But some of you may say, "That is not my case; for I can hear all that, and be in no danger of fainting at all." But here we shall descend a little lower yet. And,

1st, A thirsty man cannot eat his meat well. Now if ye take this with regard to your natural food, ye will think it as hard and difficult as the rest; but I mean spiritually. So it is with the man that is pained at the heart with thirst for God. He cannot eat well; because he must have a drink of water. Now, if thou be one of these, what use makest thou of that which is laid to thy hand daily? Art thou saying, "I am not able to eat it. I must have somewhat to make it go down." Then here is water for him that is thirsty. Seek His Spirit, and that will put it down and make all your food digest in due season.

2ndly, A thirsty man is not able to speak well. "But this is

not applicable to me," say some of you; "for I can speak enough about anything in the world." But, let me ask you, "Were ye ever in such a case that ye could pray none?" then be what thou wilt, thou art a thirsty man.

3rdly, A man is not able to work well, but hangs down his head at his business. Well, art thou in this case that thou canst go about no duty, but thou still thinkest thou wantest something. That is the man that the promises of the water of His Spirit have respect unto; a man that is not able to speak well, eat well, nor work well. But after all, ye may say, "I cannot think that is the man He offers His Spirit unto." But when the people of God see a promise that requires a brave qualification, they think that none should take that, but those that have this qualification, as that promise, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Ye think these are only to those that are pressed down with the sense of their sins, and those who are pained with such a great thirst. But indeed ye are mistaken. The Lord speaks unto them only; and why! Because it is only these who are most loath to meddle with it. He gives it out under their name, but everyone may take it under that name.

But ye will say, "That is a strange doctrine that ye preach, for who may lay claim to, or take the promise, but those who have these qualifications therein required?" But will ye tell me in a word, "What is the least qualification that ye may take a promise upon?" Indeed I dare not name one, that we may take a promise upon, under the pain of God's displeasure. I may not judge upon that; for, "Cursed is he that addeth any thing to God's word." For He will seek a less qualification than we would require. But I will tell you somewhat of it. If ye have any need of a promise, that is a



qualification good enough. For if ye see that the promise can do you any good, and that ye have need of it, that is a qualification to take the promise. "But how can these things be?" ye will say. Ye would think it strange for me to prove it from the word "thirsty." Yes, for the Lord neither says, those that have a great thirst, or a burning thirst; but He sets it down so universally, that all are bound or commanded that are thirsty under heaven, to take it; because we must not make the promise more narrow than He hath made it. "And let him that is athirst come and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." But ye will then say, "This is spoken to those that are thirsting after the world too." I allow so it is. "Come ye that spend your money on that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not." And folk that are thirsting after the world, are commanded to come, and He will pour out His Spirit upon them.

"But what," say ye, "if we be thirsting for nothing." Then ye are a piece of dry ground. And you have it in the text; "I will pour floods upon the dry ground." This is what I was saying, that it is to the thirsty that could not eat, speak, or work well; but if they will not be satisfied with that word, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty;" then He gives you another word to suit your condition; and wilt that satisfy you? "I will pour floods upon the dry ground." Which brings me unto

IV. A fourth point of doctrine is, The Lord will pour floods upon the dry ground. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing." What makes Him speak to the barren and dry ground? It is because all the world is dry ground. And are they not as dry ground that bear nothing? Are they not all dry, withered, and dead in trespasses and sins? And the reasons are:

1. Because there is no such ground in the world but it is dry

and barren until God gives it something. What is any in the world, but as dry barren ground? And therefore the wickedest in the world may come and take it freely.

2. The second reason wherefore it is offered unto dry ground, is, because God never put away any that came unto Him. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Wherever He comes in the word of His gospel, He excludes none but those who exclude themselves. And so the promises are holden out unto all. "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." That is, an outward calling them that are afar off. God offers the promises freely to all that will take them. "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." God loves freely, and He does not regard whether they be wicked, or not wicked, if once they will come unto Him. Nothing in this case will hinder them from receiving the promises.

3. The third reason for which He calls it dry ground, is, that He may meet with the cases that His people are most often in. Therefore, anyone that is useless, fruitless, hopeless, and helpless; come; this is the word that He has bid you abide by, and take with you. But ye will say, "We are very barren." So is the world until God cultivate it. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." But some of you may be saying, "I am worse than barren, for I bear nothing but briers and thorns, thistles, and so. And the Scripture says, such are 'rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.'" But yet let such come unto Him, He shall take you from under that curse. "I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered." "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and

instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be unto the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” And whereas ye say ye are useless and fruitless; you see here that it shall be to the Lord “for a name, and for an everlasting covenant that shall not be cut off.”

*Objection 1.* If this be the case, then any man or woman in the world, in a natural state, may take a promise.

*Answer.* And what dare you say to the contrary? What were any that ever took a promise but runaways from God? All that are spending their money for that which is vanity, may come and take it if they will.

*Objection 2.* But we find many in a natural state taking, or laying claim to, the promises, that have no right to them.

*Answer.* I am very sure that these folk take none; for,

(1.) No person takes a promise, but those that have a right to it.<sup>2</sup> And prove it by this: they have no particular needs, to be answered by the promise, or to meet the promise with; and therefore they have no right to it.

(2.) They were never caused to take it. “Remember thy word, on which thou hast caused me to hope.” They were never *caused* to take a promise, and therefore they never took one.

(3.) Tell me when thou wast served heir to the promise; for one must know when he was served heir to the promise. And that the natural man does not; but the child of God knows when and where this took place.

(4.) The natural man never took it, because it was never sealed over unto him as to those which believe. “In whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit

of promise.” They think they have a right to it, because they can speak well of it, or about it; like a beggar, who can tell over the several parts of a charter very distinctly, but yet he has no right unto any article therein at all.

(5.) I prove that thou art a natural man, for thou never knewest the different parts or dimensions of the promise; thou never drewest rent, or increase of the promise. But the child of God can discourse of all the principal parts and appendages of the promises; and he draws the rent of the promise, when once he hath laid hold of it. And,

(6.) I prove that he has not taken hold of the promise, because it doth not cleanse and purify him from the filth and pollutions of the flesh and spirit, which it does indeed unto the spiritual man. “Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” It makes the spiritual man never rest till he attain unto a cleansing of the soul in some measure.

Now, finally, I say the natural man has not these things now noticed, and therefore he has never yet taken hold of the promise and if you get it you shall, sooner or later, know when and where you got it. “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”

---

### Footnotes:

1. An afternoon sermon.

2. By RIGHT here must be meant an actual interest in the promise by faith; for with respect to a right of access, all

gospel-hearers are on a level, that is, they are equally warranted to receive and apply the promises to themselves; since the promise of the gospel is directed (as it is suitable) to sinners of mankind without exception. (Acts 2.39. Prov. 8.4.)

## SERMON IV.<sup>1</sup>

*“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*

Isaiah 1:18

THE Lord is here speaking unto a stubborn and rebellious people, who thought themselves far on in religion because of external things; and now the Lord, who loves the welfare of His people, resolves either to bring them home unto Himself or leave them inexcusable. In the former verses, the Lord, finding them to have made some kind of reformation in their lives by outward ceremonies, tells them it was nothing but lies; when they trusted unto their outward service, it could not pass in heaven, because it was not sound on both sides, and therefore He calls both their practices and their worship a lie. Having convinced them of this, He comes now to lay down the true and living way, that if they would take Christ for their Prophet, Priest, and King, and His righteousness and holiness, then although He and they were strangers to one another before, now He would admit them into near fellowship with Him. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. And whatsoever ye can object against your well-being, I shall answer it if once ye will come and make use of the suit. Come, and I will take away your sins;” and He says in the sixteenth verse, “Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil.”

We have in the text so many reasons to press the point upon them.

Reason 1. “Come,” says He, “let us reason together. And

if ye will do so, I will admit you into near fellowship with Me.”

Reason 2. The second reason is, “If ye will come and make use of the fountain, or remedy, that I have laid out unto you, then come; I am content to debate, or reason the matter with you in a gospel way.”

Reason 3. The third reason is, If ye will come and make use of the fountain, be your condition what it will, it shall not be remembered: “If your sins were as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

1. The first is the word “Come.”
2. The second is, “Let us reason together.”
3. The third is, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool.”

And there is the authority on which they are given, viz., “Thus saith the Lord;” and the last reason is expressed twice over, to beat down all objections whatever.

Now we come to the explication of the words. And,

I. The first reason, as we have said, is “Come.” And to come is several ways taken in Scripture. And,

1. To “come,” sometimes signifies to appear. “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran.” There, coming is taken for appearing.
2. Sometimes “coming” is taken for believing. “He that cometh unto me shall never hunger.” There it is meant of believing.
3. Sometimes, in Scripture, it is taken for going from one

place to another; and in this sense it means a piece of reformation in life; and so it may be taken in these words.

4. “Coming” may be also taken for a heavenly joining together. “And many nations shall come, and say, Let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord.” That is, Come let us join ourselves in a heavenly way together, in the Lord’s service.

Now we say all these significations may be contained here, in the word “Come.” Now,

1st, The first signification was, to appear. In the former words He has laid out a fountain unto them, and has bid them come, and make use of it; and it is well. “Come,” says He, “and let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”

2ndly, This word “Come” may be taken for believing. “Ye are guilty of all these things,” says He. “Now if ye will come and take My advice, and submit unto Me, then I allow you faith to believe upon My Son, and you shall have life.”

3rdly, As it signifies to come from one place to another; and this expresses some piece of reformation, as I said before, says He, “If ye come and make application to this fountain, then I will command holiness for you.” “Now ye are clean, through the word that I have spoken unto you.” By what word? Even by that word that He had spoken unto them and that they had believed. So says He, “Come, ye shall be cleansed; I will command holiness for you.” But,

4thly, The word here is principally to be taken for a heavenly or close joining together. “You are guilty,” says He, “and ye cannot be cleansed, but by the fountain; and if ye will come, whereas ye were but strangers and outlaws before, and I took no gracious notice of you; now I will admit



you to be near unto Me, and I will notice and look into your case and condition.” But there is a coming two ways.

1. There is a coming, out of respect to a command, where the creature dare do nothing, but even because there is a command for it; and then a necessity pressing upon the back of it, and the creature must give obedience. And indeed many a time the creature thinks the command of God very unreasonable, as in this instance that the like of it should come and believe, and yet necessity and the command press unto it. And,

2. There is another sort of coming, and that is not so much out of obedience to the command, and of necessity, as it is out of love to God. This kind of coming is rather a reward for the creature, than a duty; for it may be the creature has stayed itself upon God, and yet comes to God but as a law-giver; and because of the command, it goes about duty. But when one comes out of love to a loving invitation, then it becomes rather a reward than a duty.

II. I come now to the second reason that is given to press this point on these people: “Let us reason together. Let us humbly and mildly debate the matter as to whatever concerns your well-being. I am now upon speaking terms with you, which I was not before.” Now there are sundry sorts of reasoning between God and the soul. And,

1. There is a law-reasoning between them. Sometimes when the Lord, as a just and holy God, sets all the sinner’s iniquities before him, and then He appears as a lawgiver unto him. Now, in this law-reasoning, all the acts of parliament are from the covenant of works; and this is one act, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the words of this law to do them.” And when He comes to this creature, this clause is in its bosom, “Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.” Now, in these acts there is nothing given

unto the creatures to work upon but their own strength. Neither do they admit of repentance, but persons are cursed for the least sin as a breach of that law.

2. A second kind of reasoning is a gospel-reasoning. The form of it is this: God enters into debate with the creature, only for the removal of its doubts. And He reasons with the soul only according to the acts or terms of the New Covenant, and this points out a pleasant way wherein the creature may be fully satisfied.

3. There is a reasoning which, in some sense, may be called a law-gospel reasoning, beginning in the spirit of bondage and fear, but terminating in the gospel. In this the Lord calls a rebel to an account, and at length he finds all he has forfeited, he is made sensible that there is not so much as a dish or a spoon that he possesses but he, as it were, steals it from God, as having no proper right in law to it. Now, after all this, the criminal hears an ancient act, which was made in the reign of King Jesus, and it is found there that if any man, either in the person of himself or in the person of another, can fully satisfy, he shall be free. Whereupon a submission is drawn up, and the criminal submits unto it, he will have Christ to come in and bring him into friendship again with God. On this Christ, as Mediator, steps in and takes up the plea. He convinces the creature, and says, "You have wronged God greatly, but it shall be done away." And then out of God's own treasure He takes as much as satisfies God fully, upon which this promise comes out, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Now this we may call a law-gospel reasoning.

4. There is a fourth way of reasoning, wherein the Lord reasons or speaks to His people by strokes. In this kind of

reasoning He is said to contend, as ye will find it frequently expressed in Scripture. And this reasoning has its rise from the former. This arises from the gospel, in this sense, that it is a clause of the covenant to correct His people. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." If they stand in need, they must not want strokes. This is a clause of the New Covenant. But shut out faith and consolation from the creature, and debate only for sin in the creature, then it becomes a law-reasoning. Therefore He has said, if He sees it needful, He wilt strike them. But judicially, or aiming at satisfaction, He could debate with Christ only, so that He does not strike His people to get satisfaction from them; no, but for their good. "All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called, according to his purpose." Though it may not seem good for the present, yet it shall be for their good at the long-run, as the Scripture says, "No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous." Besides, the apostle says that He "afflicts us that we may be partakers of his holiness."

Now, there are also other sorts of reasoning between God and the creature, as when the creature reasons from arguments taken from the Lord Himself, such as Moses or Jeremiah used. The latter says, "Why shouldst thou be as a mighty man who cannot save."

Again, sometimes the creature reasons from his own holiness or uprightness. "Preserve my soul, for I am holy; save thy servant that trusteth in thee." "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me." There

the righteous might dispute with Him, "So should I be delivered for ever from my judge." Now the servants of God may argue from the argument taken from what they have already got from Him. But my reasoning here in the text is gospel reasoning, "Come," says He, "and I will debate with you in a gospel way; I will answer all your doubts, and let the Mediator be Judge of all."

III. The third thing was, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool." Their objection was, "Why should we reason; we can look for nothing but death." "No," says He, "though your sins be as scarlet, though they be of a double dye, yet they shall be blotted out." But how is it that He says "they shall be made white?" Why, He makes them as if they had never committed them. "For if once ye will yield," says He, "and come to the fountain, ye shall be freed from the pollution of sin." Moreover, if ye will yield to Jesus Christ He shall make you holy, and ye shall be reformed more and more, and made thoroughly holy.

And the authority for this is, "Thus saith the Lord." "Submit, I will reason calmly with you, and answer all your doubts." And for your warrant, ye shall have the word of Jehovah, who is absolutely in and of Himself; for "by my name, Jehovah, shall I be known." Before He was saying that He could not away with their offerings, and then in the sixteenth verse He says, "Wash you and make you clean." But here He gives them His word and His own great name as the security of their cleansing.

Now, if ye look on the command, and the necessity, you will see that the doctrinal point here is,

*DOCT. I. That provided any abominable sinner will submit his way and himself to God, he may come boldly, and have access unto Him.* "Let us draw

near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,  
having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,  
and our bodies washed with pure water.”

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him.” “In whom you are also builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.”

So that if any sinner, however so great, yield once to Him, he may come with boldness and have access unto God. And the

Reason is: If once the soul come and yield itself to God, it has got a full right and title to the heavenly inheritance. “But ye are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” And they get the new name and white stone. Moreover, the partition-wall that was betwixt God and them is now broken down. When the creature confesses his faults, and submits unto them, then he may come boldly. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Further, the soul is a bride for the King’s Son, and therefore is it not becoming that His daughter-in-law should come familiarly unto Him? The real enjoyment of this access to God manifests itself by gospel-holiness. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” Again, we have access unto Him because we are entered by the door. “I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

USE. This doctrine is of use to comfort all those that are

content to take Christ as their Prophet, Priest, and King; and yet dare not be bold with Him. But if you be content to submit to Him, ye may come boldly unto Illin. But whosoever they be that will not yield to God, and lay down their arms of rebellion, they are proud rebels, and God knoweth the proud afar off. And they get all that God gives them as one would cast a bone unto a dog. If ye ask me, “What points of familiarity those who have submitted unto Christ may use?”

1st, You may go and tell God what is wrong with you, either with respect to sin or judgment. Ye may come and tell Him the greatest sin that ever ye committed; think it before Him when ye dare not speak it. Many a time the sin is so heinous that the creature dares not speak it. And yet ye may tell the thing to Him that ye dare not tell to a living creature, for He is the best secretary that ever one had.

2ndly, Whatever you have need of, you may get, and take, in and through Christ, even whatsoever can do your souls any good.

3rdly, Ye may use familiarity with God to know His will, or purposes, in so far as such knowledge may make you forthcoming to His praise. You may say, “Wilt thou let me know, Lord, what Thou wouldst have me to do in this case, and what is Thy mind in it.” God allows you to be familiar with Him, so far as it may make you forthcoming in your duty to His praise.

“Come let us reason together.” Thus God allows them in a peaceable way to come and reason the matter with Him; and, says He, “You shall be satisfied concerning all your doubts.”

*DOCT. II If once poor sinners be content to yield to Christ, then He is willing to come into terms of speaking with them in a peaceable way; as ye will*

*find in sundry places of Scripture.*

Now, for the reason of this point, we find in Scripture that the Lord uses to reason with His people.

1st, We find the Lord's servant sometimes reasoning with Him about the matters of His divine procedure. And,

2ndly, We find, in Scripture, the Lord reasoning with them, that He may have their approbation of that which He is doing. Now,

1. For the first reasoning about the Lord's procedure. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are they all happy that deal very treacherously?" "I will give Thee credit before I begin, that Thou art righteous," says he; "yet there is somewhat in my heart concerning thy dealings, and I would be glad to be satisfied as to that: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" Here the servant of the Lord reasons with Him as to His proceedings; and yet at the same time acknowledges that all He did was righteous. When the Lord was about to destroy Sodom, He tells it to Abraham, who had some reluctance in his heart; "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" "Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?" But, says the Lord, "I will satisfy you;" and then He falls a reasoning with him about His way of proceeding with Sodom.

Sometimes they reason about the work of God in themselves. Now, the creature's mind is not clear, but in doubts; and therefore he must reason thus: "Lord, if it be not so, that I have the work of God within me, whence is all this striving? If Thou hadst designed to have killed me, wouldst Thou have taken a meat-offering at my hand?"

Again, There is a reasoning concerning the creature's duty.

The creature is at a stand in duty, and cannot go any further, till it knows the Lord's mind. "Lord, let me know what Thou wouldst have me to do in this, and in that cross, that is fallen in my way." Somewhat of this is expressed, "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" Lord, we would know why Thou hast let this and that come upon us. But the natural man doth not say so; for it were blasphemy for him to speak to God after this way and manner. And,

2. We say, "It is granted to the creature to debate with God;" and why?

(1.) Because it is one of the privileges of the creature to be of one mind with God; for God will seek the creature's approbation as to what He is about to do. And,

(2.) Because it concerns His glory, and their duty. For where they know not His mind, it is lawful for them to reason and plead with Him, in order to know it, that they may know their own duty concerning such and such a thing.

USE. You that have fled to Christ, plead for satisfaction in anything concerning God's glory, and your own duty. When ye are likely to succumb, and see not the Lord's mind in anything, ye may go and plead for the manifestation of it. But ye that have never fled unto Christ, ye shall never be satisfied concerning the Lord's way. It is well known that the natural man many times is ready to curse God in his heart, because he cannot be content with His way. But iniquity shall stop the mouth of the wicked. But unto you that flee to that fountain He shall make known His covenant; that is, He shall make you read His covenant in that which does not resemble it.

The next thing in the text is the justification of the sinner,



by taking away his iniquity. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be as crimson, they shall be as wool." Hence,

DOCT. III. *The most vile sinner that ever comes to Christ is welcome, and shall be set free from the debt of sin* "Him that cometh unto me," says Christ, "I will in no wise cast out."

The reason for this doctrine is, because the soul having once fully yielded itself to Christ, owes God nothing, so to speak; it is not a debtor any more, it is completely justified. God has nothing to say unto it when once the righteousness of Christ is imputed to it as, to everyone who savingly knows Him, he is fully justified "through His blood, which cleanseth from all sin."

USE. This reproves all those who have God's testimony in them, that they are content to submit unto Him, and yet they have thoughts arising in their hearts as to what shall become of them for such and such sins; for the text says, "Though they be of a double dye, they shall be done away, and be made white as snow." Sins that are done against light, sins that are done against challenges of conscience, are sins of a double dye, and yet they shall be done away. Sins done against love, even against much of the good-will of God, are sins of a scarlet dye. Sins done against vows, making former vows lie like so many broken chains about your necks, are sins of a scarlet colour—such sins committed after sacramental occasions; sins relapsed into after you have been oft-times convinced of them; sins after fasting, when you have been duly warned by those who would not be found guilty of your blood. Sins against covenant engagements, sins against a profession, all these are sins of a scarlet colour and crimson dye. But I say, "Suppose your sins have been after communions, after fasts, after swearing or covenanting, if once ye stoop and be content that Christ reign in you, the Lord will cleanse you, and make you white

as snow or as wool.

“But what is the matter,” say ye, “although I be clean to-day, I shall be as unclean to-morrow.” But the text says that He will put holiness in you. Hence,

DOCT. IV. *The most unclean sinner that yields to Christ, and comes to the fountain opened, shall be made a pure saint.* “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? No idolaters, adulterers, extortioners, drunkards, and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Come then to Him, and He will sanctify you, and make you holy. The reasons are,

(1.) If you yield to Christ He is engaged to make you holy. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

(2.) The soul now coming home unto God is under correction for misbelieving Him so long, and therefore is afraid to fall into sin again, and provoke God to be again angry.

(3.) A third reason is, that he has been far from God, and in the devil’s service. He knows the subtle devices of that enemy, and therefore does all he can to evite them. But we do not wish that any would take occasion from this to go far from God, that they may better know the subtle wiles of the devil. And therefore yield yourselves to God, and ye shall be purified, sanctified, and made holy.

But, say ye, “I would gladly yield if I knew my warrant, or ground whereon I would be better.” I say, there is a command, and there is a word that says, “This is the command, that ye believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, whom

he hath sent.” Here is a command and ye shall receive damnation if ye obey it not. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” There is nothing within you that should be allowed to jostle out a commanded duty. “But,” say ye, “I would yield unto Him if I knew that He would but accept of me, or the like of me.” Oh, high blasphemy! To say that thou wouldst, He would not; to say that thy insignificant love would go beyond His infinite love; for He chose us before we chose Him; He loved us before we loved Him. His love has helped many, and drowned their iniquity—many who were loath to come to heaven. Hell, devils, and men have tried His love, but they have never yet found a crack or flaw in it.

Now, to put you out of all doubt, He doubles the expression, “For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” To satisfy them He uses two different expressions of one meaning, whereby we see that the Lord is pleased to answer the daughters of Zion with sundry expressions for one doubt. And He does so for this reason, that the creature is simple, and the devil is subtle; the devil who takes so many different methods to make the creature believe that these are new doubts again, which, indeed, are nothing but the same. He will say, “How prove ye that ye are within the new covenant?” “Because,” say ye, “I do not hate instruction, but I love it, and them that give it to me. I consent not to sinners when they go on in sin; and therefore I am within the covenant.” And then in a little he will come back again and say, “How know ye that ye are called?” “Because,” say ye, “I have got mine ear opened to hear the word, and I love it better than I did before and it does me more good many times.” “And how know ye,” says he, “that God is your Father!” “Because,” say ye, “I get my meat, drink, and all I have from Him.” And then he will say, “How know ye that ye have true grace within you?” and so on, still one

doubt after another, as long as he can make the poor jealous of God; and yet all these doubts are one and the same in substance; and therefore the Lord uses sundry expressions, though one and the same in substance, to answer all His people's doubts and fears.

USE. Think much on the devil's subtlety, and God's goodness towards you, who takes such pains in answering your condition. Ruminates upon your own folly. Though God has forgiven you; never forgive yourselves. And for your security you have, "Thus saith the Lord," the greatest security Zion's daughters can have in the world; and the only security that can satisfy the soul. For if ye would speak never so much to the soul, if ye do not prove it by "Thus saith the Lord," the soul will not believe it. And moreover this security, or way of security, keeps God in much respect among His people; because all their salvation and the grounds of it depend on Him! and it makes much for our duty also.

Finally, If we had only a man's word for our security in any matter, would we not be more loath to offend that man? How much more careful should we be not to offend the Lord, whose word we have for our security? This security makes believers continually seek to have God honoured. "Come, then, saith the Lord, and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

---

#### Footnotes:

1. It is supposed that this sermon was preached at Irvine on a sacramental occasion.

## SERMON V.

*“O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways,  
and hardened our heart from thy fear?”*

Isaiah 63:17

IT is likely, if we all knew how it were with us, and if it were given to every man and woman in this assembly, to know our own sores, and the plagues of our wicked hearts, it is, I say, more than probable, that there would be a very harmonious joining in presenting this unto God, as the matter of our sad complaint, that our hearts are hardened from His fear. But it may be, that it is with the most part of us, as it was with those that Elihu speaks of when he says, “The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath; they cry not, when the Lord bindeth them.” Many are bound with the bond of a very hard and obdurate heart. It is an evidence that it hath gone a great length, and is come to a very great height with us, that we are not sensible of our bonds, and are out of capacity to cry unto God, because of this strong binding wherewith we are bound.

Now, these words are very sad words; the very mention of them, especially when they are so descriptive of our own condition, might make our hearts to tremble. It is one of the heaviest and saddest troubles from the hands of God upon men and women, to have their hearts hardened from His fear. And yet the business is not desperate, or past remedy, so long as there is so much softness of heart as to perceive or take up the hardness of our hearts, and to be capable of regretting it before God. Hard softness, as we may call it, is not the worst kind of hardness, or at least it is not the greatest degree of it. But alas! to be so hardened that all sense of discerning or feeling of it is worn away is very sad. Although the people who spoke these words were very far under this stroke; yet the Lord had so graciously set bounds unto it, that it had not gone the full length that it would

have done. Hence they take notice of it, and say, “Why hast thou suffered our hearts to be hardened from thy fear, and to be so hard that we should not fear thy name?”

But before we come to any observations from the words, lest the expression should be mistaken, and lest any of our apprehensions should be intermingled with wrong thoughts of the majesty of God, ye should know and consider,

1. That whenever it is said that the Lord hardens, it is not meant that He does so by infusing any sinful qualities into the heart of man: as it is expressed by the apostle, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” For He is incomprehensibly holy, and infinitely removed from being accessory to anything that is sinful in the creature. But,

2. It is said He hardens when He not only permits and leaves the man to the hardness of his own heart, which is natural unto the sons of fallen Adam, but also when He withholds or withdraws somewhat of that grace given to the creature, on which hardness of heart follows; and the majesty of God being under no obligation to give grace unto the creature, either by a natural necessity of Himself, or yet by merit in the creature, that hardness of heart cannot be charged upon Him, nor yet can He be blamed for the withholding of abused grace from them. Besides this, He may present objects occasionally, which may be good, nay, are good in themselves, and yet by the person’s own corruption abusing them, they may harden the heart. For instance, professors may make use of the ordinances of Christ, and their own gifts, unto their own hardening. Also, He may give up a person to his own lusts, and to the power or hand of Satan, to be hardened, as a punishment of his

former sins and iniquities. As the Psalmist says, "My people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts; and they walked in their own counsels." And as this may come to a great height in the case of natural men, even so it may be in some degrees incident unto the people and children of God.

Having thus premised these few things for guarding against mistakes, ye must look upon the complaint as not being spoken in a way of proud or ill-natured expostulation laying all the blame upon God, and evading or shifting it off themselves; no, the words intimate the Lord's carriage towards the church members who are speaking here. Nor are we to think that these words are spoken irreverently in the way of complaining of God; but only in the way of expostulation with themselves; as if they had said, "Lord, what have we done that hath provoked Thee to deal thus with us?" There is an insinuation of a desire to know what sin in them it was that had brought on this plague or stroke of hardness of heart, which was grievous to them beyond anything in their external condition and captivity.

Now having taken the words in this sense, we come shortly to draw some doctrinal observations from them. And,

I. In general, we observe, that a child of God, when in his own proper latitude, will be very diligent in taking notice of God's dispensations about and towards his own heart, and is in some case to make a representation to God how it is with his soul. Oh, how sad is it when God is dealing with our hearts, and yet we are not so much as taking notice what either God or the devil is doing about them! If the Lord reach not the carcass with some extraordinary judgment, heart-maladies never trouble many. It seems to be one of the evils of the time wherein we live, that many, even good folk, are become strangers in a great measure

unto their own heart's case and condition. We are so seldom in our approaches to God, in any case to make a serious representation of the posture of our spiritual affairs, but just as if we were in one country, and our hearts in another, we are become so great strangers unto them. But,

II. And more particularly, I observe, that hardness of heart, or heart-hardening, is an evil incident unto the people of God. It is by such that this complaint is made, "Why hast thou made us to err, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" And we think that much hardness of heart, or blindness of mind, could not have seen and felt such a weight; and we think it is with much bashfulness uttered; being spoken by those who before were ashamed, that they could not plead an interest in God as their Father, being so much degenerated from their ancestors. Yet they are necessitated to lay claim to God. They are such as give much credit; as if the look of His eye could redress their condition, and they are in case to observe the former dispensations of God, and to compare them with their present case. They likewise take up a great alteration of His kindness towards them. The case of David is a proof of this, who for near the space of a year was bound up under hardness of heart. Solomon is a proof of this, who for some time was inclined unto idolatry. Asa is a proof of this, who imprisoned the prophet, and oppressed some of the people, and under his disease sought unto the physicians, and not unto the Lord. It is probable the time wherein we live affords us likewisemany a sad proof of the truth of it. Oh! hardness in part, and in many degrees is incident even unto the people of God. But that ye may the better understand this, we shall hint at a few symptoms and evidences of it. And,

1. Take this for one. When challenges for sin do not easily make impression upon us, that is, when we are more hard to be wrought upon by challenges than formerly we were wont to be, and become like green wood that, you know,



is long a-kindling. For instance, when David was in a good case, and his heart tender, he was instantaneously alarmed with any evil, such as the cutting off the lap of Saul's skirt; but when he was under hardness of heart, there was much ado to get him convinced in general. Though the case was particularly pointed out in the parable used by Nathan, yet that would not do; he takes little notice of it in the way of applying it to himself, until the prophet said, "Thou art the man." And is it not the case of not a few that a challenge doth not so easily grip, or draw blood upon them, as formerly it used to do? And,

2. When challenges are taken with, and sins acknowledged, without persons being so affected therewith, as to be made better thereby, it is true there may be a conviction that will extort a confession, but in this case the eye that sees the sin doth not affect the heart.

3. Another evidence of it is, when a challenge is much more easily put off than sometimes it was wont to be—that is, when the impression of a sin or challenge for sin is easier worn off than formerly it used to be. I think if there were a spiritual dexterity learned of sinking challenges for sin in the blood of Christ, there were no great skaith. But when the challenge is thrown off through deadness, passes away we know not how, or else is forgot before any satisfying views of pardon, our case is not right. It is likely this is very common. We have frequent challenges that things are not right with us; that corruption is strong, and grace is under a decay; but we let them go. Such a course evinces hardness of heart, and hath a great influence in hardening the heart still more.

4. When the conscience hath lost a great deal more of the power of reflecting upon ourselves, or our case, as to what is sin or duty, this is another symptom of hardness of heart. But,

5. There is another great symptom of hardness of heart, and that is, when we are under cross dispensations, and yet prayer is restrained before God. This the people of God, or the prophet in their name, regrets. “There is none that calleth upon thy name, or that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.” The same is signified by Daniel. “All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.” And,

6. It is another great symptom when fear is in a great measure cast off; yea, this is the first degree wherein hardness of heart doth appear. The soul can scarcely be under any degree of hardness of heart, but it will soon appear in the want or decrease of true fear. Say they, “Why hast thou hardened our heart, from thy fear?”

7. A seventh evidence of hardness of heart is when persons become rash, heedless, precipitate, and fearless in worship and in walking, rushing forward without ever considering their own condition, without fearing lest God’s name be taken in vain by them, in their worshipping of Him—or, at least, without fearing lest they should be deserted of God—strengthening their own hands in their way, as if there were no hazard in people’s walk and conversation; taking every little discourse or common tale by the end, without fear of being indisposed for worship, or any kind of duty. When folk are become thus fearless, it is a great length they are come in hardness of heart. And,

8. In the eighth place, It is an evidence that there is much hardness of heart in this generation, that there is much fearlessness in our preaching, and that we have in a great measure cast off that reverential fear that we ought to have. We are grown very rash and foolhardy, as we used to say, as if we lived not in the midst of snares and manifold temptations, or as if we had not hearts ready to comply with every

snare and temptation. We are not afraid of catching skaith by our excess of mirth and jollity. So that walking in the fear of the Lord all the day long is become a rare thing among Christians now-a-days. Standing in awe to look with the eye, speak with the mouth, and to do or forbear doing anything that may be displeasing to a holy God, without leave asked of Him and obtained. There is little fear of abusing God's goodness, which says that there is little fulfilling of that promise, "And they shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days."

III. The third observation is, That felt hardness of heart is, in the account of God's children, one of the heaviest and greatest of strokes that come upon them from the hand of God. It is pitched upon here as the worst of judgments. I think their hearts were at their mouths, and the tear in their eyes, when speaking out these words, "Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" Here they do not complain to the majesty of God of their outward calamity, though it was more than ordinary; but this was the stroke that affected them, even hardness of heart. "And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities." And "All this is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth."

Now, the reasons why the people of God look upon this as a sad stroke are these:

1st, The first reason is, because it is a sad and angry-like stroke, and hath somewhat judicial in it. As there is displeasure or anger in a stroke, so it is sad and grievous to a gracious heart. But of all strokes, hardness of heart hath most of God's displeasure in it.

2ndly, Because it borders very near upon the condition of the reprobate. I say it comes near to that which is their lot or condition. God gives up His children unto some degree of a reprobate mind, as He delivers them up to walk in the lusts and counsels of their own heart. Hence it comes to pass, that it is in a singular manner puzzling in that case for a child of God to get himself kept from concluding that he is none of His, and he is ready to say, "My spot or provocation is not like the spot of His children, and consequently my stroke is not like the stroke of His children, but only like that of reprobate or wicked men." And,

3rdly, Because this keeps back from a kindly resenting of all the evils done by them that are labouring under it. Yet though they see and know that they are in the wrong, yet they cannot mourn for them before God. They sin, and cannot repent; repentance is, as it were, "hid from their eyes." So that if a child of God be any time in his own proper altitude, his light always leads him to look upon that as a most grievous stroke unto him.

4thly, Because, while under this stroke of hardness of heart, there is no profiting under any of God's dispensations. But let Him smite as He will, their hearts grieve not. So that they, in this case, may say, "That all this is come upon us, yet have we not made our prayers unto thee."

USE. For use, I would in short pose you, and desire you to put it unto yourselves: What think ye of such a stroke as this, and how doth it affect you? Do ye feel it, and think it one of the heaviest and saddest strokes? Do you seriously think that if it were meet for you to enter into a paction with God, ye would be content to take any other stroke from His hand, upon condition that this were removed? If ye were kept tender, and your heart melting before the Lord, it were a good token. Ye will conceive that there is a merciful difference to be discovered betwixt a person that

is plagued with hardness of heart, and one who is smitten with it in a kind of fatherly displeasure; that is, there is in the one a looking upon it as a grievous stroke, whereas in the other there is not. And therefore, I would say unto you that are under these bonds, and yet not affected with them, wrestle with Him that hath the keys of hell and death in His hand, that He would loose your bonds. If ye be grieving for it, and yet your grieving is not adequate, or according to your stroke, yet if it be looked on as a stroke, and lamented by you as such, so that ye are sensible of it, and that sense puts you upon making your complaint unto God—such exercise says that there is so much softening as that you have the knowledge of it. A quick feeling of hardness says ye are not given up altogether of the Lord, and “that there is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing,” and ye are in the way of getting your captivity turned back, as the streams in the south, and ye should not look upon your case as desperate.

IV. The fourth observation is, that there will be in a child of God, while under this stroke of hardness of heart, some serious search or enquiry accomplished concerning what hath been the procuring causes of it, and what hath provoked God to smite with this stroke. Therefore they say here in the text, “Why hast thou hardened our heart from thy fear?” Now there will and should be some search made into the cause where there is anything of God. And I would commend this unto you that have hardness of heart as your burden, that you would take it as a favour from God that it was or is your burden. Perhaps that it is so little your burden makes you question if there be anything promising like in your case and condition. Search then into the causes; and for your help in this, I shall only touch at a few things, which I conceive have much influence for the most part in many degrees of hardening the heart, even in the case of the godly, and which may ere long bring this hardness upon those who are yet in any measure free of it. And,

1. Not taking notice of challenges of conscience and convictions, and trying to quench the motions of the Spirit, gradually harden the heart, and provoke God to let such a person alone. Smiting of this kind may sometimes befall a child of God. But where conscience tables a challenge, oh, then, let it speak out, and smite it not upon the mouth; when God hath given His deputy in the soul a charge to arraign, then it well becomes you to listen to what it hath to say. It is likely that David had his own stirrings of conscience at the beginning of his fall, but because he listened not unto them, he is smitten almost year and day with a benumbed and silent conscience.

2. Another cause may be this: When the Lord's calls are very urgent and pressing upon us to entertain grace, communion, and fellowship with God, when these are borne in upon a person or people, and the soul listens not but lets them pass by, and takes no notice of God's entreaties at all. This is observed by the Psalmist, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." There is the offer. "But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." There is nothing hath more influence in hardening than this. Hence people that live under an entreating gospel, if they get not God's grace, or if they shift the offer of it, are the most hardened of all people. And when this deadness in the people of God prevails, and they are gadding after their idols, it brings on many degrees of hardness of heart upon them.

3. A third cause is: When any sin that we know to be a sin is not seriously opposed, but gets leave to sit down upon the conscience unrepented of. As every act of sin strengthens the habit of sin, and disposes unto more acts of sin, so it hardens exceedingly, thrusts out from God, and keeps the soul still under its dominion; and therefore says the apostle to the Hebrews, "But exhort one another daily, lest any of

you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

4. A fourth cause is: A continual custom of formal worshipping of God, either in public, in the family, or in secret; and when ye use no ejaculations in the time of your worship, and when ye reflect not upon it when it is over. Alas! we are killed in these days with much formality. There are symptoms of it in this place, in regard that there is so much sleeping even among good folk. There is much of it even where that evidence is wanting. And oh, what lightness is in the duty of family worship, even to such a degree that strangers may observe it! And,

5. The fifth and last cause we shall at present observe is: When people get a way of expostulating with themselves in the duty of prayer, and are near the putting of themselves unto the door, making the grace of God that is in them debatable; but then they leave it so, and immediately fall a-talking or laughing, but never mind or ask what becomes of these evils that they expostulated with themselves for; and so lie down, and as it were leave the door open unto wrath, &c. No marvel that, many a night, floodgates should break in upon them before the morrow. This is a very subtle cause. Many good folk have a custom of complaining of evils, who wrestle not with God for their pardon and victory over them; and hardness of heart is one of these evils. It is true there is a number under this evil that never complain of it, and it is a doleful prelude that it will be their death at last; but it is a good token, and some ground of hope, when a person is puzzled about it and burdened with it. The Lord convince us more thoroughly of it, and teach us to make use of the right remedy through Christ Jesus. Amen.

## SERMON VI.

*“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”*

Mark 11:24

HAVING formerly spoken unto divers things upon this subject of prayer, both as to its kinds and nature, and to the persons for whom we ought to make conscience of prayer to God, and likewise the persons against whom we may warrantably pray, I come, in the next place, to speak of those qualifications requisite in acceptable prayer—there being a vast difference between prayer and acceptable prayer—between our uttering words to God and praying by a gift, and praying by the promised Spirit of grace and supplication, in such a way and manner as to be accepted of God in what we pray for. This is the thing that doth so much take up the thoughts of the tender and serious Christian: Am I accepted of God in what I do? The words of the mouth many times run this way; and if ye heard the language of their heart, ye would hear much unto this purpose.

Now, the first requisite qualification of acceptable prayer to God is true and saving faith. And it is so requisite in prayer, that no man or woman can put up a suitable desire without it. And the having of this grace makes anything that they do in this exercise of a sweet smelling savour unto God. Hence,

I shall observe, That in order to acceptance with God in all our addresses unto Him sound, saving, and justifying faith is very requisite and necessary. And the method is the following:

1. I shall show you from Scripture that this is the



thing that God requires in prayer to make it acceptable.

2. Show you what it is to pray in faith.
3. Show you what is faith's work in prayer.
4. Show you what is the nature and properties of this grace, which is so necessary in prayer, that without it God will not accept of prayer.
5. Show you how it is that this faith, which I shall describe as to its nature and properties, is so necessary in prayer.
6. Show you in what respects this grace is requisite and necessary in prayer.
7. Show you what are the helps to attain unto this grace of faith.
8. Show you some of the noble effects that faith in prayer hath. And,
9. Lastly, make application of the whole.

I. For the first of these, the Scripture makes this very clear and plain, in the words of the text: "Whatsoever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." As ever ye would be accepted of God, believe, and so, "Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive." "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." That is, let faith be acted and exercised in our prayers. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." So that the way to draw near to God acceptably is by faith. The apostle James allows any that lack wisdom, to ask it by faith. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." So if you would obtain anything from me, says God, seek it in faith. And says the same apostle, "And the prayer of faith shall save

the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” Now, that which gives being and life to prayer is faith. Thus, for the first head, these Scriptures hold out that, in acceptable prayer, faith is requisite and altogether necessary.

II. The second thing is: To show what it is to pray in faith.

I shall take it up in these five or six things, which ye may endeavour to keep in remembrance. And

1. To pray in faith is to be endued with saving grace from the Lord. This grace of faith must be infused into the person that approaches unto God. For it is impossible that the person that wants faith can be acceptable to God—I mean not faith of miracles, or an historical faith, but true and justifying faith. This shows that all that are destitute of this grace are in a bad case. “For without faith it is impossible to please God.” And this is the woeful case they are in that want faith, that never anything they do is acceptable to God; and this, again, is the noble privilege of those that have it, that all they do in duty is accepted of Him.

2. To pray in faith is not only to have this grace infused into you, but it is to have that grace in exercise in and about the particular petition ye would put up to God. Whatsoever thing ye ask, ye must have faith exercised about that particular, whether it be for soul or body; for yourself or for the Church; for spiritual or for temporal things.

3. To pray in faith is to make use of the grounds of faith in our praying, viz., the word of promise; for the promises are the ground of our suit. So that in acceptable prayer faith makes use of this and that promise and turns the promise into a petition. This is faith’s work. It is neither humility, nor self-denial that can do this. But faith takes this and the other promise, and holds it up to God, that He may make

it out. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

4. To pray in faith is to make use of and to employ Christ the Mediator. So that the soul will never go to God but in the Mediator; and it looks for a return to its suits or petitions, only in and through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Says He Himself, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." That is, "Expect access to the Father in and through my name; look for a return in and through my name." We pray in faith when in all our addresses we are actually endeavouring to improve the merit and mediation of Him who is at the right hand of God the Father.

5. To pray in faith is to pray over the belly of all opposition. When, in human appearance, there is nothing but anger and wrath from God, and when the soul is under the apprehensions of His wrath, yet faith will come over all these unto God. When He is inflicting some judgment upon the person, and seems to be angry with the person, then faith goes over all and presses in unto God; that is to pray in faith. For instance, "I cried by reason of my affliction; I said, I am cast out of thy presence." Yet what does faith when in sense he is cast out of God's presence? Faith puts him upon supplicating God again. "Yet will I look again to thy holy temple."

6. To pray in faith is this: When the soul promises to itself on the ground of God's word an answer to the particular petition it is putting up to God. To pray in faith is not only to know well that the thing ye are seeking is warrantable and according to His will, but in some measure to have assurance (or endeavour after it) of an answer in absolute things, that is, if it be absolutely necessary they believe it shall be granted. As to conditional petitions, they believe that if it be good for them, they shall have what they ask.

If they present a petition for those things that are absolutely necessary, whether in respect of themselves or His Church, it shall be sure unto them; and if their petition is for things conditional, either to themselves or the Church, if it be for their good it shall not be wanting. Ye see an instance to this purpose in Mic. 7.7. All was then going wrong, yet, says he, "I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me:" as if he had said, "What then? I answer myself that God will hear me." Remember these six things which show what it is to pray in faith.

III. The third thing is: What is faith's work in prayer, or what is the work of this grace in a believer in his suits and supplications?

1. It instructs the person of his own need of the unsearchable riches that are in Christ. It makes him cry out, "O sinful man that I am! I have destroyed and undone myself." And, on the other hand, it informs the soul of its relief and out-gate from that misery, and of the soul's portion that is to be had in Christ, and of the fullness thereof; so that there is not the least want, but there is a perfect and complete fullness in Christ, as ye may see in the case of the publican. What was the thing he prayed for? Says he, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Faith instructs as to his sin, and then as to the way of his relief and help from sin, viz., in Christ; so that faith's first work in prayer is to instruct a sinner of its own condition, and then of its supply, and help. And poor, poor are they that want this grace of faith; and rich, rich are they that have it.

2. Faith's work in prayer is to be the hand by which the soul takes hold of the remedy and relief that is in Christ, and offered by Him to us in the gospel. It is the soul's hand to lay hold of Christ and His fullness, as He is offered and held forth to us. As a poor man puts forth his hand to take

that which is offered unto him, so it is with faith in prayer. It is called a receiving, and it is the very hand whereby Christ, and all that is to be had in Him, is to be received or laid hold of. This is an excellent mark in prayer.

3. The work of faith in prayer is, to enable the soul to wait patiently on God for a return of the petition it hath put up. Faith says, "Ye have prayed, and that is your duty; but see, Sirs, that ye stay still at His door until ye get an answer. Be not like those who shoot blunt-shot, and never look where it goes. 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.'" "I will stand on my watch, and set me on the tower to see what He will say to me," says faith to the soul. This is a good work of faith in prayer, to make our souls wait patiently on Him, while He is trying them with delays. It is faith that puts strength into our souls to make them patiently wait on, till God send an answer unto them.

4. It is true faith's work in prayer to make them judge aright of all the Lord's dispensations towards them, especially in or about the exercise of prayer. Faith says, "Look that ye construct aright of Him, and entertain not wrong thoughts of Him: although He gives you not His presence now, yet He will come." "He that will come, shall come, and shall not tarry." If He give you not in that measure that ye propose, see that ye fret not. If He seem to frown, you are then to abase yourselves as miserable wretches. What says David, "O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." There is faith's work; he cried to God, and is not heard; but says he, "Thou art holy." As if he had said, "I aver that He is holy, if He should shut out my prayers, as it were, with hewn stone, and refuse to answer me till my dying day, yet Thou art holy." That is faith's work in prayer.

5. Faith's work in prayer is to take hold of the least meaning, may-be, or intimation from the Lord, and to lay hold of the least ground of hope of mercy; as a poor man takes hold of the least meaning of mercy from man. It was the exercise of the woman of Canaan in her prayer, when Christ upbraided her, saying, "What have I to do with thee? Should I give the children's bread to dogs?" "Truth, Lord," says she, "Thou hast given me some ground to expect help from Thee. Truth, Lord, I acknowledge that I am a dog; but it is as true that dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Whereupon Christ says unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith. Thy faith hath taken hold of the least intimation, or may-be, as a ground of hope. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And this reproves those who fret if they get not what dish of meat they please; or if it pleases them not, they cast it from them. But if thou knewest what thou art, and how little thou deservest, thou wouldst bless God, that thou art not in hell already.

6. Faith's work in prayer is to enjoin every praying faculty, or all that is within the soul, before God. For faith sets its desires in order. Faith makes it desire nothing but what God hath allowed in His word, and it will be nothing short of this. Again, it orders our zeal, so that it is not blind and preposterous: where faith rules it orders humility, so that the soul does not say in a sullen fit, "Lord, depart from me for I am a sinful man." It orders sorrow for sin neither to be too little nor too great. It is faith's work to make the soul sorrow heartily before God: on the other hand it makes us guard against anxious sorrow. Then it orders hope that the soul may wait patiently for the answer or accomplishment of prayer. Thus it is faith's work to order all things within the soul, and put all things in a composed temper. So commanding is the grace of faith in a soul where it is, that it will let nothing be out of order.

7. Faith's work in a soul in prayer is to make it importunate

in pressing for that which it prays for. Having the word of God for its ground, and the name of Christ for its encouragement, it importunately presses for the thing desired, and when He seems to say, "Ye shall not have it;" it says, "I will not let Thee go." It was faith that made Jacob wrestle that night with God; says the angel, "Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And, "Moses," says the Lord, "will ye let me alone, that I may destroy this people." But says Moses, "If thou wilt forgive their sins; and if not, blot me out of thy book, which thou hast written." And the woman of Samaria, say what He would, harped still upon this string, "Lord, have mercy upon me."

8. Faith's work in prayer is to undertake for the soul to God, and for God to the soul. This is the very kernel of prayer. Faith says to the soul, "I assure thee that whatsoever God hath promised in His word, that He will give and perform." Faith says to the soul, "There is not a promise made to the Church, but it shall be accomplished; nor to itself in particular, but it shall be performed." So that this is the work of faith in prayer, to engage for the Lord that all the promises that He hath given shall be made out and fulfilled unto them. On the other hand, faith engages the soul to wait patiently on for the accomplishment of all that the Lord hath promised. So that this is one of the mysteries of God; and it is lamentable that so many souls live strangers to God and to this work of faith, and do not consider the worth and excellency of this grace of faith. I dare say that we, His Church and people, would be as far above trouble this day as we are under it if we had faith and the lively exercise thereof. Those that have this are of all men the most happy, and those that want it are of all men the most miserable.

9. Faith's work is to make the soul to plead with God upon

Scripture argument. Faith looks to what God hath promised, and makes use of all these promises in its approaches unto God in prayer. This ye may see in Moses' pleading for the people. He pleads upon all the promises the Lord had made unto them, when they had provoked His anger to burn against them. And so Jeremiah pleads upon scriptural arguments, not for himself only, but for the people of his time, that the Lord would do some great thing for them. So that this is faith's work, to gather all the arguments contained in Scripture, and to pray that the Lord would do this and that according to His promise.

10. The work of faith in prayer is, to turn over all the suits that the supplicant puts up into the hand of Christ the Mediator, that for His sake, intercession, and mediation they may be accepted of God, and answered in things according to His will; which implies a disclaiming of any works or merit in the person's self that is praying. Says Daniel: "Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." Not for my sake, nor the people's sake, nor for anything that we can do, but for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. He puts all the suits upon Christ's account, that in His name they may come before the Father and be accepted.

11. This is faith's work in prayer, to make the person praying keep at a due distance from God. Faith makes the person keep its own due room as unworthy—as dust and ashes. It teaches persons to give God His due room, as He is the high and lofty one; to have low thoughts of themselves, and high thoughts of God. Faith says to the soul, "Carry in subordination unto God; let not your words be rash, nor your thoughts and conceptions of Him unsuitable." Faith made Abraham say, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." It is an excellent work of faith, to make us to ascribe to Him that which is due to Him—glory, honour, and dominion for



ever, and to take shame and confusion of face unto ourselves.

12. Faith's work in prayer is to furnish the supplicant with subject-matter of prayer, viz., to gather the promises that are here and there in the Bible. And then it not only furnishes matter, but it furnishes a mouth to speak unto God; it opens the mouth to speak unto God that which the soul hath gathered. Nay, it furnishes feet to go unto God with the matter gathered. Nor does faith only furnish matter, and a mouth to speak it, and feet to go to God with it, but it is as wings unto the soul, whereby it flies as it were with wings unto heaven with the petition that it hath to put up to Him for itself, or for His work, or for His Zion. Oh, but this is an excellent work of faith! It makes them that wait upon the Lord "mount up as on eagles' wings; and walk, and not be weary; and run, and not be faint."

13. It is faith's work in prayer to enable the soul to wait patiently till God give an answer to prayer. Faith is still petitioning and supplicating the Lord till He give a gracious return. To renew the self-same thing in prayer again and again, it being according to His will and warranted in His word, in the exercise of the self-same faith, is no tautology, though it were a hundred times to have the self-same suit. It was the way of the woman of Canaan. "I am not sent to thee," says Christ; yet she prays still, "Have mercy upon me, Lord." And it made Paul return his suit again and again. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice." This is also an excellent work of faith. Nay, I may say, they never can do anything in the exercise of prayer that want this grace. Their prayers have no bones, strength, nor edge. They will never pierce heaven.

14. Faith's work in prayer is, to make the petitioner take up God aright as the object of prayer, and Christ Jesus as the only Mediator, and take up their own condition aright,

that they may apply the promises accordingly. For faith's work is to apprehend aright our Lord Jesus Christ the Angel of the covenant, and to apprehend our own soul's case and condition aright; as in Isa. xli. it is called a looking; as it makes them take up Him whom they are seeking, and themselves aright. This is faith's work in prayer. And,

Lastly, I shall add this. It is faith's work in prayer to enable the soul to prevail over, and, as it were, to command the Lord. The prayer of faith has a prevailing and commanding over the great and dreadful Lord. Hence it is said by James, "The fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much." And it healeth the sick. It is said of Jacob, "He had power over the angel, and prevailed." Says the Lord, "Concerning my sons and my daughters, command ye me." Thus the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth is content to be commanded by His own creatures praying in faith, and in a manner prevailing over Him. This is only prayer animated by faith. Were it not so, your prayers would not go above the crown of your heads. It was faith that made Him yield to the woman of Canaan—"Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. For I cannot keep it from thee. Thy faith has prevailed over Me."

Now from all these, you may see the woeful case they are in, who want this grace; and the good and desirable case they are in, whom God hath endued with it.

IV. The fourth thing is, What is the nature of this faith, which is a necessary and requisite qualification in prayer? That we may show you the worth and excellency of this grace, and the need folk have of it, I shall in these particulars hold it out, that ye may know it, and how to come by it. And,

1. This grace of saving faith is one of the main, choice and principal graces peculiar to the elect, and is the very root of

all other graces. It is in a manner, the kernel and life of all the rest, it being the only grace that closeth with Christ. "Add to your faith virtue; and to your virtue, knowledge." It is the first ground stone, and then add to it all the rest. All that folk go about, all the moral duties that some professed Christians perform, are but mere shadows for want of this.

2. This grace is one in all the elect, but not in a like measure in all. It is the self-same grace in all the elect. But you will say, How is that? For then one's faith would serve all. No, there are as many faiths, as particular persons of the elect; for it is not one in the elect as to the measure of it; for some may have a less, and some a greater degree of faith. But in this respect, it is one as to its closing with Christ, and embracing of Him as offered unto them in the gospel. It is the very self-same faith in all the elect. It was the self-same faith that was in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that is in all the believers after them. The poorest as well as the greatest hath the self-same faith in substance. If this were considered, it might be comfortable to us. You will say, "The apostle Paul, and the rest of these worthy men, might plead confidently with God in their own behalf, and in the behalf of others." But, I say, if ye have fled to Christ, and closed with Him, ye may with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, to plead with God on your own, and on the behalf of others also.

3. This grace of faith may, yea, ought to increase in the saints of God. See Mark 9.2, 2 Cor. 10.15, where the increase of faith is mentioned. And, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love." This grace is said to grow. "The righteousness of God revealed in the gospel from faith to faith." It is a sin and a shame for Christians to be and continue at the same degree that at the first they were at. Where it is sound and real, it grows. And oh,

but the Lord's people should endeavour much for the increase of faith, that they be not as children, ever doubting and staggering, so that they cannot live without sensible manifestations of God's favourable presence unto them.

4. Ye should know that as it ought to grow, so sometimes it may come under decay, as to the exercise of it; though there cannot be a decay of it as to its foundation. But I say, it may come under a decay as to its exercise; which proceeds either from security, or from Christians being too much elated in duty. When these give a stroke to faith, it may come under a decay. Christians, beware of security, for it is the bane of faith. Beware of uplifting in duties, for it likewise is the bane of faith. And in your afflictions pray to God for the increase of your faith, for trials and rods of affliction are for trials to faith, therefore ye ought to pray for faith that are bearing the burden in the heat of the day.

5. The grace of faith is that which renders all that ye do acceptable unto God, "For without faith it is impossible to please God."

6. This grace of faith hath always with it obedience, and the bringing forth of good fruit to the glory of God and the edification of others, which fruit is called "the obedience of faith." Wherever it is, it leads still to sincere endeavours to keep up all the commandments of God. By this, folk may know whether they have this grace or not."

7. This grace of faith apprehends things altogether beyond the reach of human reason, and brings these things home unto the man's own bosom. It makes things that are absent as if they were present; it brings that into the man's heart that he shall have to all eternity; it brings in God to the man; it brings in Christ to his bosom; it brings in the joys of heaven to his soul—hence it is said to be "the substance of things not seen." It was this that made Moses see Him

that is invisible, and the eternal glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, whereupon he refused to be preferred in Pharaoh's court; and this is the nature of this grace which is so necessary and requisite a qualification in the duty of prayer. And,

8. This grace of faith is a most sincere cordial grace. It is called "faith unfeigned." It knows not what it is to have the winding by-gates that carnal reason and hellish policy find out. This grace of faith is downright and without guile.

9. The nature of this grace is, that it is firm, stable, and steadfast, and renders the person steadfast in whom it is: "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith." They are like growing trees that cannot be shaken; they are like mount Zion, that cannot be removed. When they are in a right frame, let the world turn upside down, they will not be afraid. But folk destitute of this grace, like weather-cocks, will never hold out in the storm. They may bear it a little, but will not endure unto the end. But they that trust in the Lord shall be stable as mount Zion; rooted and built up in Him, they can never be removed.

10. This grace of faith is altogether supernatural. It is wholly of God, and hath nothing of our own power in it. "Faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." It descends from the Father of lights, and by this ye may know where to find it; and if it be once infused into you, it can never be plucked out of your hearts again. They are fools that think to believe, without knowing God the Author of faith.

11. This grace hath the Word of God for its ground. It is not this or that minister said it; not this great man, nor that great man that said it; no, nothing will serve the believer until he gets this, "Thus saith the Lord."

12. This grace of faith is a knowing and intelligent grace,

so that they in whom it is know somewhat of God, and of Jesus Christ, who is the immediate object of faith, and of the promises of the Gospel, and of their own case and condition. Says Christ, “And have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me”—hence sometimes it is called knowledge.

13. This grace is a lively, operative, and working grace. It makes the soul in which it is lively, diligent, and active in working the work of God. It is called “the work of faith.” It puts folk upon working. Ye shall never see one who hath true faith, though he discerns it not, but he is busy; even though believers were not bidden—yea, though they were forbidden—they would read the Scripture, pray unto God, speak and confer with the Lord’s people when under trouble or disquiet of mind, if they knew them to be such as they might safely communicate their mind unto.

14. This grace is a most precious grace in respect of God, the author of it; in respect of Christ, the object of it; and in respect of the Gospel, the means of attaining to it; and in respect of salvation, the end of it. Oh, but it is precious, and makes those that have it precious unto God.

15. It is a most conquering and overcoming grace; “It overcometh the world and the devil;” it is the shield that quenches all his fiery darts.

16. I shall add that it is a purifying and cleansing grace, for it gives the person no rest until he has recourse unto the fountain of His blood. Says John, “He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Not only to be reformed outwardly, but inwardly. By these things ye may see what this grace of faith is; and by some of them ye may know if ye have it, and how ye may get it. Withal ye may see the need ye have of it.

If ye would go to God acceptably—if ye would bear a storm—if ye would have life then study faith. If ye get it not, ye shall never see life, and nothing that ye do shall be acceptable to God. Remember these things, lay them to heart, and do not think that it will be enough to hear them; for how will ye look death in the face who never studied this grace? How will ye wade the fords of Jordan to eternity? And how shall ye be able to answer God in the great day of accounts? If ye would get safe through all these, labour to obtain this grace of faith. The Lord help you so to do.

## SERMON VII.<sup>1</sup>

*“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”*

Mark 11:24

I OBSERVED the last Sabbath from this verse that sound justifying faith is a necessary and requisite qualification of acceptable prayer to God. In prosecution of this point I went through these things in your hearing.

1. I proved from Scripture that faith is a necessary and requisite qualification of right and acceptable prayer unto God.
2. I observed in several particulars what it is to pray in faith.
3. I showed you what is faith's work in prayer.
4. I cleared a little what is the nature and the properties of this grace of faith which is so necessary a qualification in acceptable prayer.

Now I come,

5. To the fifth thing in the method. And this is to show you how it appears that the grace of faith, as I described it in its nature and its properties, is required in acceptable prayer. It will appear that sound and saving faith is requisite and necessary in prayer, if we consider:

1. That the Lord commands absolutely that in our prayers to Him we pray in faith. He enjoins by His authority that every petition we put up to Him be put up in faith—“Let him that prayeth, pray in faith, nothing wavering.” And here in the text it is said, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” So that in respect of the Lord's command it is



highly necessary.

2. Consider this, That there is no prayer acceptable to God, nor well-pleasing to Him, without faith. No performance nor duty that we can do, or go about, and consequently no prayer is acceptable unto God without this grace. “But without faith it is impossible to please God.”

3. Consider that it is by the grace of faith that the saints repel all Satan’s temptations, and quench his fiery darts, wherewith they are afflicted, especially in time of prayer. And hence it appears that faith is necessary in prayer. Persons cannot stand it out without this grace; they cannot endure his fiery darts, but must be burnt up by them. Says the apostle, “Above all things, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” This is the grace that resists when he sets upon them to divert them in prayer.

4. Consider that it is faith that prepares, fits, and disposes the Lord’s people for the exercise of prayer. It puts and keeps them in a praying frame—faith being a grace purifying the heart and life, and it being necessary that all that come to God be studious of holiness. “I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass thine altar.” And this will make it appear that faith is necessary in prayer, if ye would be kept in a fit disposition for it at all times and seasons.

5. Consider that it is the grace of faith that makes the soul continue in prayer till it obtains its answer or request. It is faith that is the strength, or bone of the soul, enabling it to go on in prayer, and not to take a refusal from God till it obtains an answer, as appears in the woman of Canaan. It was her faith that would not take a refusal, but she continued praying and wrestling out her soul until she got an answer. It was faith that made Jacob refuse to let the angel go

until he blessed him. Thus it appears to be requisite, because it makes the people of God continue to wrestle with God in prayer. Folk that only pray by a gift will soon take a refusal; but it is not so with faith, it will not be refused.

6. Consider that it is this grace that mainly and principally glorifies God, and therefore it is most requisite in prayer, in ascribing majesty, power, honour, and dominion unto God. And must not that be necessary in prayer which glorifies, magnifies, and honours Him to whom we pray? And,

7. Consider that the grace of faith is the means and way to see, behold, inherit, and enjoy the glory of the Lord. And oh! but faith is necessary in prayer, as ever ye would behold His glory and power in that duty. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." And is it not then very necessary that souls have faith, seeing it is the way and means of getting a view of His glory? From all these we may see how necessary faith is in all our performances, and especially in prayer.

VI. For the farther prosecution of this subject, I shall show you in what respects this grace of faith is necessary in prayer; and in clearing of this, I shall sum it up in the following particulars. And,

1. The grace of faith is necessary in respect of God the object of prayer, as of every other act of worship.
2. It is necessary in respect of Christ Jesus the Redeemer.
3. It is necessary in respect of the promises of God.
4. It is necessary in respect of God's providences.

1st, I say, in our praying to God, faith is necessary in respect of God Himself, the object of prayer. For faith looks unto Him. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and

that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”  
And particularly I observe,

(1.) There must be in our prayer to God, faith in His omnipresence, as one that is in a manner present with us when we pray. Faith looks on God as present with us. “But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” We should take heed to His omnipresence; that is, His being everywhere present. Thus faith takes Him up as present with the person wherever he prays.

(2.) In our prayers, faith is necessary in respect of His omniscience, by which He is intimately acquainted with our case and ways—acquainted with the sighs and groans of the soul. Jeremiah, in praying to God, says, “For thine eyes are open unto all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruits of his doings.” Faith looks unto Him as one to whose eyes all things are naked and bare. Christ says, “Pray to your Father in secret, and your Father who seeth in secret, shall reward you openly.” So that there must be faith in His omniscience in one praying to Him in an acceptable way.

(3.) In our prayers, faith in His all-sufficiency is also necessary. There must be faith in Him, as one who hath to supply our needs and necessities to the utmost. His supply and help is broader than all our wants. He hath a sufficiency to help our need, without any mean or instrument. There He holds out His all-sufficiency, as one who needs neither bull-oak nor goat. “For,” says He, “every beast of the forest and cattle on a thousand hills are mine. I need none of these. I have enough for thee; only call thou on me. But look by faith unto my all-sufficiency.” So that there must be faith in God’s all-sufficiency in prayer. And oh! but it is necessary to take Him up in prayer as one who hath to serve our turn;

as one who hath mercy to pardon us; life to those that are dead; healing to those who are sick and diseased; righteousness unto those whose righteousness is as filthy rags; peace unto them that are confused; light to them who are in darkness; and strength to them that are weak, and not able to go about duty.

(4.) Faith, while we pray, must be exercised in His omnipotence and almighty power, in respect of which there is nothing we stand in need of but He is of power to give it, and able to perform it for us. He can do it without the concurrence of second causes; nay, His power can do it above natural causes. "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there any thing too hard for me?" What is it He cannot do? What is it thou standest in need of that He cannot do? What evil is there that a soul is under that He cannot take away? What evil is it that ye are troubled with that He cannot remove by His power?

(5.) It is also necessary and requisite in our prayers that we exercise faith in His gracious nature, as one that is gracious and merciful to pardon poor sinners, be their guilt what it will. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and who healeth all thy diseases." Sinners, ye should look unto God by the exercise of faith in His gracious nature, as one ready and willing to forgive and pardon all your sins. Oh, but that is necessary in prayer.

(6.) In our prayers faith should be exercised in God's simplicity and spirituality, as He is a Spirit invisible and cannot be apprehended by our outward senses, and therefore one that requires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Ye must be spiritual in your worship, that so ye may not have gross and unsuitable conceptions of the Lord whom ye worship.

(7.) In our prayers faith must be exercised in His eternity, as He is an eternal and everlasting majesty, without beginning or end; as one who was from all eternity contriving the salvation of sinners; as one who had time enough to do good to His creatures: as one who endures for ever to be their happiness. Says Habakkuk, “Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God?” We are to look on Him as one with whom a thousand years are but as one day. The faith of this might damp all the perplexed thoughts of our hearts, as if He were long in performing His promises.

(8.) In prayer we must exercise faith in His unchangeableness, as He is unchangeable in all that He is in His nature; in His goodness. “He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever: without variableness or shadow of turning.” The Psalmist looked upon God as one who changeth not. “But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” There is great need of faith in this respect, that the soul may be fixed on God as one that hath done such things and can yet do such things for them.

(9.) Faith should be exercised in Him in prayer, as He is holy and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that with all due reverence the soul may draw near unto Him. “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity. Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?” Think ye that men and women durst wallow in sin if they exercised faith in God as a holy one, as one who cannot look upon iniquity.

(10.) In prayer faith must be exercised in His justice, as He is a just and jealous God, and will by no means acquit the wicked; that the sins persons are guilty of may be the more grievous unto them, considering that God will not let them go unpunished if they get not true repentance.

(11.) Faith in prayer must be exercised in the relative titles that God hath come under unto His people, as that He is their Former and Maker. "We are the clay, and thou art the potter;" as if the prophet had said, "Lord, destroy us not, for we are the works of Thy hands." Faith looks to Him as a Father. "Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, thou, O Lord, art our Father." And they should look on God as in covenant with them. "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." How sweet the relation faith looks to in prayer! They should look to Him in prayer as their Husband, considering themselves as His married people, called by His name, and having His name put upon them. "I will be their God, and they shall return unto me with their whole heart." This then is the first thing in regard of which faith is necessary.

2ndly, I told you faith is necessary in respect of Christ the Mediator; for in going to God in prayer we must have an eye to the Mediator, for His sake, not for our own sake, looking to be heard. There are particularly these things in Christ that faith looks to in prayer:

(1.) It looks unto Him as one in and by whom the person praying gets access to the Father. It is in and through Him that we ever had nearness to God; no coming unto this holy God but in and through Christ the Mediator.

(2.) It looks upon Him as one in and by whom the supplicant finds acceptance, and not only access. One may, in some cases, get access and not get acceptance; but says the apostle, "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

(3.) Faith looks upon Him as one who offereth up incense with the person's prayers, that the value of Christ's sufferings may make the prayers acceptable to God. Faith looks

much unto the obedience and sufferings of Christ, through which it gets acceptation before God and remission of sin.

(4.) Faith looks on Him as one who intercedes with the Father. The praying person finds there is this and that he cannot say to God, and in what he says there is this and that wrong. "But," says he, "I have all my dependence on Christ's intercession in my prayer, therefore do I look to Him that is at the Father's right hand interceding for sinners."

(5.) It looks to Him as one who is the agent or advocate with God for the person praying, seeing he cannot plead his own cause in the court of heaven. "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

(6.) Faith looks upon Christ as one appearing before God for sinners, and presenting the person unto God; as praying like the high priest who had the twelve tribes upon his breast when he went in unto the holy of holies, that he might present them unto God. "Such is this person's case, and such is that person's case," says he to God. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us."

(7.) Faith in prayer looks upon Him as a cautioner substituted for sinners to pay their debt, and to answer for them when the principal debtor hath nothing to pay. "By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament." God substituted Him as their Cautioner and Surety. What they could not do for themselves He did for them. Faith looks upon Him as satisfying justice and responsible for the believer.

(8.) Faith looks on Him as compassionate, merciful, and

pitiful to poor sinners; He having our nature, and so a fellow-feeling with us. Hence He is held out and typified by the high-priest as one compassionate on the ignorant and those who are out of the way. Thus there must be a mystery of the exercise of faith in God, the object of prayer, and in Christ the Mediator and Redeemer, otherwise ye are not the wetting of your finger in water the better for your prayers. They will never ascend above your heads. He will regard them no more than the barking of dogs, or the offering of swine's flesh, or the cutting off a dog's neck. The Lord rejects all these; and so without this grace of faith folk "spend their labour for that which profiteth not, and their money for that which is not bread." How very necessary is it to exercise faith in Christ the Redeemer; and oh! if many would reflect how they have gone about this duty, they would look with black countenances, and they may say, "That in effect all our prayers are lost; we have not taken the right way in it."

3rdly, I told you that faith was necessary in prayer in respect of the promises of God. We have examples of the exercise of it in many places of Scripture, as in 2 Sam. 7.28, David makes much use of God's promises by faith in his prayer to God; and 2 Chron. 20.7, Jehoshaphat is praying, and in this exercise he makes much use of the promises by faith. Now in prayer faith is requisite in respect of the promises.

(1.) Because faith gathereth the promises that are interspersed here and there in the revealed will of God, as a hungry man his food, or a thirsty man his drink, or as a naked man his clothing to keep him from the chilling cold.

(2.) Faith not only gathers God's promises, but it makes application of them to the heart of the person in particular, as if the person had been set down particularly by name and surname. Faith makes the promise directed to sinners



in general one's own in particular.

(3.) Faith chooses promises suitable to the ease and condition that the soul is in; for such a case such a promise, and for another case another promise. If the soul be dead, it looks to the promise God hath made of life; if it be under the sense of guilt, it looks to the promise God hath made of the pardon and remission of sin; if it be ignorant, it looks to the promise of giving light and knowledge; if it finds its own righteousness as filthy rags, it chooses a promise holding out the perfect and complete righteousness of Christ; if it finds its heart hard, it chooses a promise of softening the heart and giving a heart of flesh, taking away the stony heart. Thus faith chooses suitable promises to the man's case and condition, as a hungry man chooses meat, and a thirsty man drink, and a sick man physic, &c.

(4.) Faith makes persons urge in prayer all the promises of God, that He would perform and accomplish them unto them. It looks through the Scriptures, and chooses such and such promises: and goes to God with them, and begs God that He would make them out unto them. "For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house." What does David with the promise? Why, he goes unto God with it. "Now therefore, let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue before thee for ever; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it." Faith having found out the promise, goes to God with it, and puts Him to it; turning the promises into petitions to God. There is no grace in the soul besides faith, that can put it upon wrestling and pleading earnestly with the Lord, that He would make out His own word, even His gracious word of promise.

(5.) Faith having gathered the promises, chooses them, applies them, and urges them; and then it will make the soul patiently wait on, without fretting, or wearying, till God

make out His promises to it. Thus in respect of the promises of the gospel. Oh! but faith is requisite in prayer, if ye consider these five things already noticed.

4thly, I told you that faith is requisite in prayer, in respect of God's providences. This ye may see in Psalm 22.4, where David prays earnestly, and his faith is exercised in reference to the dispensations of providence. There are three or four things that faith does under providences. And,

(1.) It makes the person wisely observe every passage of God's providences, to himself, or others. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." And "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Faith makes a person careful to observe God's providences.

(2.) Not only doth faith make them carefully observe God's providences, but it makes them have errands to God as to all the occurrences of providence. If it were but something happening one's beast, or one's child, nay if it were but a forefinger, forehead, or the toothache, it goes to God with every such passage of providence, whether it be of mercy, or of judgment; nothing else than faith can or will do this effectually.

(3.) Not only doth faith observe and make errands of occurrences of providence to God, but it also puts good constructions on providences though they should seem to contradict the promises. It will make Abraham say, when he is commanded to offer up his son Isaac, "Here is the wood, there is the fire, but where will we get the sacrifice." But says he, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

(4.) It makes this of providence, that it refuseth to make it

the ground of the person's walk, when it comes to contradict the promises. For the Lord's providences are not the ground of our walk. Oh! but faith is necessary in prayer. Without it, folk will never observe God's providences, nor make errands of providences, nor shall they wisely interpret providences; nor shall they refuse providences to be the rule of their walk. But those that have faith and look to the object of prayer; to Christ the Mediator, to the promises, to the occurrences of providence, know certainly that this grace of faith is highly necessary in prayer; even so necessary that persons cannot make a right use of God, of Christ, of the promises, and of providences without it.

VII. But say ye, "What shall they do that have not found saving faith, it being so absolutely necessary that without it they cannot pray one word acceptably to God? Now what shall we do, who think we have it not?" Now, that I may answer this, ye must consider that those who have this question; scruple, or doubt, are,

1st, Either such as have no sound saving faith at all; or,

2ndly, Such as have it, and cannot yet discern it. Or,

3rdly, Such as do but make a question, or scruple about it in words, to fill the field (as we sometimes say) but use not the right means to get it. Or,

4thly, Such as in sincerity are making the doubt, or scruple, whether they have faith or not, and are using the means for it, and would gladly have it.

First, For the first of these, I would have them that have no faith, consider these two things; 1. The danger of such a case. 2. Consider that they are yet in the place of hope, and therefore ought to use the means to attain it. I say, those who have not true faith, as there are many who have it not, should consider the case they are in. And what is that?

(1.) They are a prey unto the devil, to do with them what he pleases. "Who are taken captive by him at his will." They curse, they swear, they debauch, they profane the Sabbath-day, they lie and deceive; for it is impossible to resist the devil, that is "going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" without this grace of faith.

(2.) And not only are they a prey to the devil, but they are prey to their own lusts. "My people would not listen to my voice; and Israel would have none of me." But what comes of it? "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts; and they walked in their own counsels." Oh! but that is a dreadful thing, for men to be given up unto the lusts of their own hearts. Know ye not, that sound faith is evidently awanting in our days, when almost all ranks of men are given up to profanity; to their own hearts' lusts; to all sorts of wickedness. Scotland, since any can remember, was never so full of abominations as it is at this day. And,

(3.) It deprives them of fellowship with God, and with Jesus Christ. They that have no faith, can have no communion with God. For it is by faith that Christ dwells in us. And is not this a doleful thing to be without God, and without Christ in the world? One is without God, while he lives without that precious grace.

(4.) The want of this grace brings on more obduracy and hardness of heart. In Mark 16.14 ye will find that unbelief and hardness of heart go hand and hand together. Is it not a sad case to be bound up in stupidity and hardness of heart. But so is it with those who are destitute of faith.

(5.) They not only cannot pray acceptably; but unbelief also takes away the gift of prayer, and the mouth, so that they cannot speak to God. "Behold thou shalt be dumb, and not be able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which

shall be fulfilled in their season.” It makes the person a slighter of prayer in secret, and if they have a family, in their families; so that there is never a day goes over their head that they pray a word to God. “Thou shalt be dumb, and not be able to speak,” &c.

(6.) They that want faith cannot bring forth fruit unto the glory of God. No more than these branches broken down can bear fruit, no more can a man without faith bring forth good fruit unto God. What is that which makes folk like briars and thorns? Whence their profanity, ungodliness, and throwing out oaths for every trifling matter? Is it not owing to their unbelief? And,

(7.) This is the woefulness of their case that want faith, that whatsoever they do is sin. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Everything that people do is sin, if they believe not. The very work and labour they are about is sin. Their plowing, their eating, their drinking, their walking, their sitting, their sleeping, and all that they do is sin. Their hearing, their reading, their praying is sin. And is not that a deplorable case, to have all that a man doeth looked upon as sin? And so it is with such as are destitute of the grace of faith.

(8.) This is also a branch of the woefulness of that case, that they are obnoxious, and liable unto the wrath and curse of God, here and hereafter. “He that believeth not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” God’s wrath and curse are on their soul, on their body, on their means, honour, wealth, poverty, &c. Oh, but this is a dreadful case; and it is the case of those that want faith. And,

(9.) This is their case; they shall irrecoverably die, and perish eternally, that do not believe. “For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”

They that have not found faith would do well to consider that they are yet in the land of the living. Your case, however deplorable it may be, is more hopeful than that of those who are already in hell. The means are therefore to be gone about, such as reading, hearing; and be busy in prayer to God for it, and say, "Lord, increase our faith." Be convinced of the want of this grace, and of the evil of the want of it, if ever ye would attain unto it. So that this is the answer to the first sort, viz.: Those who have not found faith (1.) They should sincerely consider their case and condition. (2.) They should consider with themselves, "I am yet in the land of the living, and in the place of hope." Those who find it to be so with them, should seriously say unto themselves, "I will set to now, as if I had but one night or one day to live in the world. I will not take rest, until, in some measure, I get it made out unto me, that I have faith."

Secondly, For the second sort, viz.: Those who have it, and yet do not discern it. To such I may say these few things:

1. Consider that the having of faith is sufficient security for folks happiness and well-being, though they know it not; seeing the having of it interests them in God as their own, in heaven as their own, in the promises as their own, and in the righteousness of Christ as their own; in justification, adoption, and sanctification as their own. I say, the having of faith is sufficient to secure salvation, though ye know not that ye have it. Although their not having the knowledge of it tends much to the sorrow of such, yet the having of sound saving faith is a great matter. It is true they have most comfort that know that they do believe, and can say, "I know in whom I have believed."

2. Consider that the Lord in His revealed will hath laid down several signs or marks of true faith; and therefore the Lord's people should try and examine themselves by those signs, marks, and evidences of faith set down in Scripture,

whether they have them or not, so that ye may not only have it, but know that ye have it, and take the comfort of it. There are these marks and evidences of sound faith in Scripture, which I shall briefly mention here. And,

(1.) Those excellent graces, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit are where this grace of faith is. See Gal. 5.22,

(2.) Where those Christian virtues and graces are linked together as in a chain. “Add to faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness.” I say, where those virtues are linked thus together there is faith.

(3.) Wherever there is true faith there is love to the object of faith: for if He hath begotten any, they cannot but love Him that begat. “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

(4.) Wherever faith is, there is sincere love to all the saints of God. “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.” So that faith and love go hand in hand together.

(5.) Wherever faith is, there is a patient waiting for the promises. Faith makes no haste, but waits for the performing of the promises. It is by faith and patience that the glorified and redeemed have obtained possession of the promises. “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

(6.) Where faith is, there is a patient enduring of affliction. What God carves out unto them, the apostle tells them they were to endure in faith. Faith keeps patience in the soul where it is.

(7.) Where it is, it weans the heart and affections from the

earth and earthly things; they are not desirous of them. “I glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” It is by faith in the cross of Christ that the heart is taken off the earth and earthly things, where it is real.

(8.) Faith, where it is in exercise, resists temptations to sin, whether from men or from the devil. The grace of faith cannot enter into any communication with the devil. It is not good communicating with him, lest ye give way. Therefore faith rejects all his temptations with this, “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

(9.) It is serious and studious of holiness in the heart, life, and conversation. Believing will not tolerate sin in the heart or conversation. It makes the soul say, “Should such a man as I yield to sin, should such a man as I go on with the world in their corrupt courses, who am an adopted child of God.” “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Faith purifieth the heart.

(10.) Again, where faith is, oh! but it puts folk upon being serious and fervent in prayer to God. “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Now, are ye bowing your knees to God and confessing your ill-spent time, your ignorance, and the plagues of your corrupt hearts?

(11.) Where faith is, persons are very sensible of the unbelief of their hearts; and gladly would they have their unbelief cured. “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

(12.) Faith leads the person in whom it is to make conscience of yielding obedience to God only in Christ’s strength. It sets about every commanded duty, and has a respect to all His commandments, in the way of looking to Christ as made unto us sanctification. Therefore the obedience of the saints is called the “obedience of faith,” and



there are none that have this grace that are not studying to keep His commandments. And,

Lastly, Wherefore it is they are longing for Christ's second coming, that they may be in His company never to be out of it again, as ye may see in 2 Cor. v. 1. There is a great longing to have the house or tabernacle of clay dissolved, and to be possessed of that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Take a believer in his right frame, you would find he does not care if the day of judgment were ere he slept; he does not care if all the world were in a red flame, as it will be when that day comes; he does not care if the sound of the last trumpet were going through the four winds of heaven. Therefore, believers are described to be those who are hasting unto the coming of Jesus Christ. They are waiting for His appearing in the clouds. Where faith is not, they cannot endure to think of the judgment, because the Judge and they are not friends. The sight of the Judge shall be the saddest sight that ever they saw. Then they shall cry out, "Hills and mountains fall on us, and cover us from the face of the Lamb." But where faith is, there is a crying of the soul, "Haste, Lord." The Spirit says "Come," and the Bride says "Come." So much for the second sort, viz., those who are not clear, and cannot discern it. I daresay that it is folks lying in their sins that makes them uncertain of their faith.

Thirdly, For the third sort, viz., those who make some words or noise about the want of it. Say they, "What shall I do without faith? Why should I pray since I want faith? My praying will not be acceptable to God." Such are Gallo-like, indifferent whether they do it or not. To these I would say these two things:

1. To make words of that kind, and not to have any hearty concern for the want of it, is altogether unprofitable.

2. While folk continue in that case, they cannot see the Lord, heaven, or eternal happiness. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”—that is, all that are such shall be excluded the kingdom of heaven. But,

Fourthly, For the fourth sort, even such as seriously think that they want faith, and would be glad to use the means of getting it. To these I would only say:

1. Consider that faith is the gift of God.

2. Consider that the way to draw this faith from God is by prayer; for whatsoever they need, let them seek it by prayer.

3. Consider that as it is God’s gift, and that which we should seek from Him by prayer, the Lord hath promised to give whatsoever we ask in the name of Christ. Ye would rest in saying ye cannot believe! But mind that God hath promised to give what ye ask in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is His gift, and He hath appointed us to seek it by prayer; and promised to give whatever we ask agreeably to His will. As this is so, I shall add no more. But remember the absolute necessity of faith, and the good and desirable case and condition they are in that have it; and the woeful condition those are in who want it. Remember that He is both the Author and Finisher of faith, He hath promised to give it, if ye seek it. Continue in so doing, and ye shall receive it according to His own promise.

---

*N.B.* It appears that the author preached another sermon upon this subject, as the last head and the application are not discussed.

Footnotes:

1. The second sermon on this text.

## SERMON VIII.<sup>1</sup>

*“We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”*

Isaiah 26:18-19

AS this people had before heard of many judgments, and likewise of many good days to come; so, in the first and second verses of this chapter, Zion begins this song, “In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.” And well she sings, and desires to have possession of that of which she sings. That shows what was in her heart, for she sings with the tear in her eye. She sings a song of that which is coming on; she invites all to come and take a trial of the Lord, for “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” And then, “Trust ye in the Lord for ever.” And then she begins to look what way she will do it: “For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he layeth it low, even to the dust.” And then she and her daughter come to say, “Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited upon thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.” And at length she takes the promise boldly: “Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”

In the words we have read, she shuts up her song, as if she had said, “I can sing no more, except it be in complaints; we have been with child.” We may take this to have been spoken when she was in captivity. She says, “We have been

in pain; we expected a deliverance; but when we thought to have brought forth a man child, then we only brought forth wind. We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.” But Christ answers her thus, “Although thou be dead, and lying in the dust, yet sing, ‘Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.’” Or the prophet says it, in Christ’s name, “I am fully persuaded that ye shall be well, and I would engage to sink and swim with you. I shall,” says he, “desire to be no better than ye shall be.” He bids them all believe it; and then they begin to apply the promise unto themselves, and they all confess to that which the prophet had said. Hence the Church says her dead body shall arise, so that all her members begin and apply it unto themselves. The Lord begins to bear in the application of the point upon them; then they all consent to sing, and they encourage one another, saying, “Our dew shall be as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

Now ye have heard of the close of the song. And now in this, and the preceding verses ye have: (1) A complaint, (2) a promise, and (3) an application of the promise.

As to the complaint, it consists in three things: (1.) “We have been with child.” This is their condition. (2.) They are pained. (3.) The continuance of the pain. “We thought to have been delivered, but our thoughts and expectations are frustrated, and we bring forth wind, instead of a child.”

DOCT. I. *When ye find such a woful condition, and yet a song appended to it, observe that sometimes Zion and her daughters sing with tears in their eyes.*

Now, for proof of this, there are many mournful psalms of David that bear this title or inscription, “A Song or Psalm of David.” The Church of God is represented in a sad and woful condition in this place, and yet the prophet calls this representation a “song.” The reasons are threefold:

1. The first reason why she must sing with the tear in her eye, is because it is a commanded duty. Though she can give no reason of a song, either internal or external, yet she must sing. If it should be to run over some precipice, and dash herself to pieces, if she hath a command, she must obey the charge. Whatsoever stands in her way, she must go through it; and then He allows Zion to sing. She must sing a song.

USE. This reaches a reproof unto the natural man, for he knows not what it is to obey a command out of regard to God's authority. He cannot do it in remembrance of Him; but the spiritual man must essay it, and he dares not say anything to the contrary. Says Job, "Yet in my flesh shall I see God;" that is, "My dust shall yet praise God." Thus the children of Zion must go on in obedience to a command. And,

2. She must sing. And why? That she may engage others in this work;" For although I never thrive," says the child of God, "yet I wish all Zion's daughters to thrive and prosper." So that, Christians, you should not suffer any of your jealousies to frighten others from coming to God in Christ. Zion's daughters will smile when they hear the word preached, although it should sting them to the heart.

3. The third reason why she sings is, she knows that if there be any means under heaven to engage God to work for her and to recover her out of her bad condition, it is this exercise. Says David, "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies." She knows that to call upon God and to praise Him would be the way to be saved by Him. The soul knows that it never got God's approbation for disbelieving. "Many times," says the soul, "hath He frowned upon me for it; and therefore I would strive against unbelief." Now when the soul can plead this way from experience, then it is encouraged to sing. But again, as Zion sings, she sings with the tear in

her eye. The reasons for this are:

(1.) Because, although she sees she is bound to sing, yet she sees a debt in her bosom that she will never be able to pay. This makes her weep because she hath wronged Christ; and when she sees how far she is fallen from God, and from that sweet and desirable condition she was in, as the Psalmist expresses it, "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day." Thus he begins to sing, and then the tears start into his eyes, and he thinks, "Oh, that it had been with me as formerly, then I might have sung cheerfully."

(2.) The second reason why they sing with the tear in their eye is, because their enemies thrust sore at them. When they begin to sing, the devil perhaps starts up and says, "O thou blasphemer of God, how canst thou sing? for thou but dishonourest Him with thy song." Then the tears start in their eyes. "Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me." And then she sees that she hath reason both of singing and complaining. At last she finds out a way to unite them, and sings with the tear in her eye.

(3.) The third reason is, because ye know singing is a token of hope. When she begins to think how many vain hopes she has had, she is troubled, and that makes the tear to start into her eye.

Now, we think there are some people this day that would sing, and they must sing, and yet the tear appears in their eye when they think how many vain thoughts and vain expectations they have had, to be loosed from their bonds. Now, we would wish the Lord's people would not plead their duty of praise out of doors. For be your condition what it will, sing; for the worst condition ye can be in gives

you no liberty to thrust out a command. If ye will give this place, we defy unbelief to prevail with you. But you may say, "Ye know not what condition we are in, and yet you bid us sing." Indeed, I know not your different conditions; but they can be no worse than the condition the Scripture here speaks of. "We have been in pain; we have brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth."

Now, "We have been in pain; we have been with child." Here the Church's condition may be divided into three different things.

1st, A conception or deliverance under outward troubles.  
2ndly, This conception comes to the hopes of a delivery.  
And, 3rdly, They were disappointed in this.

DOCT. II. *Great troubles and afflictions are in the lot of the people and children of God.*

But you will wonder that we took such a text or subject on this day; but as we essayed to pass it by, but could not get liberty, so we think that many of the people of God are come to this pass.

I say, outward afflictions are the lot of the godly; for "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Some have troubles on their bodies, some upon their names, some upon their goods, &c. But why is it so with Zion?

1. The first reason for this is, because it is to scour off the rust, so to speak, of their armour, that it may be put to use or practice. Sometimes when a man doth not his duty to God, then He lays trouble one way or another upon him to stir him up to his duty. He will suffer this man's character to be tossed as a foot-ball up and down the country, and



by that means will set the man upon working. "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed." Acquainted with troubles, people grow more patient; they will bear with a wrong now, that they could not have endured or borne with before.

2. A second reason is, that they may know that the full enjoyment of their peace is not on this side the grave. For when they begin, as it were, to lay in a stock for themselves to live peaceably upon, then he cuts the sinews of their expectations. That which they leaned unto fails, so that they can find no comfort in it. But says the apostle, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city."

3. The third reason why God lays troubles upon His people is, that the rent of these troubles may be paid unto Him. There are a great number of outward strokes that He lays upon the men of the world, and they never acknowledge God in or for them; and therefore He lays them upon Zion, that He may get the tribute of them from her. He will have His people declare what they can pay to Him out of any year, accident, or the like. He will have them give a proof before the world what may be made of that which the world can make nothing of. And, we dare say, that if people knew this, they would walk more sure, more safely, in and under troubles. Pay thy dues then, O man, or woman, before the world. "I will pay my vows now, in presence of all his people."

Now the Lord out of His absolute power and sovereignty will lay the plague of pestilence on some of His people, that the world may see that they can believe, hope, and rejoice in such a condition, and pay the due thereof unto God. The world cannot do it, and therefore you of Zion shall get them laid upon you. "We have been in pain; we have been

with child.”

The trouble is as that of a woman with child; that is, great trouble in itself; but the thoughts of being a mother to a child mitigates the pain unto her. Hence,

DOCT. III. *That outward trouble is grievous in itself.*

Therefore it reproves these who may be saying, “Oh that I had some cross, I would wait better upon my duty.” But fools, I say, that trouble is altogether grievous in itself; it is as a woman with child in pain to be delivered. It is true, the man is blessed that gets the right and satisfied use of it. “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law.” But without teaching of His law, trouble is an impediment, and hindrance unto many. I say, a cross laid on you, if ye get not the sanctified use of it, will bring one trouble after another daily, as so many strangers that will hold you so busy, that ye shall not have time or leisure for prayer to God. Therefore let none of the people of the Lord, now approach unto His table, with these thoughts in their hearts. For crosses of themselves are an enemy to godliness. For instance, some men will have a bad wife, and some women a bad husband; some bad children, and these troubles occasion new ones, so that they are in pain to be delivered, and yet oftentimes bring forth nothing but wind. And troubles are grievous,

1. Because the Lord hath hidden, as is were, His face; and that makes it troublesome. For it is impossible for one to be much subdued with any affliction, if he have the Lord’s countenances. But when He hides His face, then trouble becomes more grievous. “Thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled.” Now we would wish, that those who have trouble, and from whom the Lord hath hid His face, would pray unto God, that He would, as it were, draw the curtain, and that would make every trouble sweet and comfortable

unto them.

2. A second reason why trouble becomes grievous is, because ye have not a clear conscience, but have challenges along with the cross; and then the least cross hath the sting in it. For if I am not consumed with guilt lying upon my conscience, then I can plead with God more cheerfully.

3. The third reason why your troubles become grievous to you is, that when ye see these things come to pass that ye proposed unto yourselves, yet have not got that in them which ye expected. This brings forth wind, and makes your trouble grievous unto you. For example, a man that, perhaps, hath a bad wife takes comfort in this: he thinks, "I shall have good children, and I shall have honour of them;" but God makes the children crosses to him as well as the wife; and thus what he laid down as his ground of comfort, brings forth wind. I will tell you what makes it grievous to you; it is because you limit the way of getting your cross loosed. But, I say, resolve to wait; and depend upon God until He deliver you, although it should be till your last breath.

4. The fourth reason that makes your cross grievous unto you, is because ye will not bear one day's cross alone; as if the cross ye have were not enough, ye cut and carve out crosses unto yourselves. Ye think, "What if this and that shall be, then I must be still worse and worse." Thus the man is vexed with his own vain thoughts. "This and that will come," says he, "and then I shall be ashamed—then I and my house will be ruined." "But is not every day sufficient for the evil thereof," says Christ. And can He not send as much strength with the cross, as shall make you bear it. These sad thoughts of the cross make it become exceeding heavy.

USE. Now for the use. Anyone who is thinking it shall be

thus and thus, and whose time is taken up with these vexing thoughts of crosses, ye should live in a constant dependence upon God, and on bills of exchange. One cross shall furnish you with as much as will carry you on to another; and thus ye shall be carried still from one to another, if ye live by a constant dependence on God. This kind of life will keep His name great in your estimation. "God is our refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble." I wish that the Lord's people, before they now go to His table, would resolve upon this, to live henceforth, as it were, on bills of exchange, and trust all unto God. Oh! that all God's afflicted people would do this!

5. The fifth reason is, Ye will not yield to the cross, when it lays hold of you. Ye know when a beast frets and takes ill with the yoke, then the yoke becomes more grievous and irksome to it than it would be if it took well with it. So when He says you shall bear it, you say ye will not bear it. But you should say, "I see Thou art designed to cross me such and such ways; and now from henceforth I desire that I may receive strength to bear them." He allows you all means to hold off the cross; but when it comes ye should resolve to bear it. For if ye say, that "at such a time crosses shall not come in my way;" then they shall undoubtedly come in your way. As when the Lord sent a message to the Moabites, saying, "Let my people go through your land, and they shall take nothing from you." Say they, "They shall not get leave to pass through." "But," says the Lord, "they shall go through it, and to your cost too. Let my rod pass by you," says God; but ye say, ye will not have it come your way; and when it comes, ye lay the blame on this person, and that person. But from henceforth never own the creature for thy party, but take God for thy party, and say it is good reason that it should be so and so. Welcome the cross.

"We have been with child; we have been in pain; we have,

as it were, brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.” There is a term, when their pain comes to a height, and they expect to be delivered; but their hopes are frustrated.

DOCT. IV. *That sometimes the troubles of the people and children of God come to a height; and then they presently expect an outgate, and they bring forth nothing but, as it were, wind.*

Now in this, it is Satan’s way to make them hope on wrong grounds; for then he knows, that when they are thus beguiled, it is a hundred to one if they be not made to question all the work of God within them. Now we shall show you some of these false grounds, whereupon he makes you hope. And,

1. When ye see a sin which ye saw not before, oh ye think “Surely this has been the sin for which He hath contended with me. Now since He has let me see it, He will forthwith deliver me.” And dost thou think He will deliver thee for that? Hath He not enough of reasons besides for contending with thee, although thou beholdest them not.

2. The second ground whereupon ye hope is, That He shall deliver you, because you have taken on a new duty, or engagement to duty.

3. The creature hopes for an outgate, when it seems to have attained to any measure of submission under the cross. But do not hope upon that ground; for that is but a weak ground or evidence for you to hope upon.

4. The fourth false ground is, that He makes them hope when they seem to have a promise of deliverance. But I say, take heed how ye understand the promise, for, I say, ye are

not bound to believe any promise, but that which is necessary for salvation. But ye may believe in general, "that all his paths are mercy and truth unto you." Indeed, I grant that we may believe a promise for such a particular thing, if the Spirit of God so bear it in upon us, that we are engaged to believe it.

5. The fifth ground whereupon your hopes are wrong, is, that when ye come to such a height of distress, ye think, surely He will now either destroy or deliver you. But ye are mistaken; for He may bring you to the door, when ye think your troubles are at a height, and, as it were, let you get the air; and even put you back into your prison, and shut the door upon you again. Therefore, I say, limit not the grounds of your deliverance; for if ye lay down a ground, and hope upon that ground, and when it is frustrated, it is a thousand to one if ye do not question all your salvation to-morrow. Therefore lay down no such grounds; for He that knows all things, can He not take a time to work when it shall be most conducive to His own glory and your good?

Now all that entertain these false hopes shall be disappointed. We wish ye would not lay down any ground whereupon ye should hope for present deliverance. But let every one of you say, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." And let all who are under trouble, apply unto themselves the two last verses of the chapter where my text lies; "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

But the words may be taken in another sense here. There is another conception that the daughters of Zion may have, and that is a conception of faith. And here,

1. We shall show you how there is such a conception.
2. How this conception comes to a height. And,

I. Of a false conception. Ye that have this false conception, we ask you these questions:

1. The first is, how and when did ye conceive? Ye may say, that ye know the time; and yet by your conversation, I know ye have not conceived.

2. Thou sayest, thou hast conceived, and yet the evils of thy nature are still breaking out. Now when I see a man that says he hath conceived, and yet his evil nature is allowed in breaking out daily, I say, there is not so much as even a false conception in that person.

3. The third question we think pertinent to ask is, What fellowship or discourses have ye about the new birth? If thou hast no discourse about them that are regenerate, and the marks of regeneration; and if thou desirest not to be amongst those that are born again, it is but a false conception that thou hast, and not a true and genuine one.

4. The fourth question is, Hast thou any longing desires after this and that spiritual good? All that have conceived graciously, do still long for some new things; and they long "for the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby."

5. Thou that sayest thou hast conceived, if thy conception have not stirrings, thou hast but a false conception. I think nothing of a man's having a stirring sometimes at a preaching. It is not a scriptural conception that hath not these marks. When there is a rich reward to be given to religion;

as when there were gifts to be given to the Jews, many called themselves so that were not Jews. There was a stirring among them. So there is a stirring when Christ hath a great day in His sanctuary; when He is, as it were, dropping myrrh amongst His people. Again, there is a stirring in this man, and that, when the Lord is dealing about great strokes. "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and enquired early after God."

And then there is a stirring, when there are great out-breakings. Then the man's conscience flies in his face, and he hath a great stir within him. Yet, I say, the man that hath but these, hath but a false conception, and shall bring forth wind. If thou trust to such a conception, thou wilt break thy neck by approaching unto these holy things in the sacramental ordinance, however thou prayest, think that thou bringest forth something.

II. We come to the true conception; and we shall show you how it comes to a height, and thinks to be delivered, and yet brings forth the wind. Now,

1st, The first and great doubt thou hast is, that it was not a proper means that first set thee on foot. Thou sayest, "It was not the sight of my sin and transgression, and therefore I bring forth but wind." What was it then? "Why, it was a cross or affliction," say ye, "that first set me on work; therefore I bring forth but vanity." But that is bad reasoning. As if a man going about a base errand should find a purse of gold by the way; but he says, "I will not take the gold, because I came not to seek gold; but when I come to seek gold, then I will take it." Everyone sees the folly of such reasoning. Now that we speak of that which first set you on work, ye say it was a cross; we say, it is not the unsounder for that circumstance. With regard to most of those who came unto Christ in the days of His flesh, it was some outward trouble that made them come. Some came,



as it were, to buy a needle. "But stay," said He, "I will tell you that there is not a whole shirt on your back." In this way He made many a bargain with poor fools. Some came there that did not so much as know that He was the true Messiah; and yet they were brought to say, "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" And He says, "Come and see." And says He, "Ye shall bear testimony of me before the world. I shall give you enough." What is that to you? What set you on work, if ye be set on work? You believe the Master is speaking to you, and take it as from God, and hide your faces when ye hear this told you; but you need not do so; for it is a true conception, although ye have these doubts about it.

2ndly, A second question, or doubt, that ye may have about the soundness of your conception is, "I had no such pain as I conceive some have had in their conception; and therefore I think mine is not a true one." As for that that ye say, that ye have not been so damped with the works of the law as others, ye must know that the Lord is an absolute sovereign, and He works as He will. It is true that some that have the work of God within them can tell the very hour of conversion; but it is also true that there are others that cannot tell it, and yet have the work of God in them. For which cause we shall give some rules whereby ye may know whether ye have the work of God within you.

1. Whether or not didst thou see so much villainy and uncleanness, even in thy holy things, as made thee flee unto the Mediator and refuge set before thee. Then the Lord allows strong consolation to all those who flee unto the refuge set before them, or have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them.

2. Whether or not didst thou see so much of the covenant of free grace as to make thee wonder at it, and say, "I see as much in free grace as can pardon the greatest sinner that

ever was." Unto the new man all things are pure. Look if thou hast got such a view of justification as makes thee fear Him—"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord." And thou art afraid to offend Him in anything. We use to say, "Burnt children dread the fire." Now this is all ye have to object against your conception. Ye say, "Seeing it is true, why then am I not established and delivered?" I say, for this reason, that ye walk upon false grounds. And,

(1.) The first false ground whereon ye walk is, That ye will not believe as long as ye see an outbreking in yourselves, or as long as ye see an infirmity. So that if ye were once healed, ye would believe and come to Christ. But, I say, whether ye be healed or not, ye are bound to believe; and ye shall never get these evils mortified until you come to Christ.

(2.) A second false ground wherein ye walk is, that ye say "Such are some of the marks of the child of God; but I cannot believe that these are stirring in me, because I cannot get all the marks of the child of God. Therefore I am not of that number." "But shall the ear say, Because I am not the eye, therefore I am not of the body." When thou dost get nineteen promises that thou mayest lay hold upon, yet thou wilt not believe because thou canst not lay hold upon the twentieth; that is to give God the lie nineteen times.

(3.) The third false ground is, "Because," say ye, "I have not the condition of that promise, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' therefore I will not come." But, if none should come but those who have the condition of that promise, of what use are all the promises in the Bible? For if none should come but those who have the condition of such a promise, there needed be no more promises in all the Bible. But because some have got the condition of one promise, and some that of another<sup>a</sup>—"Whosoever will, let him come and take of

the water of life freely” —they are free. If you get a grip of any promise, take it under the pain of condemnation. Now these are some of the reasons why ye are not established.

Now would ye know when the conception comes to a height? When a great stroke is coming on, and it sees hell as it were beside it, then it stirs to be at the Mediator. At other times it will be silent. Sometimes, when it comes to a height, there is much of the power of God seen. When the person is walking through the sanctuary, then it begins to stir like John the Baptist, who as soon as he heard Mary’s voice leaped in his mother’s womb; so the true conception begins to stir when there is a day of Christ’s presence in the sanctuary. Another time is when it receives a hurt—when there is some sin committed, then it strikes with hands and feet, and says, “Either take Christ now, or never.” When threatenings come forth, then it resolves that it must set about believing. Another time is just before it be delivered. Now we may assign these three reasons as the causes that make persons bring forth the wind, and hinder them from being established in believing: (1.) There is somewhat in God’s part, as an act of justice, that “because ye delighted not to believe, and to retain the knowledge of God in your hearts, therefore he hath given you up to strong delusions to believe a lie.” (2.) A second way in which it comes from God is, as it is an act of His wisdom. And (3.) As it is an act of His absolute sovereignty. He would have the creature give up all claims to Him. As long as it will not believe, it shall never be established; otherwise, it comes from Satan’s false way of reasoning with them.

1st, He reasons from wrong expounded Scriptures. But take no expositions but what agree with the analogy of faith and the grounds of religion.

2ndly, He reasons from sundry ways of providence. But I am not bound to these, for “no man knows love or hatred

by all that is before him.”

3rdly, He reasons from a part to the whole. “Thou canst not deny,” says he, “that thou hast hypocrisy, then thou art altogether a hypocrite.” But, Satan, this is groundless and foolish logic.

4thly, He reasons from one time to all times. Says he, “Ye dare not say that ever ye had love to God or to His people, therefore ye shall never have it.” And then he reasons from breach of promise. Says he, “Thou hast promised to Him many a time, and hast still broken thy promises. If thou shouldst do so to any like thyself, would he ever believe thee again.” That is bad reasoning, for it is to bring God unto the level of the creature. “But as far as the heavens are above the earth, so far are my thoughts above your thoughts, saith the Lord.” And then he reasons from one saint to another—“Thou canst not find another saint in thy case.” As Job’s friend said unto him, “Unto which of the saints wilt thou turn?” But I am not bound to find another in my condition, if my condition be like a scriptural one. Then he will propose an objection, and because ye cannot answer it, therefore he says it is unanswerable. But he lies in this too. And then he reasons from what is done to what is to do. “Because,” says he, “ye have not done such and such things, therefore ye shall never do it.” I say this too is false reasoning.

But, upon the whole, take his reasons and throw them back upon himself. Go to Christ and desire Him to teach you how to answer them. But we add no more.

---

Footnotes:

1. This sermon was preached immediately before the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Fenwick.

2. As the Lord has been graciously pleased to favour us with an absolutely free grant of Christ, and of eternal life in Him, so He has condescended to exhibit this grant in a wonderful variety of promises suitable to the variety of our cases. "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Hence these words, "Some have got the condition of one promise, some that of another," must be understood agreeably to the nature of the gospel promise, as if it had been said, "The Lord has given us not one but many great and precious promises, so that though a person does not see one of them to be suitable to his case, he may see another to be so."

## SERMON IX.<sup>1</sup>

*“Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hosts,  
be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be  
confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.”*

Psalm 69:6

THERE are many mysteries in the world, amongst which these five following are none of the least:

1st, Who are those who are called “the Godly Party” in the world? This is a great mystery.

2ndly, How comes it about that this party, called “the Godly Party,” cleaves so closely together? It is likewise a mystery that they are so strongly united to one another.

3rdly, The variety of lots in this one party. Though they are so closely united together, yet they are led to heaven in different ways. Here is a great mystery.

4thly, What the exercises of that party are, when they are at the worst, is likewise a mystery.

5thly, How they come to be guided and preserved in composure in their exercise, amidst all troubles, is another mystery.

Now these five things, I conceive, are contained in the text; and I perceive that there are five doctrines that will natively arise from them.

DOCT. I. *The godly party are such as wait upon the Lord.*

Make of them what ye will, this is the true description of them. They are so described, “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee.”

In this distinction of them, ye may take up these things following, that hold out clearly what they are:

1. It says that their expectations terminate upon God; their thoughts are conversant about an invisible God. In Psalm 39, when David has told us that every man walks in a vain show, he says (verse 7), “And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.”

2. It says that whatever that party be, their stock is in hope, and not in their hand; they are but waiting; they are but just looking for it; they have not as yet overtaken it. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” or sense.

3. It says they are a party devoted unto the service and attendance of the God of heaven; they are waiting upon God; their eyes are fixed upon Him; and they look to what is His will, and to what He commands, and not to what man wills or commands. Many wait upon poor masters, if it were known; but the godly party wait upon God, and what He commands them.

4. They are a party that have committed their lot, and all the events thereof, unto the God of heaven. They are waiting on Him, and are content that their sentence should come forth from Him. “Let my sentence come forth from thy presence.”

5. It implies an inclination to wait, and hope for good from God’s hand. He only is a godly man who is actuated by the Spirit that inclines him to mercy’s side of the question.

USE. For use, try yourselves by these things, whether or not ye are waiting on God? Whether or not does your expectation terminate on God only? Whether or not are ye devoted unto His service? Do ye commit all events to God? Are ye content that your sentence come forth from before Him?

Look if your heart inclines you to mercy's side of the question, and to look for good from God's hand? Can you say these things? There is no man in a natural state that can say so, or plead these things.

DOCT. II. *There is a strange unity and communion among the godly.*

There is a strong bond of union amongst them. The Psalmist here supposes that all the godly will have their eye upon him, and he is afraid that he may carry not aright before them. "Jerusalem is builded as a city, that is compact together." But here I shall show you:

1. Some things wherein they are mostly united.
2. What makes them to be so closely united in one body.
3. What are the consequences that natively flow from these.

Now,

I. For the first of these. They are,

1. A party that are one in heart. They have all one heart given them. It is a promise to all the godly, that they shall have one heart; that is, the new heart which is given to them all.

2. They are one as to their interest. Their first aim is, that the Lord Jesus Christ may reign and be great in the world, and that His kingdom may prosper; and then that they may be found in Him on that day, and in His righteousness. That is their interest, in which they are all one. If they were all asked, "What is your interest?" this would be their answer: "Let Christ reign, and be great; and let us be found in Him."



3. They are all one as to their design and endeavours. Their design is to be like unto Him, and to be conformed to His blessed will and command. This is the one way that is promised unto them all. "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear thee for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."

4. They are all one as to their outward profession in the world. In the primitive times it was so. In the days of the apostles they had all things common. There was a communion of goods, or of worldly substance amongst them.

5. They have all one lot, which is, to be persecuted by the seed of the serpent. Whoever he be that is not in some cases a sufferer with them, he has reason to suspect his state, since it is the lot of all the seed of the woman to be persecuted by the seed of the serpent.

II. Now would ye know why they are all so completely united in everything.

1. They are all cast in one mould of the Divine decree, that is from everlasting.

2. They are all actuated by one spirit; therefore they must be one. This spirit is promised to them all to cause them to walk in His ways. They are all actuated by this one spirit. Hence the spirituality of their duties.

3. They are all designed for one end, that is, full conformity to God, and the immediate enjoyment of Him to all eternity, in so far as they are capable of enjoying Him. Since they are cast in one mould from everlasting, and actuated by one spirit, and designed for one end, then how can they but be one? Which brings me,

III. To what are the consequences that natively follow from this oneness of heart and mind. And,

1. A unity in exercises follows on it, amongst all the people of God. They are all exercised about some spiritual thing. They are all exercised about a corrupt heart, that is disobedient in the matters of God and will not abide in His way. They are all exercised about the threatenings of God in Scripture; such as that, "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully."

2. They are one as to temptation. One temptation they are all assaulted with is, whether or not there is a reality in religion and godliness; and whether there is a God above that rules all things on the earth below, since He lets all things go through one another in such a manner, and one man devours another, as the fishes of the sea. In this, and some other things, I would say, they have a oneness in respect of temptations. Satan loves to assault a man with that temptation whereby he prevails oftenest or most readily over him. But,

3. This follows on it: They are one in respect of the same precious truths that they believe in and feed upon. They have the same *michtams*, or golden Scriptures. They have the same great and precious promises. Was not that a good word that you and many love well? "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure." Was not this a word ye loved well? "I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely;" and that word, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

4. There natively follows on it a mutual sympathy in one another's case and condition. They stand and fall together. When one of them is glad, all of them rejoice. They joy and sorrow together. The wicked are not so. It is true, they are all one in evil. They are all one in the crucifying of Christ. Herod and Pilate were all one in this. They are all one

about a visible God; but the other is all one about an invisible God. The one goes upward; the other goes downward.

USE. Try yourselves by this, how it answers your condition. Can you say, ye are all one with the people of God in these things. If ye be one with them in these things; think it not strange if ye be one with them in persecution, and the cross of Christ also. If ye be not content to take that lot with them, then you want one special point of your character. Wherefore let me obtest all the godly to be more and more one. Let us be one, come of us what will. I would use these arguments with you, to make you study this oneness.

1. It is your strength.

2. I hope it has been your happiness. For some years past, we walked together in one profession. Therefore let us be one, seeing we have walked together as one these many years past. Therefore I would obtest and charge you to be still of one heart, and of one mind.

3. This feast that we have been at, says, that we are all one. We have all sealed it this day, and taken our sacrament on it. The unity of communicants is the report of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

4. I believe if ye were all posed on it, ye would own you had no great temptation to join with any other party in the world. What can be your temptation to be one with another party Therefore be one amongst yourselves.

And I shall only add—I put this question home to everyone of you—Whether the Scriptures do not speak most favourably of the godly party? For as low as they are in the world, the Scripture speaks much to their commendation. You scarcely open your Bible, but you find it smile upon God's people, and frown upon their adversaries. Is it not of great advantage then, to be of the godly party?

DOCT. III. *Although this party be most singularly knit together, yet it pleaseth their Master to exhibit some of them, as on a stage for Himself, more singularly than others.*

Thus it was with these men here. He does so ordinarily in one of these three cases.

1. He exhibits some of them singularly with regard to the temptations to sin they are assaulted with. Some of them have ugly messengers of Satan, impudent devils haunting them. Again, others have not such gross things following them, but only sins of infirmity.

2. There are some of them shown, as it were, upon the stage of their personal afflictions and sufferings. Justice is still pursuing your house or family, sometimes taking away the wife, sometimes the husband, and sometimes taking away the children. Job stands as a pattern for us of all this.

3. He uses to make spectacles of some of His people in their public trials, for the cause of Jesus Christ. He exhibits some of them singularly, in order to the trial of the cross of Christ. Paul was so; "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep." The reasons of this dispensation are various. The Lord brings some of His people, as it were, on a theatre more than others.

(1.) Not because there is more sin in one, than in another.

(2.) Neither is it out of less respect to some, that He suffers devils to haunt and tempt them more than others. Nor,

(3.) Is it a greater stock of habitual grace that makes Him exhibit some as bearing the cross of Christ more singularly than others.

But the reason is, The absolute sovereignty of God, who will do with any of His people as He pleaseth; and that His wisdom and strength may the more illustriously appear in bearing them up under all their trials.

USE. Let never one of you, great or small, dream that ye may not be exhibited, as on a theatre, in one or all of these three ways, and mistake not the reasons why it is so.

DOCT. IV. *The thing that vexes the people of God, when at the worst, is, lest they should be a shame, or an affront to all the rest of the godly, by disowning the Lord's way.* "Let none that wait upon thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake."

This says, that unless the carriage and deportment of the godly man redounds to the comfort of all the rest of the godly, through his being enabled honestly to bear up when he is any way called out to a public appearance for God, it some way tends to the discredit of all the godly. Since this is the case, when they slip aside or carry not aright, since they are all in hazard of doing so, it should be matter of affecting and afflicting exercise lest they do so. Fellow professors are ashamed of the person that carries not aright; they are ashamed that ever they should have been in company or fellowship with him; they are ashamed that ever such a person should have owned such a cause, and that ever such a thing should have befallen a professor of such a cause; and, besides, they are weakened by him in their hopes of through-bearing for themselves.

Again, they are in hazard of being a discredit to all the godly, because, say they, it seems the Lord has granted no peremptory promise, as to the manner of their through-bearing, and corruption enough remains in them still to overturn all their stock of grace, if they get not present renewed influences.

USE. All of you know how many ways ye are in hazard of being a discredit to the cause and to the rest of the godly, by yielding to temptations after this communion. And we will be ashamed of you if any of you fall into drunkenness and other vices after you have been at this communion. Oh, think on it, that ye are in hazard of being a disgrace to all the honest folk that know you, if ye fall so, and wrong the work and cause of God!

DOCT. V. *The way to secure every one of God's people is, to improve and make use of God, as He has revealed Himself, according all the cases and conditions wherein they are in hazard of being a discredit to all the godly.*

And wouldst thou improve this art, thou who art dogged with some vile temptation? Hast thou reason to fear that thou mayest be a discredit to the godly? Then improve the Lord as He has held out Himself in a most answerable way to your case and condition. Dost thou fear that thou mayest wrong the cause of God and be a discredit to His people, thou art so weak and ready to fall? Then, look unto the Lord of hosts, who is able to bear weak ones through, even such as thou art. But when I bid you improve Him, then I allow you to look unto the glorious titles that He takes to Himself, that are most consonant and agreeable to your case and condition. Cleave unto Him; hang on Him for the performance of the promises by faith; wrestle with Him by prayer to make out these promises to you. "Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel." This is the way to carry fair under every temptation; and may the Lord Himself help and enable you to do so. Amen.

---

Footnotes:

1. This sermon seems to have been preached immediately after the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

## SERMON X.<sup>1</sup>

*“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”*

Isaiah 55:1-2

THERE is in this chapter a proclaimed market, such as was never heard of, even the most pleasant, most substantial, and most glorious market that ever was; the most glorious wares; the most precious wares; the dearest bought and cheapest sold that ever any wares were. Here we have the most free and lawful invitation to all sorts of persons to come and have them. They shall get them and pay nothing for them. Now there is in this chapter

1st, An invitation to all persons in all places, to come and receive Jesus Christ, the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Prince of peace, who is even among our hands in the gospel, wherein He manifests Himself. Now that He offers Himself, take Him, and you are welcome to Him. Any person who hath anything ado with Him, come; for He is now seeking employment to be given Him. He hath balms for all wounds, salves for all sores, and cures for all sorts of diseases. And,

2ndly, There are some objections against this coming, and these He solves, and uses various motives and invitations to encourage souls to come unto Him and buy. Such are the following:

1. The market is free. He is seeking nothing from you, but hath all glorious things to give you. Therefore, ye are fools if ye will not come and take when ye have nothing to give.



2. If ye will not come, your well-doing is over. Your doom is, “Depart for ever;” and do what ye can, ye shall not prosper, nor get any soul-satisfaction any other way. And,

3. If ye will come, ye need not be afraid of wrath and justice. Ye shall not have that to say that ye dare not come for fear He execute justice upon you. The Father took Christ Jesus to be your Cautioner or Surety. Christ shall stand for you and manage in your room or stead. He will manage all that concerns you, both with regard to the guilt and the pollution of sin; for the punishment of sin, if ye will but accept of Him to be your Cautioner or Surety, He shall answer for all your wrongs, as if they had been done in His own person, and He shall stand for them, and ye shall go free. And,

4. Ye may think it a great honour and prerogative that ever the like of you is allowed to come near Christ, instead of saying ye will not come unto Him. For God hath a mind to make Him unspeakably honourable in His kingdom, think ye of Him what ye will. For many shall come out of all kindreds, kingdoms, and nations, like flocks of sheep, and shall cast down their crowns at His footstool, even those that have never yet heard of Him; and what a shame will it be for you to be the last of all in paying your respects to Him?

5. If ye will not come and close with Him now in the offers of the gospel, wherein He is offered unto you, take care that ye sit not your time of the market; for there is but a set time of His offers, wherein He will be found of you.

But there are two formidable objections, which are these:

Objection 1. We are so abominable, and have provoked God so often, that we think it cannot stand with His justice to accept of such traitors, though we should come. But God

answers, "Away with such chat; for my thoughts are not like your thoughts, saith the Lord; they are as far above them as the heavens are above the earth."

Objection 2. Say some, "Ye may promise us fair words enough; but in the mean time, we get nothing in our hands, but bare words." "That is true," says God, "but I think My word effectual enough to perform anything I can promise; for I am both powerful enough, and willing enough to perform it. Besides My word must prove itself effectual, for it must be for a name, and for a praise unto Me in all generations." And then He hints at the deliverance of the people of the Jews from their bondage. So much for the meaning of this chapter. We now return, to make some improvement of it in the way of comparing it with the former chapter, in which ye heard many a precious promise made to the Church and her children. And now God will have them apply and bring home all these to their own souls, in closing with Christ; wherein we observe,

That whatever promise was made to the Church, all the members of it should believe, and apply them to themselves in the way of closing with Christ. And now we enter upon the words, wherein there are:

1. The King's proclamation making way for our coming to the market, in the words, "Ho, every one."
2. A public intimation of the goods that are to be had at this market, and these are "water," "wine," and "milk."
3. The manner in which these goods are to be viewed.
4. The duty of the party to come, and a dehoration from any other way in these words, "Wherefore do ye spend your labour for that which is nought?"

5. An exclusion from salvation in any other way than by coming unto Christ, and receiving Him as He offereth Himself in the gospel.

I return,

I. To the first, which is the proclamation openly made for coming unto Christ. "Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Now Christ is crying this day, who will come unto Him? He is crying to deaf folk who never heard, "Will ye hear, and believe the word preached? I will make you see, ye blind folk, who are running upon imminent hazard, Ho! are there any folk who have wounds to heal? here is balm for you. Is there any man here who desires to be made clean? here is water to cleanse you. Is there any who have sores to heal? come, here is salve for you. Are there any fractured bones amongst you? here is healing for you. Are there any hard hearts amongst you? here is repentance for you. Are there any confused with darkness amongst you? come, here is light for you. Do any desire to be taught? here is teaching for you. Do you desire to be made friends with God? here is reconciliation for you. Would any be borne up under their crosses? here is strength for them. Is there any person who judges himself, though they suppose they are beguiling themselves? here is counsel for you. Come unto me and I will tell you where you are, and what ye are doing." But oh! what is the matter that we have to say unto you, that few of you will come to Christ, though ye know yourselves to be far from Him? The reason why a proclamation must be made before we come to this market, is,

1. That the King may declare publicly what goodwill He bears to the commonwealth of Israel. He would much rather have folk to be converted and live, than die and perish.

2. He makes it public, that He may evidence His power and sovereignty over all things.

3. He makes it public, that the mouth of all objectors to the contrary may be stopped.

4. That all his enemies may come to a rendezvous and see whether they are able to stop Him.

5. He proclaims it publicly, that all may know that the market has but a set time, wherein Jesus Christ is offered to souls; and therefore they should bestir themselves in the time of the market. Go not away, then, ere ye get the wares secured to yourselves, seeing the great God of heaven has made an open proclamation for all sorts of persons to come to Christ. Let no person be so foolish as to despise the King's proclamation.

He makes an open proclamation, that you may know that there is a reality in closing with Christ in the Gospel. Consider this, all ye who never knew anything of your guilt, nor had the sense of it, nor had ever had any debate about your closing with Christ for your recovery out of your lost state and condition. I say, such are to look upon themselves as the most vile and the maddest creatures that ever were known. They even savour of the earth. Any person that is truly acquainted with the exercises of closing with Christ, and dare say that they have Him for their portion, their countenance shall be made to shine in heavenly glory. As to any person who supposes he has any hatred of his sins, and yet, through a sense of guilt, dares not venture upon closing with Christ, I say, as long as he stands on this side of Christ, he shall have no true peace of mind.

Now we shall give you some motives that we think may put you upon a peremptory closing with Christ. And consider:

1. That these offers are threatened to be removed. God knows how long you may have them. Now, while you have your day of the Gospel, improve and make use of Christ for your salvation, by closing your interest with Him.

2. Though it should please Him to continue the same day of the standing of the Gospel, it will not stand long without a storm and many a winter blast blowing against it and its professors. Since the winter is approaching, ye have need to look that your clothes be provided for you, lest ye go with the storms and dint of the weather.

3. And is not God now plaguing all the land? We conceive it is for no other reason but because people will not flee from their idols, and cleave to Christ, and close with Him for their alone portion. But,

II. We come to the wares of this market, and these are of three sorts: (1) Water, (2) wine, (3) milk.

With regard to water, He is called “the water of life;” with regard to wine, the spouse compares Him to “flagons of wine;” and with regard to milk, He bids His people suck out the “sincere milk of the word (which is Himself), that they may grow thereby.” The reasons will be taken from the properties of each of these, which we shall consider separately for your better understanding of the point. And,

Firstly, (1.) Water, ye know, is good for washing and cleaning away of all filthiness. (2.) Water is good for the softening of any hard thing. (3.) Water is good for refreshing, or quenching of thirst. (4.) Water is good for curing hot and fiery humours. All these properties are to be found in Christ. Art thou one of the most filthy creatures upon the earth? Then Christ is that fountain opened for washing away your sin and uncleanness. Is the wrath of God burning in thy conscience for thy sin and uncleanness? Then

Christ broke down the partition wall, and quenched justice and wrath, and became a curse for us. Hast thou an old hard heart, harder than anything thou ever sawest? I say, Christ can soften it, and pour out the spirit of repentance, and make one mourn for sin that never mourned for it before. Is thy conscience galled for sin that thou canst get no rest? Christ is a Prince for that end, to make peace in a soul that is out of peace. Hast thou a desire after Christ, and are all things nothing to thee for want of Him? Then come and venture upon Christ, and thou shalt be satisfied and filled with Him in such a manner that out of "thy belly shall flow living waters;" that is, thou shalt have full satisfaction in Him. Is thy case one of the most strange and wonderful in the world? Then Christ's name is also the Wonderful, Counsellor. Art thou afraid of the removal of the gospel, which would oblige thee to flee to the mountains, where thy soul would be famished for want of this water? Christ can be a little sanctuary, and preach to thee there Himself. "But I fear," says one, "for all that, I shall fall into some error or other for want of instruction." I say, Christ will feed thee, lead thee, and teach thee. "But," say you, "what will I have there to live upon, on the top of a bare mountain!" Why? Christ can feed thee there, according to His prophetic office? "But," say ye, "what if the gospel be not totally removed, but is tainted with some mixture that will prove poison to me?" I say, Christ will "lead thee by the way that thou shouldst go," even up unto His own bosom, which is the ocean from which the whole gospel flows, where thou shalt drink pure and clear water without any mixture at all. And if thou thinkest thou canst not get Him served there, He can write His law in thy inward parts, circumcise thy heart, and cause thee to serve Him.

Secondly, As for wine, ye know it is good for comforting a weak and heavy spirit. It is also good for reviving one that falls into fainting fits. It is likewise good for fitting a man for more than ordinary pieces of work. All these properties,

and more, are to be found in Christ. Then look what case thou hast to propose; there is still something in Christ to answer it. Is thy case a dead case? Then Christ revives the dead and dry bones of Zion. Art thou not only dead, but so very dead that thou art past hopes of recovery? Then Christ can say to these dry and withered bones, Live. Is thy strength quite gone? Then come to Christ, and He will be thy strength and portion for ever. Thinkest thou thyself one of the most needy creatures in the world? Then Christ is that noble plant of renown, that puts life, and holds life, in all His branches. Hast thou no strength to resist an enemy? Then say, "When I am weak, then am I strong in the Lord." Art thou oppressed and borne down with an enemy, and hast thou lost all strength to resist? Then they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, and make them to face their enemy again. Is all thy strength so far spent that thou art sighing and going backward? Then Christ is that green fir-tree that holds in the spark of life in all the branches that are withered. And as for growth; hast thou such a case that for all the pains that have been taken upon thee thou hast never grown anything better? Then Christ is the choice builder who makes all the stones of the house cement compactly together. Besides, He is that Sun of righteousness who arises with healing under His wings for all sorts of maladies and diseases, or kinds of diseases.

There are other reasons why Christ and all that believers have in Him, are compared to water, wine, and milk. And Christ represents Himself under these similitudes to hold out the variety of cures that are in Him, suited to the variety of diseases in His people.

Then, all polluted people, come away to Christ; He has cleansing for you. All that are languishing under diseases, come away; He has cleansing for you. Here is a cure for all your diseases; strength for all your weaknesses; comfort under all your crosses and trials; growth under all your

backwardness. He takes away the guilt of sin, and the filth of sin, and the punishment of it. He makes the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk and go forward. He feeds the hungry with good things, binds up the broken-hearted, and dandles them upon His knees, and tenderly lays them in His bosom. We will say no more of that ocean of fulness that is in Christ, but this, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard it," nor is tongue able to express the bottomless fulness that is to be had in Christ. Oh, that He were made use of and got employment at our hands! How much more cheerful in this case would many souls be than they are! There would not be so many complaints amongst you; but we think all would be stirring up one another to speak unto His commendation; and that would be a sweet and comfortable life for you.

III. We come to the manner in which the party is desired to come and accept of Christ in this market of free grace. And, First, They are desired to come that are thirsty.

Secondly, Those that have no money. These are the only objects of Christ's free offers. For thirsty folk, it is clear from the fore-cited text: "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And for those who have no money: "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed," Now,

1st, For the first of these, viz., the thirsty. I shall speak to so many sorts of them that are invited to come.

1. Some are afraid of hell, and thirst principally for heaven, that they may be kept in life. These, perhaps, have no thoughts of Christ. I say to those who are afraid of hell, and would gladly be at heaven, ye must come to Christ for that, for Christ hath both the keys of heaven and hell at



His side; it is He that must open heaven's gates, if ever ye get there. Therefore close with Christ for salvation, and ye need not be afraid that ye will not get heaven; but without Him heaven ye shall never see.

2. There is a sort that thirst principally after Christ; and give them all the world, they count it but loss and dung if they get not Christ. Give them evidences of their interest in Him, it will make up all their other losses. I say, I wot well ye should come and close with Christ; for He cries unto all, who have any desire after Him to come, and He will fulfil and satisfy all their desires. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

3. There is another sort that thirst after holiness; and these also are bidden come. But although this be good in itself, yet take care that ye thirst not more to be holy than to come unto Christ Himself, who must sanctify you, and make you holy by His Holy Spirit. And,

(1.) Beware of seeking holiness in order to make it a positive qualification, whereby ye may have it to say that ye have something in your hands to buy with, by which ye will spoil all the market; for the market is "without money, and without price."

(2.) I say, think ye ever to get the grace of holiness wrought within you until first ye venture your salvation on Christ, and take Him to be a righteousness unto you. Take Christ in the first place, and then seek holiness from Him. According to His own word, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Seek first righteousness, and then holiness. Ye would think him a foolish man that would look for apples on a tree that is not yet planted. So people are foolish to think that ever Christ will make one grow in holiness as long as they dare not venture their salvation upon Him.

How can ye believe He will make you holy, as long as ye cannot believe in Him, or trust your salvation unto Him. But,

(3.) In the third place, Think not that we discommend holiness, or those who are seeking after it. No, God forbid; “for without holiness, no man shall see God.” Our meaning here is, that people should think nothing of their holiness. For anything that they can do is but as “an unclean thing,” which needs mercy for the imperfection of it. However, they must be earnest in following after commanded duties, for fear of offending God; and the due honour of their Maker should be the reason of holy duties. And,

(4.) I say, if once ye were well interested in Christ for salvation, then He would put a principle of holiness within you that would not let you take a liberty to sin, and would make you so walk in duties, that for a thousand worlds ye durst not do such things as the multitude do, who know nothing of Christ by closing with Him. Know ye what the apostle Paul, with all his holiness, says? “I count all things but loss and dung, that I may win Christ.”

(5.) I say, every thought that puts Christ out of His place, is as much as to say, ye will shift for yourselves without Him. I say, that is even the conflict betwixt Christ and souls: they would still have something in themselves; and Christ will have all flesh as grass, still abasing themselves as nothing, and seeing there is a daily need of Him, and a daily hazard without Him.

4. A fourth sort that have a thirst, that lets them have no rest, and yet they are so stupid that they cannot tell what it is. But oh how glad would they be to have some person’s counsel, that could tell them the right way; and how ready would they be to do anything that would relieve them. I say, let such wait on Christ for counsel, and close with

Him, according to that word, “He that hath no light, and walks in darkness, and sees himself to be in that case, let him stay himself upon God, and come to Christ, and he shall give him light,” Seek light from Him who, I am certain, will not deceive you.

5. A fifth sort are those who have some desire after Christ, and yet spend their strength upon the world, and its vanities. I say, these may also come to Christ, and close with Him in the way of forsaking their idols. “Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, and I will have compassion upon thee, saith the Lord.”

2ndly, The second sort of people invited to come to this market, are those who have no money. And,

1. Is there any man that has no money in his purse, and yet knows not where to get any, let him come to this market, and close with Christ.

2. Those who have nothing in their purses, and yet know where to get it, but dare not come to take it, I say, here is your warrant to come holden out to you, subscribed and sealed with the King’s seal.

3. There are a sort of poor folk, poor indeed, while they know not that they are poor, but imagine that they are rich enough; they think that nothing is wanting to them. I say unto you, Atheists of this kind, if ye were once brought so far as to suspect yourselves, and were but afraid of beguiling yourselves, ye might make it an errand to come to Christ, and close with Him, that ye might get a better sight of yourselves, according to that third chapter of the Revelation before-cited. So that if thirsters, and those who have no money, are to be the only party at Christ’s banquet this day, and the only persons who are to taste of these fat things, then anyone that sees his need, and has any desire

of Christ and these things; and sees that he has nothing in himself to help him; and sees any worth in a Christ to do him good; let such a one come away to Him; here is your market. Here is a rich supply of all your wants.

We know that there will be some objections to this, proposed by some; but it will not be by those that are convinced they have no money. We know few that can boast of their duties or works at this time; we think all may be ashamed of their naughtiness. But we know of some that will say, that they are not of those who are thirsty, and therefore they should not come. Their objection will be this:

(1.) A thirsty man is pained and troubled under his thirst; but this I am not. I have neither pain nor thirst.

(2.) We say that a thirsty man is not only troubled, but is impatient under his thirst; but this I am not; I have neither trouble nor pain for want of Christ; neither am I seeking after Him, or at pains to find Him.

(3.) A thirsty man is not only pained, and gets no rest under thirst; but even so much pained that he cannot forget it. But it is not so with me; I have no trouble for want of Christ; nor am I in pain to get Him; and besides, any thought or desire I have is soon forgotten. And how can any person in this case be said to thirst for Christ, and be among those that should close with Him this day?

1st, In answer to this: Dare you say that Jesus Christ, in this text, excludes any person that has the least desire to be interested in Him? Here is a word for that. Boaz, who was a type of Christ, said to Ruth, "When thou art athirst, go unto the vessel and drink of that which the young men have drawn." So I say unto you, If ye have any desire after Christ, He is here offered unto you. Go, take Him, and

close with Him. "And any man who will come, let him come, and drink of the water of life freely." But who dare put another qualification upon their closing with Christ, than what He has set down here in His word?

2ndly, I say, ye must consider that everyone gets not a like degree of thirst after Christ. To some the King measures with larger measure; and to some with less, according to His absolute sovereignty. How dare you be so bold as to make any qualification necessary that He has not set down Himself? Dost thou see any need of closing with Him? Seest thou any need of the pardon of sin, or any need of strength to be borne through, or any diseases thou hast to be cured? Seest thou that thou art not able to make any help to thyself? and that thou canst not remedy thy case? Seest thou any merit in Christ? Come then, and close with Him for salvation, in order to be freed from the punishment of sin, and to be cured of all your diseases, and to have strength for all your weakness. For, think ye ever to get a constant dependence on Him, adherence to Him, hunger after Him, and thirsting for strength to cleave to Him, if ye close not with Him first for salvation? But,

3rdly, I say it may be ye have resolved upon it beforehand never to close with Him till He give you such a measure of holiness, and then ye would venture your soul's salvation on Him if invited to it. But when ye would think that Christ is bound to you by your holiness, and ye would think salvation, so to speak, to be out of Christ's common. And,

Lastly, I say that the text excludes none living, whether they have any good desires or not. If they have any need of Him, let them come, be what they will. If ye be so self-witted that ye will not come, stand your hazard. If you can provide for yourselves without Him, never come near Him. If ye will not come till ye get something in your hands to put you out of His common, then ye shall not come unto Him, for that

ye shall never get. And if ye remain as ignorant as stocks and stones of the knowledge of God, ye may not come unto His table; but if ye see your need of Christ, and are under the sense of sin, and behold anything in Him that will do you good, then ye may come forward to the table of the Lord, in the way of closing with Him as your Saviour, and receiving His wine and milk without money and without price.

---

Footnotes:

1. This sermon seems to have been preached immediately before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

## SERMON XI.<sup>1</sup>

*“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”*

Isaiah 55:1-2

WE spake,

1. Of the proclamation making way for our coming to this gospel market in the words, “Ho, every one.”
2. We spake of the intimation of the goods to be had in this market, which were “water,” “wine,” and “milk,” which hold forth Christ and all that is in Him.
3. We spake of the party that were invited to come and close with Jesus Christ. Now we come to speak,
4. Of the fourth particular in the method, which is to speak of our closing with Christ, which lies in these three things: (1.) Coming; (2.) Buying; and (3.) Eating.

All these hold forth people’s closing with Christ, and their receiving and embracing of Him.

Observe, that the soul’s right closing with Christ is a coming to Him, a buying and eating of Him, and an obeying of Him. Believing on Him is called coming. “Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” So that coming unto Him is a believing on Him, and

a closing with Him for salvation. And so is buying of Christ, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." And in like manner eating, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.... For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

The reason why a closing with Christ is compared to these things will be taken from the properties of them.

We will speak of the properties of each, and what each of them severally holds forth. And,

First, In a man's coming, ye know, there are three things.

1. He must come *from* such a place.
2. He must come *to* another place.
3. There must be some *certain way by which* he comes from the one place to another.

In like manner, in closing with Christ there must be,

1. A coming from the kingdom of darkness, where persons were ruled by the power of Satan, and the delight of sin. They must come from these principles that the multitude of the world walk by. They must come from their own self-righteousness, that once they thought to win heaven by. They must come from all the principles of their former walk and conversation. And they must come,

2. To a new King that they never had before. Their life must be a new life, wherein all things are new. So that it is a life hid with Christ in God, which is a mystery to the multitude of a dark world. They now see themselves blind fools that have need of daily teaching and direction, or else they would soon destroy themselves. They now see God to be infinitely wise in all He doth. They now see the principles of a vain world, by which they walked before, to be stark nought. They account any mercy they receive a free mercy,



if it were but a drink of cold water. They see all the power of hell and wicked men as nothing in respect of the Lord. They see God in Christ to be a holy God, and one that heals all sin. They see that there is nothing in themselves that can make any help for their salvation, because of their insensibility; but they see God unchangeable in His love, though He correct them many times for their sins. They see all these things in a world as what are with us to-day, and away to-morrow; and therefore they make light of them, and are loosed from them in their affections. But they see that the counsel of the Lord stands to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

3. For the way that He brings on souls to close with Christ, I say, He may have many ways for converting them. For example, some may be brought in by some heavy rod of affliction laid upon them; some by great and horrible checks of conscience; others may get, at first, a calm view of the love of God, but God's ordinary way is by the preaching of the gospel. If any have got good by this, they have these marks following, to know or discern it by,

As first, The Spirit of God, by the authority of the word, hath circumcised their heart; and made them greedily attend on every word preached; so that as soon as ever the minister speaks a word, they will be waiting for the next word, and still as they get it they will apply it and make it their own. And,

1. The first thing that the word, accompanied with the authority of the Spirit, does to them, is to discover the man's sin and guilt to him, and upon that discovery to make him apply all the cures and threatenings of the law unto himself, as particularly as if there were no more than he, so that he is bound hand and foot, like one condemned to the gibbet. He condemns himself as liable to the wrath of God, and to all the threatenings against sin contained in the Scriptures.

2. Upon this, the Spirit of God, in the word preached, discovers to the man One who is exhibited as a Surety for him. And then he is made willing to embrace the free offer of Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures. By these folk may try themselves, whether or not they have got any benefit by the preaching of the gospel and by the free offers of Jesus Christ. I say, Was ever any of you determined greedily to take heed to the preaching of the word till it discovered to you your lost state and condition, and upon that made you apply every curse in the Bible as belonging to you in particular; so that ye were thereby bound hand and foot, not knowing of any help ye could make to yourselves, but on the contrary, obliged in everything to condemn yourselves? And after that, Was there any cautioner or surety discovered unto you? And were you made with gladness to embrace Jesus Christ in the offers of the gospel, according to Scripture promises?

Secondly, In buying, there is something that resembles a closing with Christ.

1. There must be in buying a sight of some valuable goods.
2. Ye must see that these goods are not your own.
3. Ye must see them to be such commodities as ye stand in need of, otherwise ye will not buy them at all.
4. Ye must commune with the merchant about, the price of the goods, and agree with him the best way ye can, to get them out of his hand.

And, in like manner, I say, all these must be in a closing with Christ.

1. There must be an apprehension of the worth of Jesus Christ.
2. There must be also a conviction of your want of

Christ, otherwise ye will never seek after Him.

3. You must also have a sense of your need of Him, otherwise ye will never receive Him. And,
4. There must be some exercise in the soul, in order to get a grip of Him. You must go about the clearest way that you can to get Him, and to get a union with Him, so that ye may have boldness to call Him, as the gospel warrants you to do, your Lord and Master.

Have you such a sense of your need of Him as makes you cry out, "What shall I do to be saved? I must have Thee; I cannot want Thee; nay, say what Thou wilt, I shall not want Thee. Bid me do what Thou wilt, I shall be content, provided I may find Thee; for it is by Thee alone that I must be saved; and what is the matter what become of me if I want salvation." Then try yourselves, whether or not there has been any transaction between you and Christ, about the matter of your closing with Him? Did ye never miss Christ? Saw you ever such a worth in Him as made you long to be in His company? Did you ever see that ye could not live without Him? And did it ever put you to your wits' end what ye should do to get Him made your own, to subdue your corruptions, and to pay your debts for you, while ye saw yourselves able to do nothing. And,

Thirdly, In eating there are these things:

1. There must be an appetite for meat.
2. There must be a judgment that the meat is good.
3. In eating there must be chewing of it in the mouth, to prepare it for the stomach.
4. In eating it must be swallowed, whereby its substance becomes incorporated with the body. So in closing with Christ there will be a sense of need, to excite in the soul an appetite or desire after Christ; or if they dare not say they have an appetite, yet

there will be clear convictions in their judgments, that Christ is good for any person that dare make use of Him; and they say, that they are all blessed that dare call Him their own; and that they are all cursed that know nothing of Him. There is, too, a love in the soul, that is still acting in the way of trying to get Christ. Sometimes they see their sins, and have severe checks for them. Sometimes some beams of light calm their conscience again. They are sometimes essaying to grip at a promise; and sometimes they think that such a promise belongs not to them. At last they venture upon a way in which they may best get Him, and make Him their own; and in which they may feed upon Him, and have Him for their King and Lord, ruling, reigning, governing, and setting up laws within them, against all the powers of sin and Satan, that they are troubled with. And after they have closed with Christ, and made Him a King within them to subdue their corruptions, and regard Him as their own, both for sanctification and redemption; then they become one in an embodied communion with Him, so that they live no more, as it were, but Christ lives in them, and the life that they now live “is a life by faith upon the Son of God.”

Now, the reasons why Christ useth these three words together to express one’s closing with Him, are:

1. Because He must let His people see, that there are different experiences in closing with Him. Some may get a sensible change from the power of darkness within them, and through the sense of sin occasioned by the great thunderings of the law-work upon them, may have a more piercing desire and lively appetite after communion with Him. Again, some may have got such a sight of the excellency of Christ, that they cannot think to have it said that they will

want Him. No, the need of Him, and the value they see in Him, make them both supplicate and cry about Him, so that they can both name time and place when they met Him; and can relate what transactions passed betwixt Him and them ere they got Him laid hold of, so that they durst call Him their own Lord and Master.

2. He useth many words in closing with Him, that He may declare how willing He is that they should not stand at a distance from Him.

3. He useth all these words on purpose to let people see that there should be such exercise in His people that should not let them be satisfied about their closing with Him on slight grounds. And,

4. He uses all these words on purpose that folk may trace all their steps over again—both before and after their closing with Christ—and be convinced of their sin, and flee to Christ to intercede for the pardon of it.

Now for the clearing up of people's closing with Christ, let us mark out so many sorts of people as have been at this market of free grace yesterday.

First, There is one sort of natural folk that have been bold enough to come to Christ in His Supper, that, we daresay, have never yet known anything of closing with Him.

Secondly, There is another sort who dare boldly say that they have closed with Him, and are bold to tell of all the actions and motions of agreement that passed betwixt Him and them.

Thirdly, There is a sort that are halting betwixt these two, that dare neither say boldly that they have closed with Christ, nor dare they say boldly to the contrary. And,

1. For the first of these, we would say to you that are natural folk and atheists, and yet have made bold to meddle with these holy ordinances, I say unto you, acknowledge it, and mourn for your presumption in being so bold as to meddle with these holy things, and to profane this holy Sacrament; be ye assured that ye have drunk your own condemnation. But, I say, if it shall please God to make any of you sensible of that sin, we do not bid you call away your hope hereafter, as if ye had done that which could never be pardoned. Christ's market of His free offer is yet to be had for the salvation of any poor sinner who will have it. Oh, what a joyful sight would it be to see atheist ministers, atheist scholars, all the haughty and high-minded men in the land, gentlemen and commoners, only suspecting and judging themselves as a people living without God in the world and without Christ, then there would be some hopes; but as long as ye never want God, and think ye had Him, and believed in Him all your days, and never once missed your faith in Him, we say we have sufficient evidence, in that case, that ye never knew what Christ was nor what it was to believe in Him.

2. With regard to you that dare say ye have closed with Christ, and are sure of it, I say this unto you, For as sure as ye are, if ye have been so bold as to come to this ordinance without examination of your sin and guilt, and of your need of new pardon for it; and without any exercises of that kind, ye have done that which may bring sad judgment upon your bodies, and great hardness of heart upon your souls. If it be so, that ye have not been engaged in exercises of that kind before you came, we allow you now to mourn for the abuse of these holy things, as well as others. Cry down yourselves as loathsome and abominable; but beware of limiting to free grace any of your exercises. I say to you, though ye be sure, yet beware of being careless or secure. This feast, at such a time, says that God has some difficult

work to put you upon—work that will try all your evidences of being in Christ; therefore dream not of ease, but prepare yourselves for trials of all sorts. And we think that though there were no more, it may even bind you to the diligent performance of duty that God has given you that feast in this place, before many other places that were longing for it, and has not left you disputing about that matter, like many a poor thing in the land.<sup>2</sup> I say, ye may bear the better with any piece of trial that it shall please God to tryste you with, and ye should stick closely to your duty, that ye may be examples to others of a stedfast adherence to Christ.

3. With regard to you who cannot tell whether ye have closed with Christ or not, we will: (1) Speak to some grounds of hope, that ye may have as to your closing with Christ; (2) speak also to some grounds of fear that may hinder your closing with Him, and are ready to kill you, when you would venture upon Christ. And,

(1.) For the ground of your hope, ye dare not deny but that ye have real conviction of sin, and of your guiltiness by sin, and that ye cannot help yourselves by anything that ye can do, although you should perish. Ye dare not deny but that ye have fled from any righteousness in yourselves. Ye dare not say but that ye see some difference betwixt our principles and the principles of the multitude, so that, for a world, ye dare not do many things that ye see them do. Ye dare not deny but that ye are fled from many of those principles ye once walked by, and now, for a thousand worlds, ye dare not do that which once ye thought it no sin to do. You dare not deny but that ye look for salvation from no other airth, but from Christ. Ye dare not deny but that ye hear the Gospel preached with another ear than ye were wont to do. You dare not deny but that ye think yourselves liable to the curses of the broken law, and apply these particularly to yourselves, and therefore ye would gladly be in

hands with Christ. Ye dare not deny, though ye dare not say ye have really closed with Christ, that ye would not for a thousand worlds give up your part of Him. Ye dare not deny but that they are blessed folk in your esteem that have Christ and dare call Him their own, and that ye account them all a parcel of poor beggarly creatures that have nothing of Him. Ye dare not deny (though ye dare not say that there is true grace in you) that ye are convinced of what ye understand of the marks of grace that we speak of, and find them to be matter of exercise with you; hence it is your good day when ye hear the most of these preached and cleared up. Ye dare not say (though ye get not all your idols brought down that are within you) but that at sometimes ye get such access to God that ye get liberty to curse your idols, and to hate them and to wage war against them. Ye dare not deny but that ye get some tastes and motions of light within you even such as ye would be at. Ye dare not deny that according to these motions ye apprehend some great worth to be in Christ, so that ye cannot think to want Him. Besides, if ye durst say that ye claim your interest in Christ, it would soon make up any other want; and though one should give you all the world, it would yield no contentment unto you as long as ye could not claim clearly your interest in Him. In fine, ye cannot say but that there is some exercise in your soul about finding Him, and that you essay in the appointed way to lay hold of Him.

Now, I say all these are evidences of your closing with Christ, and serve to keep the spark of life within you, and to preserve you from giving over your endeavour to close with Him, and are preludes to your further success in this matter. And,

(2.) For the grounds of that fear which hinders you from closing with Christ; [a.] Ye are afraid that you have never got such a deep sense of your sin and guiltiness as your closing with Christ requires. [b.] Ye fear that ye have never



had such a lively spiritual exercise in you as the nature of closing with Christ requires. [c.] Ye cannot think that ye have closed with Him, because ye think that for all that is threatened against you, and for all that ye can do, there still remains some old predominate sin within you which ye think is still unkilld, and which you think inconsistent with the grace of faith. Now,

For answer to these doubts, consider,

1. That with respect to your sense of sin, God gives not every one a like measure of exercises for their sin that closes with Him. To some He gives more sense of sin, and to others less, according to the several employments He has to call them unto. Some He has to call to the work of the ministry, and these have need of a more deep exercise than others, for they have the charge of many souls to look to and to give account of; they have the doubts of the people to clear up to them, and they must be exercised in order to fit them for their calling.

2. Some, I say, have but small exercise about their sin on account of the company among whom their lot is cast. Were some exercised as deeply as others, the people who dwell with them would think them perfectly mad; they would never bear with them, and God's name would be profaned by these atheists. But for the sense of sin, I ask if ever ye found so much of it as to be brought to a loathing and abasing of yourselves? Have you been brought to think none in all the world so vile as yourselves? Have you been brought to loathe and abhor yourselves because of your filthiness? Have you been made to acknowledge that there is hardly a sin in all the world but what ye have been guilty of, at least that there is no sin but ye find the root of it to be in you, and that there has been nothing that kept sin in you from breaking out into the vilest of all outbreaks in the world but only the good hand of God that prevented

it? And now thou art made to bless God that thou art not such a man and such a woman as many are this day. No thanks to thee that thou art not one of the vilest of out-breakers that ever lived, for such thou wouldst have been if God had given thee over to thyself as many are. Many professors were never brought this length of loathing themselves. The high heads of many, their shaking and tinkling bravery which they prance with, makes us fear that they have never known what it was to loathe themselves for sin. After that conviction of sin and loathing of thyself for it, did it work up thy heart to a high esteem of Jesus Christ; and wast thou made to yield to Him any way He pleased, provided He would be a King within thee, and subdue thy lust and corruptions? And now thou art made to esteem the holy law of God, and to account it holy, just, and good, yea, worthy to be observed; and thou now standest in awe to offend God, by breaking of His holy law.

I say, all these are evidences of a soul's closing with Christ:

(1.) To be convinced that really by the breach of the law, you are guilty of sin, and so liable to be condemned unto the wrath of God. Then,

(2.) Fleeing from that unto Christ for a refuge. And,

(3.) After all, making the law a rule of your life, and whole conversation.

But now ye want the knowledge of that incorporating union with Him, which we spoke of as imported in the third word, "eating," when the soul comes to Christ, which is a making of Christ your own by a union with Him. And,

1st, The first way in which God gives them this privilege, is by the Spirit of discerning, whereby they can understand all the actions and motions within them, in order to their closing with Christ; while a divine command also holds out

to them their warrant of closing with Christ. And,

2ndly, Some attain to the knowledge of this union with Christ, by the clearing up to themselves what marks of grace they find in life and vigour within them. Though the soul cannot clear up all the marks of grace as what are within them, yet they may not for that deny their interest in Christ; for if thou canst only evidence one mark of grace to be in vigour within thee, and if thou art sure that the Spirit of God calls it a real mark of grace, I say, by that one mark, thou mayest claim thy interest in Christ. Suppose it were but a love to the brethren, let that be cleared well, and by it thou art proved to be one who is passed from death to life. However, we wish that people were clearing to themselves all the marks of grace in them.

3rdly, A third way by which souls may attain to the knowledge of their interest in Christ, and union with Him, and dare most confidently say that Christ is their God, is by the zeal and testimony of the Spirit bearing witness in and with and upon their spirits. Now the Spirit of God hath many ways of working. It is the Spirit that both convinceth folk of sin, and maketh them mourn for it, and bears testimony to the spirits of His people, that they are the children of God. And besides, He clears His people's judgment, so that He makes them know and discern what marks of grace they have within them that speak forth their union with Christ. And then He brings a promise to their hand that is suitable to their union with Him; and He Himself opens and unfolds that promise, and makes it look pleasant to them. He bears in the promise in a lively manner upon them, and will not let it admit of any objection. The Spirit rouses the soul, and makes it stir, and flutter, and run, and embrace the promise, and welcome it home. He makes them believe the truth of it, and apply it to themselves. On which marriage the soul is wrought up to a sort of heavenly and unspeakable joy; the greatest pitch of joy a soul can

attain to on this side of time.

Now, to conclude, there are but few that can attain to such noble testimonies as these; and yet everyone that comes not that length may not deny his interest in Christ. I say, if thou canst discern any motions or acts in thy soul that lead thee to comply with the command to believe in Him, and if thou canst clear up to thyself any mark of grace which the Spirit of God calls a mark of grace, by which an union with Him is evidenced. As for your saying that ye cannot think there is any union between you and Christ, so long as your predominate sin is unmortified, I leave you with recommending to your consideration the apostle Paul, who got not all sin borne down within him; yet as it was his burthen, he was an enemy to it, and waged war against it, accordingly pleaded his integrity and interest in Jesus Christ; and so may you do. If that sin be your burthen, and if ye can say that ye are mourning for it, and using means against it, and daily representing it to the King to be taken order with; in this case, though it still remains as a strong fort within you, ye may both plead your integrity and interest in Jesus Christ.

But we add no more, but leave you to the Spirit of God alone, to whom it solely belongs, to confirm and establish you in all your waverings. Be earnest with the Spirit of God; and beware of doing anything to grieve Him. But by all means entertain the motions of the Spirit; for it is He alone, that can clear all your objections.

---

*N.B.* Whether Mr. Guthrie's preaching on the Monday after the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in his own parish, was owing to the paucity of the ministers, or the custom of the times, which is more probable, is

not now certainly known. However, these sermons, with the most part of those which follow, seem to have been preached betwixt the year 1660, and 1665, in which all the rest of the Presbyterian ministers, except one or two, were cast out of their parishes.

Footnotes:

1. The second sermon on this text.
2. This sermon seems to have been preached soon after the restoration of Charles II., when most of the faithful ministers were ejected.

## SERMON XII.

*“Who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Galatians 2:20

IF we were in such a spiritual frame and temper of mind we should be in, and if our lamps were shining as they ought to be, we would wonder much at this text of Scripture. How would we admire that ever the eternal Son of God, the heir of heaven, should have made such poor and wretched creatures the objects of His love, and not only that He should have loved us, but that He should have given us such a testimony of His love as to be content not only to give Himself to be our Head and Husband, but to give Himself unto death for us, and that not an easy death, or an honourable death, but a most painful and shameful death, even the death of the cross.

Now, upon the Lord's day, ye were hearing<sup>t</sup> of the lover and of his death; and now we come to speak of the giver and of his gift. The lover and the giver are all one. “Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone; a tried stone; a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” Now the lover and giver here, is the Mediator of the new covenant, God and man in one person. “He in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell;” and that “the fullness of the Godhead should dwell in him bodily.” This is He who is the lover, and the giver.

When we came to speak of this gift, we held out that our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself to be a man, even to be accounted a sinful man. He knew no sin, and yet was content to set Himself up as a mark for justice to shoot at on account of sin. He knew not what it was to break a covenant; no, but He was content for the elect's sake, that their sin of breach of covenant should be laid upon Him, and

that He should be charged with the breach of the covenant of works.

And next we came to speak of the persons for whom Christ gave Himself. The apostle says, that it was even for me. "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." In like manner, he says, "Even Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." John, the beloved disciple, signifies, that He gave Himself for them that were given Him of the Father, in that noble transaction betwixt the Father and the Son, from eternity. It was even for those that He gave Himself, who are both the fewest and the meanest of folk in all the world. He gave Himself but for very few great folk in the world. Indeed we find them ordinarily the most remote from being the objects of God's love. Hence, even at this time, Sirs, the great folk cannot endure to have Christ and His people in the land. They would have them banished unto the utmost parts of the earth, if they could get them. There would none of them have liberty to dwell in their lands, but they shall not get all their designs in this. It was not for many nobles that Christ gave Himself unto the death of the cross. But as for poor believers, for whom Christ gave Himself, though the men of the world may count such worthy of prison, banishment, persecution, the scaffold, &c., yet let them do so; there is no great matter, for they are even the folk that Christ gave Himself for. Let them bind them in prisons and bonds as they will, yet they are Christ's free men. Christ hath paid all their debt; so that they are neither to be bound, imprisoned, nor banished, let the world think as they please.

Now I come to the third thing, and that is, to speak of the fruits and effects that redound to sinners by Christ's giving of Himself for them. But as it is said of the things that are treasured up for them that love Him, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of

man to conceive of it;" so it may be said of the great privileges that redound unto the soul of man, by the Lord's giving of Himself for it. But we must not stand here, but come to point out some of these benefits and privileges that redound to the soul by the death of Christ. And,

1st, There is peace made up between God and man. Ye know, Sirs, that God and man were at variance. The distances, you know, became so great that the Lord drove Adam out of the garden, and placed an angel there with a flaming sword in his hand, which turned every way, to keep man from the tree of life. There was an utter enmity, if we may so speak, between God and man. This is the benefit flowing from the death of Christ to us, that this variance is done away, and the poor believer, for whom Christ gave Himself, hath access unto the throne of grace, to make his suits known unto God. That vail is now done away, and we have now access to come "through that vail, consecrated for us, that is to say, the vail of His flesh."

2ndly, We have not only this advantage by Christ's giving of Himself for us; but also we are hereby redeemed from the slavery and bondage of sin and Satan, and from the power of darkness. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light!" He gave Himself for us, and hath purchased life for us, that we might be freed from this bondage. He having satisfied justice, believers are set at liberty. "If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

3rdly, Ye have this privilege by Christ's giving Himself for you, namely, access unto the throne of His grace, to "find help in time of need." There are many amongst the sons and daughters of men that think it no great privilege to have access unto the throne of grace. But such do not evidence themselves to be among those for whom Christ gave Himself; for, I am confident of this, that souls that know



their need will think it no small privilege to have liberty of access unto a God in Christ, to make known to Him all their wants, and to speak to Him concerning those who injure and trouble them. This is one of the benefits we have by the Lord's giving of Himself for us; for if Christ had not given Himself, as ye were hearing, we had been so far from this liberty of access to God, that on the contrary, we would have run as fast from Him as ever Adam did to hide himself amongst the thick boughs, when he heard His voice walking in the garden.

4thly, Another privilege that redounds to souls through Christ's giving Himself for them, is, Nearness to God. By this the believer in Christ is advanced to be near of kin to God. There is, indeed, such a nearness between God and these souls for whom Christ died, that they cannot be separated. There is no union in the world so near as this union between Christ and His Church; for it hath the properties of all the closest unions among the creatures. It is their standing relation that God is their Father, and they are His sons. He is the Husband, and they the spouse. He is also called their elder Brother. Nay, He is all relations to them. A child can never go more familiarly to a father than they are allowed to come unto Him, and make known their requests to Him. Never wife could go more familiarly to her husband to ask anything, than the believer in Christ is allowed to go to the Lord for anything he wants. Sit up, Sirs, and sleep not; it may be, ye will get sleeping enough, for hearing of preaching, ere it be long.<sup>2</sup> Those for whom Christ gave Himself are advanced to be very noble folk. I assure you, though the men of this world think not very much of their honour, there are none in all the world that can lay claim to such nobility as believers in Christ can do. It is said of Caleb that he had another spirit with him, and "followed the Lord fully." Whenever souls begin to be made to act faith upon Christ, and the Lord begins by the effectual call of the gospel to call them unto Himself, then

a change is wrought upon them; then they become men of other spirits, even of far more noble spirits, than they were of before. When they thus become men and women of other spirits, then they follow the Lord fully. Now, Sirs, that believers are advanced unto such a state of nobility by Christ's giving Himself for them, will more easily appear, if we consider,

1. Who is their Father? He is the Lord Jehovah, God of peace. He is their Father, and they are begotten through the blessing of God, by the immortal seed of the word. Now, must not those be men and women of noble spirits, that have no less kindred than the Lord Jehovah, the mighty Prince in whom is everlasting strength. And,

2. This will appear that these are men of nobler spirits than any other in all the world. If ye consider their food, it is not the food of the world, or the husks that the men and women of this world eat. No, that will not serve them. Their food is no less than the food that cometh from the Lord. It is no less than His flesh and His blood. As He Himself says, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Ye may see from this, that believers in Christ are men and women of noble spirits, for they cannot feed on common food and the husks of the world, sin and lusts. No less can prove satisfying food unto them than the flesh and blood of the eternal Son of God.

3. It will appear that they are the most noble folk in the world, if ye consider the language that they speak. They do not speak that broad blasphemous language that is spoken up and down the country. They do not speak that cursed language of Ashdod. What then is the language that they speak? Why, it is that noble speech and blessed language of Canaan: "Five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts." Be-

lievers are a people of a pure language. That they are a noble people, then, appears from their parentage, and their food, and their language; no food will satisfy them but the food we have spoken of; no language pleases them but that blessed language of Canaan. But having spoken unto these points already we now come to a word of use.

USE 1. Is it so, that Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God hath not only loved an elect world, but hath given Himself for them? Well, Sirs, you that find yourselves of that number ought to be much employed in praising God. I assure you, this duty of praise is most incumbent upon you all for whom Christ hath given Himself.

USE 2. Is it so, that Jesus Christ hath loved you, and not only so but given Himself for you? Then Christ will withhold nothing from you. For if He would have withheld anything from you, would He ever have given Himself for you, and given Himself to be poor, and a man of sorrows, to suffer weariness and travail for you, and not only in His body, but in His soul. For you He endured travail in His soul and made Himself a whole burnt offering. I say, He gave His soul as well as His body for you. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Well, then, what will He withhold from you, believers? And what stand ye in need of but He will give it you? He that withheld not Himself, but gave Himself wholly, soul and body for you, what will He withhold from you.

USE 3. Is it so, that Jesus Christ, God's Eternal Son, gave Himself for you; is it not a shame to refuse Him anything that He asks of you? He asks your heart, saying, "My son, give me thine heart." Well, Sirs, it is a great sin and shame for you to refuse Him your hearts, seeing that He gave Himself wholly for you. He insists that ye should follow Him and cleave closely unto Him through good and bad report, through affliction and persecution, even "through

fire and water, unto a wealthy place.” Well, then, be ashamed if ye refuse to do these things for Christ. He refused not to be scourged for you, buffeted for you, nay, crucified for you. If ye do not give yourselves to Him, embrace and close with Him, woe will be unto you for ever! But it may be some here will enquire, “If Christ is indeed making offer of Himself unto us, and hath given Himself for some, how shall we know whether we have got Him yet or not?” We may not stay here. But we shall point these few things whereby we may know this. And,

1st, If you have got or received Christ you will know that you have done so “by your following God fully,” with Caleb. There is the disposition of a godly man, it is that “he followed the Lord fully.” If you be souls that have closed with Christ, ye will be still following after Him; not desiring to run before, but to follow after Christ. You will always study to have Him in view, that so ye may follow Him. You will not be fools, taking a by-way. This will not serve your turn. If you be souls that have gotten Christ, you will be labouring all you can to follow His steps. And then,

2ndly, You will know it by your labouring hard after God, as children of light. “Walk as children of light.” I say, If you be souls that have gotten Christ, ye will be labouring by all means to walk as children of the light; you will have fervent affection to God and to the people of God, as it becometh the people to have.

3rdly, If you have closed with Christ, you will walk habitually as in the sight of God. In Gen. 17.1, where the Lord is making the covenant with Abraham, He says to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” You that have gotten Christ, you will be always walking as in the presence of a holy God, and will be loath to do anything displeasing to Him.

4thly, if you have gotten Christ you will be making much room for Him in your hearts. Believers in Christ know that He is a great King, and must have much room in the heart. If you have got Him, there must not be a lust or idol left in all your bosom. No, you will be providing a large upper room for Him. You will put away all other things that you may solace yourselves in Him. You will be still saying with the Church in Hosea, "Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses." "The best of them is as a brier: and the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." "We will not say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our Gods." And, "What have we to do any more with idols?" Now, Sirs, are there any amongst you making such great room for Christ in your hearts? nay, I fear Christ gets not the least room in them, for they are full of something else. And,

5thly, If ye have gotten Christ, ye will have a longing desire of soul after Christ. For there was never one that enjoyed anything of Christ, but would still enjoy more of Him. I will tell you what these souls that have gotten Christ are like: They are like the horse-leech, that cries still, "Give, give;" or like unto the grave that is never full. The soul in this case will never be full of Christ till it is perfected in glory, till his soul be so filled with his beloved that he can hold no more. Will one kiss of His mouth satisfy that soul? No; "But let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Let me seek salvation of Him with all my heart. "But I must have more of Him," says the spouse; "He must lie all night between my breasts. I must have continued communion and intercourse with Him. I must have Him fully and wholly, and that not for a day or an hour; but I must have Him and enjoy Him fully, not only in the day, but also in the night. He must lie all night between my breasts."

Lastly, If ye have gotten Christ ye will be much employed about the work of mortification and self-denial. When Jesus comes unto a soul, He works in that soul much self-

loathing and self-aborrence. The soul that hath gotten Christ will say with the apostle, "Those things that I counted gain, I now count loss for Christ."

This leads me to another point of doctrine, which is this: That the soul that is beloved of God, and for whom Christ hath given Himself, is much engaged in the exercise of self-denial. The apostle says not, "That the Lord loved me, and gave Himself for me, on account of anything that was in me;" but, "Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me, even me, who was a persecutor; for me, who was a blasphemer; for me, who was such and such." How much, then, was this minister, Paul, engaged in the exercise of self-denial?

Again, you may observe that the soul that is loved of God, and for whom Christ hath given Himself, will be much in the exercise of mortification; or it is a duty lying on all those who are loved of God, and for whom Christ hath given Himself, to be much engaged in this work of mortification and self-denial. Ye must not think that this is only the work of ministers and men in eminent stations, to deny themselves; no, you have Jesus Christ Himself saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." But that we may come to speak more particularly to the words, there is a threefold self that must be denied.

*First*, Natural self.

*Secondly*, Sinful self. And,

*Thirdly*, Regenerated and renewed self.

1. Natural self is the man consisting of the soul and body united. This a man must deny comparatively, or when it comes in competition with the glory of God and your own soul's edification.
2. There is a sinful self, which is the old man, and unrenewed heart, with the affections and lusts. This sinful self

we are to deny wholly and absolutely. We must not rest till we get all crucified and nailed to the cross of Christ. And,

3. There is a regenerate and renewed self—that is, the new man. This believers are to deny as to any merit in it. Indeed, believers should be seeking after more of the new man as their treasure; and they should make use of all means whereby they may be enabled so to hold it, that Satan and lust prevail not against it. There are some folk that deny the grace of the Spirit of God in this; but that which we press upon you hath these few things in it. And,

(1.) A knowledge of themselves. The man that would deny himself, must know himself. But,

(2.) As he must know himself, so he must loathe himself. And,

(3.) He sees vanity and emptiness in self. He sees that he is altogether insufficient of himself to do anything that is really good. The person that denies himself, as he is one who knows himself, and one who loathes himself, is a person that sees nothing in himself but emptiness, and has nothing in himself to trust unto in the matter of salvation. Therefore he must be denied to himself, and must lay the weight of his salvation upon another, even upon Christ. And there is this in self-denial, that as the man sees his own emptiness, so he is still emptying himself of all the old stuff. Old things must pass away, that all things may become new. So that if ye would know what self-denial is, it is even to throw all Satan's household stuff out at the door, and have no more to do with it.

(4.) As ye must labour to cast out Satan's stuff; so ye must labour to have these things of God's providing brought in. Ye must have furniture brought from a far country; and ye must have it from home. Think not, Sirs, that these souls

are denying themselves aright, that are crying down all that they have; unless they be also seeking the graces of God's Spirit to replenish their souls.

In a word, to deny yourselves is to forsake all things in yourselves, when they come in competition with the glory of God; and to be still seeking furniture from above. That it is a duty incumbent upon all to deny themselves will appear from these few things following. And,

1st, It is what Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, requires; as appears from the forecited text, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." This may be a sufficient reason for it, that it is Christ's will. If ye would not be rebels against Him, set about this work. Folk think it a great matter to be a rebel to an earthly king; but believe me, it is another matter to be a rebel to God. Well, then, ye see, Sirs, that self-denial is a duty lying upon one and all of you; and ye must set about it, if ye would not be found rebels against the God of heaven, and ye know rebellion against God, as the Scripture expresses it, "is as the sin of witchcraft."

2ndly, A second reason is this, that when ye look into yourselves, and consider what ye are by nature, you see nothing in yourselves but a heap of lusts, which rebel against God.

3rdly, Consider that Christ, who was the Heir of heaven, was content to be denied to all the pleasures of heaven for you. And think ye that it is too much for you to be denied to your sinful lusts and pleasures in the world for Him, who, though He was "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," thought nothing to be so far denied to Himself as to come into the world, and take on Him flesh, and be born of such mean parents as had nothing to offer up for Him, in the days of His nativity, but two turtle doves; who not only was contented to be



denied to worldly riches and honours, but even to His own life. Have ye not good reason, then, to be denied to yourselves; since He was content to deny Himself to purchase salvation for you? And,

Lastly, To move you to this duty of self-denial, only consider the saints of God recorded in Scripture, and you will see that this has been their choice work. There are some in this age, too, that you would think have been much engaged in this duty, by their suffering for the cause and truths of God. But will ye look to these, that were contented to endure grievous deaths for Christ; that were sawn asunder, &c. I says, Sirs, consider the worthies mentioned in Scripture, that cloud of witnesses whom we are to imitate, and ye will see that this self-denial was a lesson that they were much in learning. But before we come to the application of this doctrine, we would speak to some few things that ye should not deny.

Whatever we have of conformity to the Lord should not be denied, but in point of merit or any worth, as if it might be any compensation to Christ for what He hath done, or any satisfaction to the justice of God, for our sins. And,

Take good heed, Sirs, that ye be persons loved of, and in covenant with, God. Seriously consider what ye should not deny. And,

1st, Ye must not deny God. Therefore it is said, "They eat my people as bread, and call not upon the Lord." Ye may deny Him, by a life and conversation, like the practical atheists of the world.

2ndly, Deny not your profession; for there is much required of you that are loved of God. Encourage yourselves by "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the

word of their testimony;" that is, by adhering to their profession. They overcame that red dragon, who fought against Michael, and his angels, whose design was to drown the woman with the man-child fleeing into the wilderness. Now, would ye overcome that red dragon, that is coming down into our land to destroy the woman with the man-child; to drive the Church of Christ out of her temple; and to make her flee away to the wilderness, to other cities, and to foreign lands—would ye overcome this red dragon that is likely to come amongst us now, that is likely to draw down the stars of heaven, and that is killing and banishing the people of God? then adhere to your profession which you must now overcome by. And,

3rdly, Beware of denying any of the truths of God. John has this in his commission to write to the church of Philadelphia. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." See, that ye consider well what is written in the Bible, and hold that which is there. For if ye degenerate from that, the vengeance and curse of God will be upon you; as we have it: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." Sirs, let the word of God be written in your heart. Through His strength, stick to your profession; and let the truths of Christ be so near and dear to you, that they may be as a girdle about your loins; that ye may part with your sweet life before you part with them. And,

4thly, Ye may not deny your covenant-engagements; ye may, by no means, deny the covenant you have solemnly sworn. For David gives it as a mark of the man that shall dwell on that high and holy hill; that he is a man that will not swear, nor forswear; he will not break his oath, though it should be to his hurt. So, ye must not deny your covenant, though it should be to your hurt; though it should be

to the loss of houses, lands, goods, &c.; yea, and your own life also. It is said, "They like Adam have transgressed the covenant." Many a time the Lord charges this sin upon the people of Israel by the prophets. Now we must tell you in the name of the Lord this day, that ye should beware of breaking the covenant. In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, we debar and excommunicate all such from the table of the Lord, as are not resolved to adhere to these covenants that the lands are under to the most high God. And,

5thly, You may not deny the going about Christian duties. Many cry down praying, and preaching, and communicating, except they take the communion upon their knees. Daniel was discharged by the king, from worshipping the true God for a certain time. But he was a man much given to the practice of self-denial. You know that the decree was established by the law of the Medes and Persians. But Daniel goes to his own house and, his window being open towards Jerusalem, prays three times a day. In like manner, ye must not deny your Christian duty and exercises, let the great men of the world make all the acts and laws against them that they please. Do not think, Sirs, that we preach rebellion against any man. We are not pressing any man to rebel against our rulers; but we would have you know, that we are to follow their laws no farther than their laws are according to the true word of God. Therefore, I say, ye must not deny the going about of your Christian duties.

6thly, Ye must beware of denying your assistance to Zion, in the time of her affliction. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Beware of denying your help to Zion. I pray you, if you love your means so well, that ye will bestow nothing upon the poor afflicted people of God that are imprisoned, and banished up and down the world; will ye help them with your prayers? I wot well, ye

may say with a certain man, "That many prayers of the people of God will do more for Zion, than ten thousand men armed with the sword, will do against her."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, beware that ye deny not Zion the help of your prayers, in the time of trouble. "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." O Sirs, there were many prayers put up for Zion in former times. She was well remembered. But, I trow, she is now like a poor stepchild put to the door, whom the stepmother forgets to take in again; or like a poor little one at night, that hath none to take care of it. So it is with the Church, and poor banished people of God. There are few to take care of them. You that are believers know, that if you would not deny your duty, ye should not deny your help to Zion. If any of you forget Zion, it is a clear mark that ye are none of the people of God; for if ye were, ye would love God, and ye would love His people; and if ye loved them, ye would evidence it at such a time as this.

7thly, Ye must not be denied to the love of God. David would not be denied to the love of God, whatever he was denied to. Says he, "Many say, Who will show us any good?" and that is the world's voice. They would have the fat things of the world. But what says David? What would he have? "Lord," says he, "lift up upon me the light of thy countenance." "I shall be denied to houses, lands, crown, and kingdom, and all," says he, "but I cannot be denied to the love and favour of God." Now, Sirs, these are the things that ye should constantly adhere to. But let us press them upon you as we will, ye will not stand to them unless God Himself press you to stand to them. Whenever the temptation comes ye will go with it, swearing contrary to the covenant ye have sworn, unless grace prevents. I am afraid many folk will not hesitate much to do this.

But we come now to speak of those things that ye should deny, or be denied unto. And,

1st, Ye must be denied to all those things that are sinful, and contrary to the word of God. Such things you are to deny absolutely and wholly. And,

2ndly, Ye must here consider that there are some things that ye must deny comparatively, or when they come in competition with the glory of God; that is, ye must either deny these things or dishonour God, so far ye are to be denied to them; and I will mention three or four of these things. And,

1. Ye should be denied to your own life, when your life comes in competition with the glory of God. I will assure you, this is not an easy thing, but it is a thing you must resolve to do. Well, then, are there no Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos, who, if matters shall come to such a pass, that either their life must go, or they must worship the idol, will readily say, "Be it known to thee, O king, though it should be so, yet we will not worship the idol that thou hast set up?" I assure you there are many idols now going to be set up in the land; and we hope that many, ere they bow to them, will be denied even to their own life, and will, with Moses, "Refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, rather choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God." They will rather choose to go to Barbadoes, France, or Holland; they will rather choose to take banishment than to worship these idols. But,

2. Ye must be denied to the world; for it is with many as it was with Micah, who said, "They have taken away my gods: and what have I more?" Ay; but if thou refuse thy self-denial in this respect, thou canst not be Christ's disciple.

3. Ye must be denied to the wrongs and injuries ye receive in the world. Therefore ye have an example. When the Jews were stoning that holy man, Stephen, to death, he said,

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” And that pattern of prayer, “Lord, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” And again, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And,

Lastly, Ye must be denied to your gifts, your judgments, your duties, and even to your graces, such as faith, love, hope, and all the rest of the graces of the Holy Spirit. These things ye must be pressing after, and yet ye must be denied to them, so as not to lay the weight of your salvation thereon. Ye must still be in the exercise of these duties, and yet ye must be denied to them. When ye have done all ye can do, ye must say, “We are unprofitable servants.” I assure you, in the name of the Lord, if a soul were looking on the most special duties that ever he went about, he might see as much imperfection in them as might make him say of all duties that there is nothing in them all that deserves anything, so that he would see himself obliged to fly solely to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Now we come to another thing in the words, and that is, The way in which this godly man knew that Christ loved him, and gave Himself for him. Why, if ye would ask Paul this question how he attained this, he would have said, “Why, it was even in the way of being much in the duty of self-examination; it was by seeing these fruits and effects that the giver had wrought upon the soul.” Hence

1st, We would have you consider that seeing it is a duty lying upon one and all to be much engaged in the work of self-examination, a duty never without difficulty, and yet a duty necessary at all times, yet the Lord calls for it at some times more especially. And,

1. When a church or particular person is under affliction or trouble. At such a time especially the Lord is calling for this. Believers should be much in examining themselves as

to the reasons that they are thus afflicted and troubled. This ye see in the third and fourth chapters of the Lamentations. The Church was under very sad affliction, even as we are now. She is persecuted, and her worthy teachers removed to corners. Her ordinances are gone, and there are none frequenting her solemn feasts. What does she in that case? “Let us search and try our ways and turn again unto the Lord.” Would you know your duty, in the day of Joseph’s affliction, in the day of the Church’s trouble? Then be much in self-examination to see what is in you that hath offended the Lord, and made Him deal with you; that so He is taking His farewell of these covenanted lands, and scarcely leaving a meat or drink-offering amongst us as a token for good. Go to the duty of self-examination, and see what injuries are in you that hath been a help in this.

2. A second special time when God calls for this duty, is when folk are under desertion, and death approaches: such was David’s case. He goes to this work, and saw on what terms he stood with God. Therefore after self-examination he says, “Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure.”

3. A third time when God especially calls for this duty, is before souls approach unto the table of the Lord—before they communicate with the Lord. This is a time when God calls for this duty of self-examination. Are you intending to approach unto the table of the Lord? Then know what God is calling for at your hands. “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” And I assure you, Sirs, in the name of the Lord, that there is good reason why a soul should be much in this exercise, before approaching unto the table of the Lord.

(1.) Because the Lord, the Master of the feast, comes in to visit the guests, and to see how they are all arrayed and

prepared. Examine, then, and if any pin in your exercise be wrong, go away to Christ and say, "Thou must set this right, that I may come before Thee, having the preparation of the sanctuary." This is a reason why souls should examine themselves well before they come to the table of the Lord, for Christ will come through and visit them.

(2.) A second reason why folk should be much in this duty of self-examination before they approach the table of the Lord is, Because it is very requisite that they come to the great day of the King's coronation. It is requisite on such a day that they come with many requests. Communion days are the days of Christ's manifesting Himself as the Great King. Communion days have been sweet days in Scotland; but alas! Christ and they are gone! Alas! Christ is gone, and communion days are gone. We have all the blame of it ourselves. Many of us have, with the Gadarenes, bidden Christ depart out of our coasts. Why, rather than Christ should not go away many of us will abjure Him, and perjure ourselves that He may not abide amongst us. We will have Him away at any rate. But, I say, it is a great reason why folk should examine themselves when they come to these deal days, that then folk should present many requests. On such an occasion folk should know their need. Is it not by self-examination that you come to the knowledge of your many wants? For He "fills the hungry with good things; but the full soul goes empty away." We dare promise you in the name of the Lord that hungry souls that dare say their errand is to get Christ, and that they have much ado for Him when they get Him—we dare promise you in His name that ye shall either get Him, or a token from Him, or at least good news from Him as to your getting Him. He never sent away a poor soul from Him that had an errand without something.

(3.) Folk should be much in this exercise before they come to a communion, because it is very requisite that folk when



they approach unto the table of the Lord should be self-condemned. Now, I say, that it is in the duty of self-examination, with the Lord's blessing, that ye come to get a particular view of the things for which ye are worthy to be condemned.

(4.) Self-examination before the Lord's Supper is very necessary, because it is in order to a great and important business. I assure you, Sirs, ye have need to be well prepared; for communicating aright with Christ is a most hard and difficult business, more difficult than ye are aware of. Communicating with God is a business of another concernment than the generality of mankind think it to be. Many a soul has got much good at a communion; and many a soul has got that loss which they have never repaired again. And though many have got over it afterwards, yet it hath cost them many a sad day's weeping and mourning. "For this cause, many amongst you are weak and sickly; and many sleep," saith the apostle.

2ndly, We would have you here consider that it is a duty incumbent upon one and all of you who do examine yourselves, not to rest satisfied with your own examination, but to be entreating the Lord that He would examine you. Therefore David says, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me." As if he would say, "I have been at the work of self-examination, and I cannot be satisfied with my own examination, till Thou searchest and triest me." Nay, serious souls cannot be satisfied with their imagined examination. And no wonder that it is so, since they have often deceived themselves and made themselves think they were something, when they were just nothing. And then,

3rdly, That soul looks upon the enjoyment of God as of greater concern than to be ventured upon its own testimony, or upon the testimony of another, or upon any other than that of God Himself, who is "faithful and cannot lie."

As Job says when his friends were labouring to persuade him that he was a hypocrite: "I will not believe you; but if God say it, I will believe it." "Oh that I knew where I might find him! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments."

4thly, I would have you look to what is good in yourselves, as well as to what is evil; for there are many of the people of God that look only to what is evil in themselves, and hence they are poor melancholy creatures. O believer, thou mayst look to what is good in thee as well as to what is evil. If thou seest any good in thee, bless God for it, and acknowledge Him as Paul doth. "By the grace of God," says he, "I am what I am." But, on the other hand, the wicked still look upon what they think to be good; but Satan blindfolds them, so that they never see what is evil. They look always on that which is seemingly good; they think themselves something, when they are just nothing. But thou that art a believer in Christ, it is thy duty to look both upon that which is good and upon that which is evil. You may see the spouse doing so. "I sleep," says she; she looks on what is evil in herself; but she looks also to that which is good in herself. Says she, "But my heart waketh."

But we may not here insist. Therefore we shall give you a few directions, as to your going right about this duty of self-examination. And,

1st, Ye must begin this work with prayer. Why so? Because your strength and supply must come from another airth than from yourselves. Ye must have the candle of God coming down from heaven to enlighten you, before you can go through all the chambers of your own heart and soul. And,

2ndly, Ye must acquaint yourselves with the law of God, for how shall ye examine yourselves unless you know the rule you should be examined by? David says, "I have hid

thy word in my heart, that I offend not thee. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

3rdly, If ye would go rightly about this work of self-examination, ye will be labouring to fit yourselves for the task in secret. Therefore when the Lord, in His word, calls folk to set about this duty, alluding to the eastern custom of girding themselves for work, He calls them to gird up their loins. Therefore, I say, ye should labour by all means to be fitted for this work. And,

(1.) I say, ye should call in all your thoughts and summon them all in the name of the great God at such a time to wait upon the diet of self-examination. And,

(2.) Ye should choose a place convenient for the purpose, for fear of being interrupted in the midst of it, before ye bring it to any considerable length or to a close.

(3.) You should set yourselves to deal as ingenuously with yourselves as you can. For a soul can never go about the duty of self-examination aright unless it set itself against itself. And,

(4.) Ye should, in the name of the great God of heaven, command all the affections and faculties of the soul to come, and be free and ingenuous with you. Let not your treacherous lusts rest in your bosoms; send them all out to answer for themselves. Do not cover any of them with the devil's mask; but seek to see them as they are.

(5.) Go about this work as in the sight and presence of God. I say that ye should labour to know that He with whom you have to do is the great and everlasting God. Ye should go about this work as in His sight, before whom ye must be answerable; and in going about this duty ye must condemn yourself, for “he that condemneth shall not be condemned.” And,

Lastly, As ye must begin with prayer, so ye should end with prayer. When ye have, through God's help, found all these lusts, then pray to Him that He would subdue and kill all these iniquities in you; nor neglect to praise God for anything good ye find in yourselves in the exercise of self-examination.

But we may not stand now, time being so far spent, to tell you the things that might be further said concerning self-examination. I shall, therefore, only give you two or three marks whereby ye may try whether ye have gone about this duty of self-examination in a right way and manner. And,

First, All the heights of legal pride betwixt Christ and your souls will be done away. The poor soul has looked through his heart, and seen many traitors against God and His loving-kindness in Christ, so that he sees himself to be worthy of a thousand deaths, and there is never a word in the poor man's mouth but "Guilty, guilty." And,

Secondly, The soul that hath examined itself aright will cleave stedfastly to Christ and His finished work. "Indeed," he wilt say, "I have contracted much guilt; I am a rebel, and Thou mayest justly send me to hell; but, Lord, here am I come unto Thee, and I acknowledge myself guilty; yet, Lord, I beg Thy pardon; I am come unto Thee for mercy, and I shall never go to another; here I lie down at Thy door; here I take witness that I shall never die at another door; I confess I am guilty, and I am worthy of death; but if I fall into the hands of anyone, let me fall into the hands of the living God." But then,

Thirdly, Although ye be passing the sentence of condemnation upon yourselves, yet ye will be waiting to hear what "God the Lord will say." Ye will say, "Indeed I am condemned, and worthy to be condemned; but I would gladly hear what the sentence of free love and free mercy will be

concerning me.” Ye will be saying, “I am worthy of hell, and of excommunication from God, and from the glory of His power. I have nothing to say to the contrary, yet I will wait to see what free mercy and free love will be for me; I will hear what God the Lord will speak.” Are there any such souls amongst you? Sirs, Christ is going away from amongst us, because He cannot find such souls amongst us—such as are condemning themselves, and likewise waiting to hear the sentence of free mercy towards them.

Now, there is another point from these words; but I shall only name it, and leave it to yourselves to enlarge upon.

It is this, that folk may attain to the assurance of it, that Christ hath loved them and given Himself for them. Ye see the example of the apostle who could say, “He loved me, and gave himself for me.”

But I shall not stay upon it now, but desire you to think upon what ye have heard. And may the Lord bless it. Amen.

---

Footnotes:

1. This sermon seems to have been preached about, or after the year 1662, either on the Fast-day, or Saturday, after the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

2. This was in a few years sadly accomplished, when all the faithful servants of Christ were thrust out from their flocks.

3. It is said that Queen Mary said she was more afraid of John Knox’s prayers than ten thousand armed men, which may be here referred to.

### SERMON XIII.

*“But I said unto you that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”*

John 6:36–37

ALL these things that we preach seem to show you whether ye be in Christ or not. Now, all this is to clear it up whether ye believe or not. It is needful, especially at such a time as this, to know who is the believer and who is not.

Now these words speak somewhat unto believers or unbelievers. There was a great number of people that followed Christ in the days of His flesh; they were still proposing questions to Him, and running here and there after Him, and yet were strangers unto God, and knew nothing of Him. On this account Christ tells them that their god was their belly. They gave royal titles to Christ, and called him “Rabbi.” When they heard of heaven, they were bent on performing works to attain it. They sought great things from Christ. When He was speaking of the bread of life, they said, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” And yet they knew no more what this bread signified than a child did. Now Christ brings the charge home to their own bosoms, saying, “Although ye have run after Me, and have heard and seen Me do miracles, yet ye are as far from Me as ever ye were. Ye do not believe. But if ye were included in the covenant of redemption, ye would come: ‘For all that the Father hath given unto me, shall come to me.’” He knew His people would say, “It does not belong to us to know whether we be thus given or not.” But at leisure, says Christ, “I hold you upon this ground: ‘He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’”

Now in the words there is a challenge given them that followed Him. In the text says He, "Ye also have seen me, and believe not." The reason is, "Because ye were not given me of the Father;" for, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me." They did not understand how this could be the reason of their unbelief. He expresses Himself somewhat darkly, yet His own people are satisfied; besides, He hath sent forth His ministers to clear up such things further unto the people.

Again, here is a large promise to support His people, and to direct their attention to the revealed word of God: "And he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." There is a word of election, "They that are given me;" and then the effects of it, "They shall come." Then there is a word to believers, a large promise for a ground of faith: "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He said unto them, "Ye also have seen me, and have not believed." Now consider the persons He is speaking to; they were such as ran up and down the country and professed much religion, and yet He says unto them, "Ye have seen me, and believe not."

DOCT. I *There are many that run here and there after the Son of God, to see what He doth, and yet have nothing of God in them.*

And no doubt there are many of this sort of folk come unto this feast to-day.

Now for proof of this doctrine we think that all will grant that many do so that know nothing of God. And,

1. One sort is of those that professedly follow Him, though they believe nothing, and know nothing of God. These are they that follow Him with the half of the law in their hand. They will pray a while; they think that they may serve God well enough, and yet ban, curse, or swear twice as long for

it. They will pray half an hour in their families, and then they will drink till it be day again. These strangers to God are spoken of: "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." They will profess and say that they have been serving God ever since they were born; but they cannot do any good thing, but are reprobate to every good work.

2. A second sort that run after Christ, and yet know nothing of God, are those that come to Him with the second table of the law in their hand, as that young man in the gospel did, saying, "Master, what shall I do to be saved?" Do not commit adultery; do not steal; bear not false witness. "Oh," says he, "All these have I kept from my youth." "Then," says Christ, "I will try you with one, and the first one: 'Sell all that you have,'" says Christ. But the young man understood not what that command signified: "Thou shalt have no other God but me." He loved the world better than Christ. Take heed to yourselves. Are there any that come with the second table of the law in their hands? They defy their neighbours to say an ill word of them, to lay any fault to their charge; and yet they know not where their thoughts are when they go a-whoring after the world. To such I say, You know not the first command, and therefore go home again and touch not these holy things.

3. A third sort that know nothing of God will one while seem to run with Christ, and then will run with His enemies another while. These are known enemies to Him. When they meet with the people of God, they will speak ill of the atheist: and when they meet with the atheist, they will speak ill of the people of God. They will go as the bush goes. Some of them will come into the company of the people of God, to see what liberty the people of God take, that they may laugh at them afterward. Go ye home, and touch ye not these holy things.



4. A fourth sort run with their head, but not with their heart. They gather something that is spoken in a preaching, and get it exactly in their heads, but they take it not home into their hearts, in order to make use of it. They are like seed sown by the way side, which the fowls come and pick up. Satan is like these fowls. Such persons sit, and hear the preaching with their ears; but their heart is never moved with it. They keep not His commandments. Now we wish that these would go home again, and not approach the table of the Lord.

5. A fifth sort are they that run after Christ, to see what He can do; but they run with their idols in their hands—their idols which they would not have mortified. Their heart is on these idols. These are they of whom it is said, “The word was to them as seed sown among thorns.” There are some when they begin to speak, that cannot speak three sentences, but their kine or their corn is in the hinder-end of them.

6. A sixth sort run, and have not any ground on which they run. Many come here to the communion, yet to this day they could never produce any ground wherefore they run. Such never had their heart humbled before God under the sense of guilt. They will be content to hear, and yet as soon as they are out of the church, other vain thoughts get their heart. Such hear the word with joy for a season, and are compared to the seed sown on rocky ground. As soon as the storm blows in their faces, then their religion is delivered to the wind. Now there are many folk here that run as the tide runs; and think they are in no esteem, now-a-days, that profess nothing of God. Therefore they will go as the most part go; and yet they have no ground whereupon they were ever caused to come to the church; they were never made to believe.

7. A seventh sort that run, and know nothing of God, are

such as have a ground; but it is a false ground. They make common providence a ground. "I think," says one of them, "to get good of Christ;" and why? "Because He has fed and clad me all my days." But stay, friend, He has given that to His enemies, and to reprobates. I say, He will give all that to heathens that He gave to you. If ye have not another ground, take heed to that word, "Friend, how earnest thou thither, wanting the wedding-garment."

8. An eighth sort come, too, and come not aright, who are ever sticking about the door; but they never come in. Come to them now, and come to them three years afterwards, you will never know them an inch farther advanced in the knowledge of God. They never grow more clear in anything. God is not in such. For where God is, there is light. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Thus there are a great many that run to and fro after Christ, and yet are still taken up with this and that earthly thing; but they abide still in the law, and they know not what it is to be justified by faith in Christ. We say, such as never have light in this point have no faith in Christ.

Now, all these sorts we have spoken of know nothing of God. Therefore we wish that ye would try yourselves. Provided ye have made no progress in anything that we have spoken of, hold off your hand. And yet if ye will come now and submit and yield yourselves to Christ, and fall down at His feet this day, and lay claim to Him, and believe in Him, we call upon you to come forward. Now,

1st, With regard to them that seek Him, there are many that seek the kingdom of heaven, but not the righteousness thereof. "Seek ye this kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof also," says Christ.

2ndly, There are many that seek the kingdom of heaven and

the righteousness thereof; but they do not seek it principally and chiefly.

3rdly, There are many that seem to seek the kingdom, and the righteousness thereof principally and chiefly, but they seek it not constantly. They seemingly begin to seek it chiefly at such times as this; before, or at communions, when they hear of damnation and salvation. At such times they make a kind of stirring; but it falls away again, and they forget all when they go home.

4thly, Others would seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof; and that chiefly and contentedly; but they do not seek it satisfactorily. Some appear contented with their condition, but yet they never seek so much of God as to satisfy them; they do not seek to get satisfaction in the ways of God.

5thly, There are some that appear to seek the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, first, principally, contentedly, and satisfyingly; but yet they do not seek it upon a right ground.

6thly, There are some that appear to seek the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, first, chiefly, principally, contentedly, and satisfyingly, and do it on some ground—I mean, they will give you a ground for their doing so—yet they know nothing of God savingly. They will give you a ground out of the Scripture that will satisfy you well enough; but yet there is no real change in them at all. You know nothing truly of God, if there be not any change nor growth in you. You have not grace; hold off your hand. “But,” say ye, “Who will come, then, if all these must keep away?” I answer, All that the Father has given to Christ, in the covenant of redemption, shall come. In regard that atheists are never satisfied—in regard they say that, if they be elected, they will get to heaven whether they do good or

not, we must now speak a word about the covenant of redemption and election from the next verse of our present reading.

The Lord purposing to set forth the glory of His justice, and the glory of His mercy, creates angels and men. He lets men fall; and when they are fallen, Christ purchases some of them again. And these purchased ones are they that are given to the Son. Now, here stands election. The Lord speaks to two pieces of clay. To the one He says, "Thou shalt be with me in glory hereafter;" and to the other He says, "Thou shalt be a spectacle of my justice for ever."

Now, He does this as the absolute Lord God Omnipotent, having His being of Himself. "I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy," says He. He renders to no man a reason of His ways. He acts even as if one should take two stones out of a quarry, and say to the one, "Thou shalt have a conspicuous place in my window," and should take the other and place it as a steppingstone in the mire. If we may exercise our freedom in this manner, far more He, who is the great Creator, do so. The Lord, as He is absolute, says to one, "Thou shalt be employed in an honourable piece of service to me," and to the other, "Thou shalt be a reprobate, a stepping-stone to me." Upon the foreknowledge of man's folly, the Father bargained with the Son. Now, this bargain should be seriously thought on at this time, for now is the proclamation of it made to you. It is certain the elect were given. "Whether or not," say ye, "were they given freely?" No; they were not given freely; the Son paid for them. The truth is, the Father and the Son bargained for them; but, being fallen, they are not able to answer the law. Poor man can do nothing for himself. He cannot get a penny of the debt off his head; but in everything he does he still runs more and more into debt. Now the Father bargains with the Son, and He offers so many to Him if He would pay Him for them; and, says He, "These shall set

forth the riches of the glory of my grace." Says Christ, "I will do it; I am well content. Behold, I come to do thy will; in the volume of thy book it is written of me." Then says the Father, "I will bear thee through, and defray thy expenses: wrath will enter upon you." Says the Son, "I am well content. Give me a body that I may be such a one as wrath may get hold of." And when He has got one, He says, "Behold I come to do thy will, as it is written; whatsoever they owe, I am content to pay; they shall be freed from death for ever; they shall be my children." And then He and the Father bargain when He has taken on their flesh and bone, and stands in their room. Then says Christ, "Let all their guilt fall on me." It falls on Him. Then says God, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Stir up thyself, O wrath; thou shalt get one that will bear all thy wrestling. Now, the wrath of God never got full wrestling with any till it got it with the Son of God. And so, for the price of our redemption, He quitted all His movables in the world, so to speak, and laid down His life. He had not one drink of water; He gave up even that for us. And when He had given up all His movables, He said, "Take the rest out of my body;" and then they plucked the hair from off His face. "He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." And then they got a stone, and put it upon Him when He was dead, to hold Him in the grave. But when the time came that He should rise, He said, "O death, I will be thy death; where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Now comes the intimation of this to a lost world. It is declared to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, where the Father says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." This day there are messengers sent to declare that there are so many given to the Son. This verse shows us that all whom He has covenanted for

will believe; and this may satisfy the minds of the people of God. We have been proving that the Son has bought them, and they are bought.

Notwithstanding all that the Son has given for them, yet He counts them a gift, and this testifies that Christ is well pleased with the bargain. Yes, He is well-pleased with it, notwithstanding all the evil treatment that we gave Him; and He sets down this in Scripture, to let us see that He counts all His people a gift, notwithstanding all the price He has paid for them. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me." This He does, that He may put jealousy out of the breasts of His people. Look to His carriage towards His spouse, when she refused to lend Him a lift in His greatest need. He never says an ill word to her. This is a token that He loved them well. When He was in His greatest need, He says, "Shall ye be offended this night because of me." Says He, "I know that ye will be offended, and take ill with it. Ye will not lend me a lift. But when the deed is done, I shall remember you." This tells us He was well-pleased with the bargain. When an ill-natured woman would not give Him a drink of water, yet He gives her not an ill word, but says that it was His meat and His drink to do that same ill-natured woman's soul good. And even to this day He is sending out His messengers to tryst His bride and spouse. He is so well pleased that He says, "Those who convert many shall shine as the stars in the firmament." Now look on His carriage, and ye will see His willingness. He says, "If ye will but grant that I have died for you, and honour me by believing." But His bride will not do that. She will not believe, though life pursues her in the time of her backsliding, and says, "I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee." Still she will not grant that He has bought her. But yet He will not tell all the house what is between thee and Him. And is not that a token that He loves thee? For the Father He is very well pleased. For,

1st, He sets the business on foot, and furnishes the Son for it.

2ndly, He gives the Son, that is His dearly beloved, and is content to want His company a while to send Him to you.

3rdly, There is none that comes to the Son, but those whom the Father draws.

It is clear that the Father is content with the bargain. "Ask of me," says He, "and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." Come then, be content to take Him, and believe in Him. Whatever ye have been, He will regard you as a gift. "But," say ye, "how shall we know whether we be one of these that are given or not?" The text answers, "All that are given shall come." If ye come and lay hold on the refuge set before you, then ye are given. "But whether or not is my name in the decree?" say you. We say, ye must first read your name in the promise, before ye read it in the decree. Inquire, then, whether or not are ye poor, and feel yourselves to have nothing? Then, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Or are you one that is hungering for righteousness? Then, "Blessed are they that hunger for righteousness, for they shall be filled." If these be your names, then they are written in the promises. Or is your name Sin-abounding? Then, "Grace doth much more abound." Or if you be one that wants repentance, and your name is a Wanter of repentance: then He is exalted to give repentance to Israel. "But that is still my question, What if I be not elected?" The Lord says to thee, "Come down; ye are too high when you would pry into the decree of God." He will have you go upon the ground of His revealed will. Try, in the first place, if ye be coming, or have come, and so ye shall know that ye are elected. But say ye, "Alas! I am in as great doubt as I was. I see some making a fashion of coming; but what wot I what is right coming?" "He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast

out.” By “coming” here is meant believing, according to the 35th verse of this chapter. “He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” This is a promise to them that believe. Now we will lay down some reasons.

Coming imports a removal from one thing to another. Now,

1. If we would know who they are that come rightly; let us examine from whence, and to what place, and by what way they come. We are to enquire from whence, that is, whether or not he comes to Christ; and by what way, that is, whether or not he comes by the new covenant exhibited in the gospel. Now there are many that come wrong, that seem to come for a little, but stop short of Christ.

(1.) There are some that come from themselves in part, and come to Jesus in part. They come to Him in the matters of righteousness, but not wholly. They stick to some righteousness of their own. Ask them what will they do to win to heaven? They say they can do no good. All that they do is wrong. And yet in their hearts they are saying, “I thank God that there is so much right in my doings.” That is just to take a piece of new cloth, and put it upon an old garment; or to take a piece of Christ’s righteousness, and set it on your own righteousness. “Good prayers will do no harm; they will help something,” say most. I take Christ’s righteousness for everything. “That is wrong,” say they. But, I say, Thou must take Christ for everything thou dost, whether it be right or wrong. Ye must either take none of Him, or else ye must take Him wholly.

(2.) A second sort seem to come wholly from themselves in the matters of righteousness, and to venture themselves on the goodness of God. When they are challenged, they still say, “We are great sinners, but God’s mercy is greater, and



that will help us to heaven.” But then they do not come wholly from themselves in the matter of wickedness; they love their sins as well as ever they did. Such may not touch this feast.

(3.) A third sort seem to come from themselves in the matters of righteousness and justification; and from themselves in the matters of wickedness, in part, but not wholly. Such a one was Herod. Herod would take Christ’s righteousness to save him; he would seem to flee from himself wholly in justification, but not wholly from himself in the matters of wickedness. He refuses to let go some sin that was beloved of him. “Oh,” say some folk, “such a sin sticks to me by nature.” I say that and that nature shall go to hell together, except ye say with delight, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.” Hold off your hands, except ye resolve wholly to quit your iniquity and to regard none of it.

(4.) A fourth sort seemingly come from themselves wholly in wickedness, but not one bit from themselves in the matter of righteousness. Such were the Jews: they fled from themselves in the matter of wickedness; but they would abide by their own righteousness. Let not such approach the Lord’s Table.

(5.) A fifth sort seem to flee from themselves wholly in the matters of righteousness and justification, and also in the matters of wickedness, as far as they can, yet their foot slips by many a time, and they continue not their course. When they commit any sin, then they resolve they shall never do the like again. And yet, perhaps, on the Monday evening, they slide again into the same sin. But such know no exercise of spirit, nor grief for sin. Hold ye off your hands here.

(6.) A sixth sort are such as flee wholly from themselves in the matters of righteousness and justification, and in the

matters of wickedness; but they close not with Christ. They think it an impossibility that the like of them can ever be saved by Christ's righteousness, and so they lose hope. They are convinced that they have nothing in them that is good, or can ever do good, and yet when they see this they are not stirred up to flee to Christ to get help and relief.

2. Now there are some that come aright, and can produce their grounds. Now for satisfaction to the minds of Christians, we shall speak something of the various degrees of them.

(1.) There is a sort, or rather a degree, that come in a confident manner. And then presently the Lord lays out large allowance to them and enables them to lay hold of it. When they are convinced of their iniquity and of their inability to be saved by their own righteousness, then they flee to Christ, and He so lets out of Himself to them that they are satisfied.

(2.) A second degree is, of those that come out of themselves wholly in the matters of righteousness and in the matters of wickedness; but for their life they dare not close with the offered relief, but stand and tremble. Now there is one word unto you. "Who is amongst you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." This man feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of His servant; he has fled from himself in the matters of righteousness, and the matters of wickedness; he is sitting in darkness, and he thinks he has no light. But the man we spoke of before, that comes from himself in the matters of righteousness and of wickedness, would not grant a possibility of his help. But this man is persuaded there is a possibility of his being helped. Let such a man trust in "the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God"; a man that has fled out of himself and is saying,

“What shall I do to be saved?”

(3.) A third degree, is of those that come out of themselves in the matters of righteousness and the matters of wickedness, and yet they dare not boldly lay hold of Christ, because they see the iniquities of their practices. They dare not say they regard not iniquity in their heart, and yet they are content to yield to Him. They dare not say that they are come, but they are coming unto Him. All these we have spoken of are coming; and there is strong consolation allowed them that flee to the refuge set before them, as well as to them that are fled already. These folk are fleeing to lay hold of the refuge.

(4.) A fourth degree of those that have fled from themselves in the matters of righteousness and in the matters of wickedness, are such as have come and laid hold of the hope set before them, and yet they are fallen from close walking with Christ. Therefore, He says to such, “Strengthen the things that remain.” They are prisoners that are recovering their liberty. It is not their purpose to remain in that condition. They had stepped aside into the mire; but that is not their path-way, for the law of God is their pathway. Any good that a wicked man does is extraordinary; it is not his path-way, which is iniquity. But thou mayst come boldly to Christ, to get that strengthened that remains, when thou art put to exercise about the course of thy life, and when thou seest much iniquity in it, and art afraid to go to God. “But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.”

(5.) A fifth degree, is of those that when they have fled from themselves in the matters of righteousness, and the matters of wickedness, and have closed with Christ, grow careless and inactive. As soon as they have gotten security of their salvation, down they sit and rest themselves there. There are many of the people of God in this case now-a-days.

These are fallen from their first love. But ye must set to again and get God's loving countenance. You must work, and work over again; and fight, and fight over again, till ye be made to rejoice in His love. If ye do not this, ye shall want the fruit of this feast.

(6.) A sixth degree of those that come from themselves in the matters of self-righteousness, and the matters of wickedness, and close with Christ, are such as hold not on constantly in their motion. When they are convinced of this wrong, they do not renew the acts of their faith. They think shame, as it were, to trouble God so often with their sins and with their evil heart. O fool that thou art, He that bids us forgive our brother seventy times seven times in a day allows none to forgive so often or so much as He Himself will forgive.

(7.) A seventh sort or degree of those that are wholly come out of themselves in the matters of self-righteousness, and out of themselves in respect of wickedness, are such as continue their motion. As sin prevails, they renew their actings of faith and abide in Him. All these are real and true comers.

Now a word to clear a doubt in the way. How do they come to Him? There are sundry ways of the Lord's calling folks, and drawing them to come. But we shall speak of the ordinary way that He takes to bring in His people. When all the people are going one way, and everyone is thinking with himself he is like neighbours and others, some day something comes into his mind, and he thinks there is a possibility that he is wrong. Now this is the first stoop or goal he turns. And then he begins to think, "I trow I need something." Then says God, "Come, buy of me fine gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that ye may be clothed; and eye-salve, that ye may see." Now, when all this is done, the soul is but on the way

to grace. The next stoop that he comes to he says, "Verily I think I shall be damned." This is according to that condition of Isaiah before cited. "He that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." He fears the Lord, and he has no comfort, he has no hope in himself, and he is crying, "What shall I do to be saved?" And if one would ask him, "What think ye of your ways?" "Verily," says he, "I think they are most abominable. I will not be proud of my poverty; but I will flee to another, to get gold, that I may be rich." For now ye must understand, that folks that see themselves poor are not blessed folk; for there are some that see their poverty even on this side of time, that are proud of it, and they will despair. But blessed is the man who is not proud of his poverty; who ends his prayer with this, "Who knows but God will have mercy;" who thanks God that he is kept out of hell so long. But still He knows not whether to give God thanks for his creation, or not. He sees not as yet whether it had not been better for him to have been a beast than a man. At the next stoop he turns, he says, "I must have it from God; I wait and long for it;" then, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." He sees that he wants much; but yet he sees not that the goodness of God can supply his needs. He next comes to this stoop, "I daresay," says he, "I am lost for all that myself can do; but He knows that the desire of my soul is, that He may reign in me, and that He may deliver my feet from falling." But what have ye resolved, friend, in the meantime? I have resolved to lie at his door, and die at it, for I know that there is help at Christ's door only, and nowhere else. I am not only content to live with Him hereafter, but I am also content to have Christ for my King. So the soul advances step by step till it close with Christ.

Now, I say, this is a way of coming that is approved of God.

There are many other ways of coming. According as our wise Lord thinks fit, so He will give them so many stoops or marks to run about. Any other way of coming that ye see in the Scripture, if your way has been like it, will prepare you for coming to this feast, and ye shall not be cast out.

Now, when times of trial are coming on, ye have need to make sure work of your coming. Amen.

## SERMON XIV.<sup>1</sup>

*“And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.”*

Matthew 15:27

IT is a business of great importance that was prosecuted by this woman, in her depending on God, and in her address to Him through many difficulties. It was a discouragement that He was silent; but when He gives her an answer it was worse than silence. “It is not,” says He, “meet to give the children’s bread unto the dogs.” But yet she had better skill of this answer than of His silence. From this she presseth her point. She gets some footing here. Christ tells her she was a dog. “I grant, Lord; I cannot deny it; yet I am such a dog as may expect a crumb. If I may have a relation to Thee, let it be what it will; it is good enough.” She is content. He calls her so, and she says, “The dogs may eat of the crumbs.” She grants all He has said, and yet she gains her point well enough.

The point of doctrine is,

DOCT. *True humiliation doth not justle with Christ Jesus, but sweetly complies with Him.*

This poor woman did not justle with Christ. But when He calls her a dog, “Well, Lord, I grant I am a dog, and come of an evil kind, and evil of myself, and there are many much worthier to be set at the table than I; yet I will wait for a crumb, and that crumb is as effectual as a great piece of bread.”

In speaking to this doctrine, we shall consider,

1. False humility, and in what cases it justles with Christ.
2. What is true humility, and in what cases it sweetly

complies with God.

3. Some properties of true humility.
4. The advantages of them that have it.

#### I. The first thing we are to speak of is false humility.

This day we shall show what way false humility works. False humility is ever in one of these two extremities. It is either, 1st, ever low, that is lower than God would have it; or, 2ndly, it is higher than God would have it—higher than can be tolerated before Him.

1st, False humility goes lower than God would have it in these following respects:

1. False humility submits things to God that are not to be submitted, until they have all actual existence. For example, God never allowed a man to submit his salvation until it had all existence. There are many of you that will leave it to God whether to save or damn you. That is false humility; because He has declared His mind peremptorily to the contrary. People are still to press to get into heaven, until they be actually cast into hell. They will get no thanks from God for that kind of humility.

2. False humility leaves a latitude to God (where He leaves none) to save them whether they believe or not. “We know,” say they, “that people should believe; but He may save us any way. He may bring folk to heaven as well without faith as with it.” Do ye imagine that God will bring people to heaven except they believe? You are in a great mistake. “He that believeth not shall not see life. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” This is a sufficient proof.

3. False humility puts a man lower than the reach of free grace. When a man takes such a look of his guilt that he thinks himself below the free grace of God; though he will



not say that he has sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet he thinks God cannot pardon him. It is a sin to think so, when He has said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven." Thus false humility justles out the whole device of God in the covenant of free grace.

4. False humility is more tender of the glory of God than ever He was Himself. It is a strange sort of humility when one stands up and says, "I think it were an encroachment on the holiness of God to show mercy unto me. He may condescend to show mercy to whom He will; but He cannot condescend to pardon me." That is a strange thing. What is that to you, what encroachment it be on His holiness, since He has declared that He has found a ransom? And will ye be wiser than He? He will never account that humility. It is enough to us that He has made a declaration through the world; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." I shall satisfy myself in myself. Trouble not your heads about that. I am satisfied.

5. The fifth case wherein false humility goes lower than God allows is, that it counts it indiscretion to put little things into God's hand. Many think it indiscretion for them at such a time as this, to bid God heal their sore head that incapacitates them to hear the preaching; to help your faint heart that hinders you to profit by the word. This is the devil's humility, for the Lord counts all the hairs of your head. Some think it a piece of indiscretion to seek a peek of meal from God, and a coat to put on their back at such a time as this; though He has commanded you to put all your wants upon Him, from your salvation to your shoe-latchet.

6. False humility thinks it indiscretion to come often to God about one and the same thing. This humility justles with the majesty of God. This is the case with many of us. Ye have told God often what you are. You have frequented

many communions, and yet you are not the better. Ye have come often with one and the same thing, and ye blush to come to Him again. But in this ye are humble overmuch. I would have you ashamed that you have not come again and again about one and the same thing. Never account it indiscretion to come to Him, though the men of the world should think it so, while He has bid the brother forgive the brother, even to seventy times seven in a day. Oh, how much more will the great God of heaven forgive us in one day! So this humility is lower than ever God allowed it to be. Ye are ashamed to speak of your evil case over again, you have spoken of it so often. But truly ye must go again to Him with it, or else ye must do worse. For none of your ways are hid from Him. Ye think it would offend a saint to come so often to him about one and the same thing. But God will bear infinitely more with you than any saint will do. Although these things be marvelous in our eyes, yet they are not so in His eyes. You either grant that His mercy is like Himself, or else ye quite mistake Him. Now, these are cases wherein humility goes lower than ever God allowed it. And,

2nd, The next case is, wherein humility rises higher than ever God allowed it.

1. False humility goes higher than can be tolerated, in refusing to be in God's common. This is when people are still seeking for some qualification before they dare meddle with Christ in believing. They say they would not think much to go to Him, if they could get their hearts so and so broken—that is, if they could endure a penance for their sins. But this is to jostle with God, for He is upon this string, to “come without money and without price.” Oh, but there are many playing upon this string: “Had I such a measure of sorrow for my transgressions”—*i.e.*, I have no will to venture on Him absolutely. But nothing shall ye have but God's curse or displeasure, if ye take not another

way. Ye think it strange when people run still to Christ when they cannot do their own turn; but you may assure yourselves that it is the only way, for if ye stick at any qualification, ye spoil the market of free grace wholly.

2. A false humility has no will to be in Christ's common absolutely. It resolves to be but very little in it at all; though persons that have this kind of humility acknowledge they must be somewhat in His common, "For," say they, "He may show mercy to any other sinner, but not to such a one as I am. I know He can pardon sinners, but I cannot tell if He will pardon such as I am." False humility says, "There is nothing pinches me but to go to Him in such a case as I am in." When ye say so, truly it is a token ye know little what is betwixt you and Him. But remember what distance is betwixt you, the creature, and God; and betwixt sin and free grace. The difficulty here is, to make God stoop to man, there being such an infinite distance betwixt them. But there is no such disproportion betwixt your sin, and the sin of any others, as there is betwixt God and the creature. But has free grace stooped to pardon the sin of any? Then the hazard is past, so that your humility is proud humility, because ye will not be absolutely in His common. Ye dare venture the pardon of one sin upon Him, if it were but an ill thought or so; but ye dare not venture the pardon of such a sin that is great. That is strange ignorance. Ye think, if ye were like unto me, ye would venture upon Him; but if ye know what I am, and if I knew what ye are, we would see there is no such disproportion betwixt our sins and those of others as there is between God and the least sin that ever man committed. But know that if God stoop to pardon any man's sin, then the hazard is past, for your sin is not so far beyond the sin of any other as God is distant from the creature. But since free grace has stooped to pardon any sin, then if ye have the heart to venture the pardon of one idle word upon Him, then ye may venture upon Him the pardon of drunkenness, breach of covenant, yea, of

every sin. No sin can stand in the way, because the disproportion is betwixt sin and grace, and not betwixt grace and such a particular sin. Since God has stooped in this matter, the anger is past; His becoming Immanuel, God with us, is a greater difficulty.

3. This false humility justles with God about sin after conversion. At first it was content to be in His common absolutely; yet as to sin after conversion it hath no will to be in His common, for taking of new extracts of pardon or making special addresses to Him for the same. This is proud humility. There are many that think that, when they come first to close with Christ, they must resolve to take Him on His own terms, and to be absolutely in His common; but afterwards they think they cannot come, except they have such and such a stock of grace. "Would you have me going to God," say they, "in such a frame, before I get my heart humbled." But then, poor fools, ye may go any other way ye will. Are not all your repeated aetings of faith, repentance, &c., from God, absolutely from God? And therefore ye must be in His common for repentance and a broken heart, as well as for the pardon of sin. It is not a time now-a-days to be priggish with Him as ye were wont to do. Ye must be absolutely in His common, as at your first closing with Him. It is true ye ought to have better framed spirits, yet ye must be ever in His common Since ye want that, and cannot get it, ye must be ever in His common for new debt, as well as for the old. I grant it is duty to seek for a good frame of spirit at such a time as this; but if ye cannot get it, ye are to cast all upon Himself together, who careth for you.

4. This false humility will not acknowledge crumbs to be essential bread. Because persons meet not with special communication as others do, because there is something they have never gotten, because they never knew what sensible hearing of prayer and sensible presence was, therefore they

cast at all they have experienced. Truly ye are very proud; ye think nothing of heart conviction while you have a broken state; but consider that a man may have a worse thing than that. Ye think it nothing that ye apprehend Christ to be a precious jewel; ye think nothing that your desire runs that way. But indeed I think very much of it. Ye think nothing of it that ye account all His commands to be right, and that ye have a respect to small and great of them. That is a miserable humility of yours, since the Scripture has said that they “shall never be ashamed who have respect to all his commandments.” These crumbs are essential bread as well as big loaves. This was a prudent woman; she could be doing with little crumbs until she got more.

5. This humility that is over high will abate unto God some promise upon condition that He will perform other promises. But that is a cursed humility that would abate one promise, in order to obtain other promises that are of a greater concernment. I dare say there are many this day that would not seek health to their bodies all their days, nor the life of their wives or children, provided He would but save their souls and keep them from the troubles of this ill time. And is this fair, think ye, to set up such limits to the free bounty and holy majesty of God as not to deal liberally with Him according to His own Word? Doth He abate anything to thee? He is of a liberal heart, and allows His people to devise liberal things at His hand. Will He be in your common, so to speak, for giving Him down the performance of one promise for the out-making of another. Nay, He allows you to seek your salvation, your health, and the health of your children, with food and raiment to you and them, and every other thing that may be for your good. The people of God think it a singular virtue that they get all submitted to Him, except their salvation. I grant it is good if the Lord call for these things at your hand. In that case ye are to submit all to Him: but when He is not expressly putting you to it, ye are not to do it, but to put

Him to His promise. Has He not promised, thou shalt have bread, and thy water shall be sure? Ye may seek it from Him, for He can well spare it. He will never thank you for not asking a temporal benefit, though it were but the cure of a sore head, or sickly body. So never offer bid Him to pass from one promise to make out another. Ye will never come the better speed for doing so. I say, Seek health, food, and raiment, and as much means as may carry you through the world, without being burdensome to others. I warrant ye think that ye should never seek these things, but He hates the manner of a churl. It is still good to bode good, and get good at God's hand. "The liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand."

II. Now we come, in the second place, to speak of true humility. And,

1st, True humility complies with God in all the charges of sin. Let God charge the man with what He will, true humility takes with all. When He calls one a dog—"It is trite, Lord; we are justly called so, being come of an ill kind; and we ourselves being far worse, and like to grow no better. We are guilty of such and such things." Thus true humility grants all, and yet is never a bit the farther from its end; and this is the thing in which ye are to comply with Him this day. If there be anything in your way when approaching to Him at His table, and ye cannot tell whether it be a sin or not, take with it as a sin, and never stand upon it.

2ndly, True humility complies with God in all the charges He brings of corruption. God says, "Ye have an evil heart." "I wot well," say ye, "that is true." "You are not likely to amend, for all the pains I have taken upon you." "I think so, Lord; I come but little speed." "Your heart is as ready for an ill turn as ever it was." "Certainly that is a truth." "I think there was never an ill turn that fell out in the hand of any of thy people, but it is like to fall out in yours."

“True, Lord.” “Your heart sways some bad way at this time.” “Indeed that is as true as any of them all.” Thus true humility takes with all the charges of corruption that are brought against the soul.

3rdly, True humility complies with God as to the remedy both for the pardon of sin and for help against the power of sin. True humility accounts it no pride to submit to the righteousness of God. True humility complies with God as to the remedy He has provided for the guilt of sin, and as to the remedy He has provided for the dominion of it. It grants that it is a slave to many a lust; yea, a very fool; but it will grant more—it will grant that Christ is “made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.” My heart faints and fails it is true, indeed, “But God is the strength of my heart, and portion for ever.” That is true. If God say, “There is life in my Son,” true humility is as ready to say, “That is true; I shall get life.” If He say, “There is no way to destroy corruption but by abiding in Christ.” “Well,” says humility, “I will cleave to Him as the branches abide in the vine.” “There is a fountain opened to the house of David for sin, and for uncleanness.” “Well,” says true humility, and it complies with this contrivance, as the only remedy for the purging away of corruption.

4thly, True humility complies with God by standing to the bit, and that over the belly of such boasting, and many difficulties, and does not take the Lord short at the first word, so to speak, *i.e.*, If God will not give this thing, at this time, let Him do as He pleaseth. It is but pride to take God at His first word. This woman was an example of true humility: she was a pattern to copy after. “Thou art a dog.” “I grant,” says she, “I am a filthy one.” “Thou art none of mine.” “I grant,” says she, “I was never worthy to be called one of Thine. That is true, Lord, but we must not part so. I will abide until I reach God’s design;” which was to save

sinners. All His hard sayings were never to put away a poor sinner; but to quicken their desires and bring them nearer to Himself. Thus true humility always complies with God in what He says. It will be grieving that it gets no more; but yet it still takes what it can have. Take good heed: this carriage of true humility lies much in these two things:

1. It will be taking the essentials of life and peace, viz., Christ Himself: and yet will be still complaining of the want of these communications, these precious things He useth to distribute to His people. Yet it will solace itself in effectual grace when it finds itself under the condemnation for sin, through the conviction of heart. It sees Christ the essential treasure, worth all in the world. It will take up Him thankfully, as the essentials of life, and peace, and all the other graces. The awe of God being upon the heart, they that have this humility will make conscience of their way; but still there will be much sorrow at heart that they cannot get the love of God more abundantly shed abroad therein, with sensible presence and prayer taken off their hand. Ay, but these things are not meat; they are beautiful rings and jewels, but they cannot eat them. They are good and delightful; but a man's life cannot be holden in by them. It is Himself that fills, and is all in all to them.

2. It will be taking what is essential, and yet it will know itself to want many things. It will be ever grieving or complaining for want of other essentials. True humility will be blessing God, and yet it will be loathing itself for what the person has done. It will be very low because it cannot get heart-breaking contrition, self-loathing, and self-judging for sin. It loatheth itself because it cannot love and take thankfully of God's hand, anything of love He bestows. It would gladly have more love. Though the person's heart be not so as he would and ought, yet he will take it thankfully off God's hand that He has brought him to this, to offer up the heart to Him, and also unto His whole law. But still it



breaks his heart that he cannot attain to practical obedience to all His commands. Yet since God has stated it as an evidence of His love to have some respect to all His commands—“Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy commandments”—he will bless the Lord for all He has given him till he get more. Some will get leave to stand at the King’s table, and some to dip their morsel in the platter with Him; while others are set at a bye-table with a piece of dry bread, and all are fed with the same substantial food—even he that gets the crumbs as well as he that sits at the table.

5thly, True humility takes things in the naked promise, and leaves the performance of them to God’s own time. Give true humility a promise, and it will rest satisfied. It gives much glory to God, and is well pleasing in His sight, that we should hang all upon the promise. It is what God has designed, that we should all hang upon His word. True humility complies with God. If He will give me a word that will save me. Let Him do with me as seemeth Him good. Give me the promise that thou wilt break the dominion of such and such a lust, or idol; then I will leave it to thee to do it when thou wilt. Though I be impatient of its rule in me, yet I will not be so peremptory as to say that I will have it done at this communion or else never look for it more. Ye must not limit Him to such and such a time. Ye must not limit the Holy One of Israel. He hath said, “That it shall be well with the righteous.” And “The foot of the wicked shall slide in due time.” Then wait for it; it shall be accomplished, since He hath said that He will also do it.

6thly, True humility dares not help to bring about the performance of the promise in any way, but in the way He has allowed. If the Lord commands a peremptory duty, it dares not dispute with God about the event, whatever cross or difficulty may follow thereon. It deals more with Christ for the removal of the wrath than of the stroke in the cross. It

closes with Him as the only remedy; whereas false humility would shake off the cross and take some nearer way. But true humility will wait on a while, for it still expects good at God's hand. If He command me to go to such a communion, though I want a frame for it I must go there. And then I am to apprehend Himself, and exercise the faith of adherence, till I get more. Though I be not in a good frame, I am not to stay away from the communion; for where is a good frame to be had if not in His way? True humility dares not take any sinful way to bring about God's promise, neither dares it venture upon anything not commanded of God.

7thly, True humility complies with God in this, that it still makes more bold with its own things than with the matters of God. Hence, when its own interest and God's come in competition, it stands to God's and lets its own fall. For example, there is a thing the doing of which is a sin, or I shall be made to suffer. Well, but I will rather suffer before I sin. For there is but suffering on the one side, but there is sinning on the other. Ay, but there may be sin in it consequently. Yet that is but a may-be. The one may or may not be, but the other is clearly and manifestly sin. Suppose my suffering to be sin consequently; yet I am not called to venture upon what is manifest guilt, because my suffering may be sin consequently. True humility will venture more upon the body than upon the soul; and in this it complies with God, for God regards the soul most. Take this example for a proof: God cut down Job's children and all his worldly substance; yea, all he had, that he might get a little more grace. Oh, but God will squeeze a man strongly in his body, interests, and goods, to increase his grace.

III. The third thing to be spoken to, is: The properties of true humility. And,

1st, Although it is most condescending and complying, yet

it is most sagacious and wise to take up all that God says or does to His people. It discerns that God thereby designs to save and not destroy His people. It takes up all that God does, as what is in order to bring them to Himself, and not to chase them away from Him.

2ndly, True humility is wise to distinguish between spiritual truths and those called canonical. Every word of Scripture taken by itself is not canonical, as, “I will deliver you no more,” whereas He delivered them many a time after that. And, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Can these literally be called canonical? Then they must agree with other Scriptures, and with the analogy of faith. Every place of Scripture, taken by itself, could not be called canonical, except it were compared with other Scriptures and the analogy of faith.

3rdly, True humility is most wise and sagacious to take up sin as the worst thing in the world; and then it is most charitable towards God in all His procedure, but most uncharitable to itself in all the cases we have spoken to. True humility puts a good construction on all God does or says. If it cannot extricate or falsify itself by one particular truth, it will run to another that relates to the sovereignty of God. It still deviseth liberally of God. What if I cannot see a consistency between such a promise, and what He seems to say in such or such a particular; or how such or such a particular work shall be brought about—well, in this case, humility runs to some particular truth that is absolute, as, “Marvelous in our eyes;” yet it is not so with Him. Let Him do what pleases Him; for it is in His power. Then true humility has still true faith going along with it. It dares not question whether He will condescend to all these things, even to whatever He has said in His word. He says, “That in all the afflictions of his people, he is afflicted.” And yet all the world cannot tell how it is so. He has said, that He “will save his people in due time;” and that He “will be a

helper to them, and that right early.” True humility dares not question these things, since He has said it shall be so; though in the meantime He be breaking them in the place of dragons, and they see the wicked “flourish as a green bay-tree.”

4thly, True humility is most legal, and dares not dispute any of His commands whose will is a law, a prerogative that belongs to no sovereign power on earth. True humility dares not dispute His commands; but if He charge and command in His own name that any who sees his need should believe in His Son, and that he should turn the grace of God into wantonness, he must do it. He commands the man who brings his idols this day to be slain by the death of Christ, to take his communion as a seal of the pardon of them, and a seal of all the promises that ever He hath spoken. They know it belongs to them to perform duties, and not to debate commanded duty. Then true humility will weather out many blasts, and ward off many assaults. It sees a reason why it gets not such a thing it would have at such and such a time; and why He deals this and that way, and not another way, with His people. It sees a reason for all these things. Then true humility will not be wiser than God; for it knows He sees a way to glorify Himself more in pardoning and saving the person, by believing, than by letting him die or rot in the prison of sin through unbelief. He will never have so much glory in that way; for He is more glorified by believing in Christ, than He would be if ye should burn in hell to eternity.

IV. Therefore ye see the advantages of true humility, that whoever has it, their condition is most promising for growth in grace; for He “giveth grace unto the humble.” He giveth more grace to the man that will not strive with Him, but is still taking and waiting for more. If the Lord is dealing anything to His people, such a one is the most likely

to get something. He is the man that gets the quickest dispatches from heaven of any. For He hears the desire of the humble; yea, if it be but come to a desire, it will be answered, and that is a great advantage; and if he happen to fall or make a slip, such a man or woman has a promise to be raised, or made up again. "To this man will I look, that is of a humble or contrite heart." Then this humble frame has a great advantage in this respect, that God will let such as have it know what way to go in a dark and cloudy day sooner than any other; yea, and to keep the way when many others run wrong. Here it is, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Nay, though he be otherwise a fool, he is assured (which is much worth in an evil day) that nothing will offend him.

USE. Let me then exhort you to beware of false humility at this time, and juggle not with God. Be not lower than what He would have you. Say not that ye will not come to turn again with reiterated guilt, and faults that ye have done over and over again, and confessed very often before Him; for there is no other way for you to go or to get your case helped. Never cast at crumbs, but remember that in true humility lies your best frame of spirit and most sure outgate. Take with all your sins, and with all that God charges you with as to sin and corruption, and yet cleave closely to Him; and any bit that falls to your share take it, and be still weeping and seeking for more.

---

Footnotes:

1. The manuscript's title bears this to have been a Communion sermon at Fenwick, being the last Sacrament he had there, and so the last action-sermon he ever preached.

## SERMON XV.<sup>1</sup>

*“And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.”*

Matthew 15:27

The DOCTRINE is this: *Although there be gradual differences in many things in God’s house, yet there is no essential difference amongst these things.*

This woman acknowledges that there was a feast at the table, that people might partake of, as also crumbs not essentially different from the great loaves. There are some that sit at His elbow at the table; and there are others that have a true interest in Him, and yet are but dogs in their own esteem in respect of others; and these creep in among the children and eat the crumbs that fall from the table; and yet these crumbs are essential bread as well as the great loaves are.

Now, in speaking to this subject, we shall,

1. Show what are these things or matters of God, wherein there is such a gradual difference, and wherein this doth appear.
2. Show you that, though there be such gradual differences, yet there is no essential difference.
3. Show you why the Lord hath resolved to keep such a difference amongst the receipts in the various administrations to His people, that often we think it would be much better if we had the managing of the business; and that all should be equal and of one size in this respect.

I. The first thing then, is, to show wherein this difference does most appear. And it appears,

1. In this, that there is a gradual difference among people’s

transgressions; and therefore there is a gradual difference amongst them in the law-work which they undergo. There are some that have such strong convictions of their sins that they can scarcely say they have any impressions of them upon their hearts. And again, there are some others that are kept many a day under the spirit of bondage. Yea, upon some they have been so heavy that they have been ready to kill themselves; and others put almost stone-blind with terror of conscience. But it is the mercy of some that they are not put upon that extremity.

2. There is a difference in the Lord's outletting of His saving grace. To some He has given but a little measure of grace, but yet so great that they still take up God to be God, and sin to be sin. But oh, how far are they from that sagacity and wisdom in grace that others are partakers of! The Lord hath given it to some only to look to Christ, and they dare do no more. But He giveth to others to receive Him with open arms. He makes out all His receipts in different proportions, and yet there is no ground of quarrelling; so it is in all the graces; some get strength to stand in a temptation, and there are some that dare not venture on sufferings as others do. And,

3. There is a gradual difference in the special manifestation of His favour, and in the shedding abroad of the light of His countenance, which ye call sensible presence, or the shedding abroad of His love upon a man's heart. There are some that have but tasted of these things, so that, even though they had them, yet they would scarcely have the confidence to affect that they have anything at all. Others have been feasted with apples and wine "well refined on the lees for many days." And yet there is no ground of quarrelling with Him where there is a gradual difference amongst His people in this respect. There are some called babes, being weak; some called young men, being strong; and some are called fathers, because of experience.

Lastly, There is a gradual difference in the promises relating to all these fore-mentioned sizes, the Lord having made one or other of the promises answerable to each person's case, size, and condition. There is a promise made to him that hungereth and thirsteth, to him that is called and to him that wills, to them that can but look to Him, to them that open their mouth, and to them that are far off. All these promises are moulded differently by Him to answer the case of each particular person.

II. The second thing we would speak unto is, to let you see that there is no essential difference amongst them. This will appear, if we consider the true nature of the things themselves that we have spoken of; for to partake of them in the meanest degree has in it no essential difference from partaking of them in the very highest degree spoken of in the Scriptures. For,

1st, As to the law-work, which makes way through people's souls for Christ, some have got but little of it; and yet they have walked afterwards, so that they durst not say but that they had the grace of God, as well as those who had more of it, for in both cases there has been a real belief of the wrath and curse of God, due to them for sin and transgression.

2ndly, There hath been a proportion of the curse of the law directly to themselves for sin; and then the party, from an apprehension of misery, flees from himself, being now past hope of any relief from himself, feeling his utter inability to help himself. Christ has thus made room for Himself to come in, and has discovered sin in such a light as has excited in them a hatred against it, even the most earnest beloved sin as the worst thing imaginable. This makes out that in these things there is no essential difference. Then,



3rdly, If we consider the nature of faith, there is no difference in this respect. There are some that have weak faith and dare never call it faith; and there are others that have strong faith, and yet, I say, there is no essential difference. It is called "the like precious faith," and not the like strong faith. For is there not in the former persons the denial of self-righteousness, or anything that could help to fit them for appearing before God. This is to be found in both parties. And have not both had the faith of Christ's fullness; they believe that there is a fullness in Him to satisfy and satiate the soul. But all the matter is, how to get it? However, there is real faith in both parties. Both consent that there is a fullness in Him suitable to their case. In the weakest faith there is a desire and an endeavour to have it implanted in the heart. Herein stands the true essence of faith; when the creature applies Christ in the promise to itself and its own case, although it knows not if it shall come speed. If so, then, what need ye make such a noise that ye have not so much faith as others have?

4thly, Then there is a gradual difference in the grace of love. There are some that durst never say that they have love to Christ; and yet are loathing themselves that they could never love Him. Again, there are others that find the passion of love so carrying them out toward Him, that they are made to disdain all other things besides Him. Oh, but there is a great difference here, and yet no effectual difference! For is there not that operating love to Him, that sets Him above all other creatures in their esteem? There is an invincible respect to Christ which sets Him beyond and above all creatures, "so that many waters cannot quench it, nor can the floods drown it."

Yea, I may say, many ill turns done you will not quench it, nor will many waters of afflictions alienate your affections from Him. If the dearest friend you have in the world had done the hundredth part of that which you did to Him, ye

would never be reconciled unto him; they would never have got your hearts again. Then, is there not respect to Him that turns to jealousy, and that jealousy burns like a fire? If ye have true grounds of jealousy of His love and respect to you, is there anything in the world that can quench it? As ye could not readily fall upon that thing in the world that could satisfy you, as to the jealousy that He loves you not. Again, if there are jealousies that ye have not a regard to God's commands, upon which the Spirit of God has terminated that love, although ye have not yet overcoming assurance or dare affirm that there is effectual obedience to His commands, yet I hope by this ye may find yourselves to have the essentials of true love. Again,

5thly, There is, in the grace of patience, a gradual, though no essential difference. I know that this sticks much with the people of God that they are so far different in point of submission from others; and that they cannot bear things as others do, and yet have a grudge to say they have no grace. Yet I must let you see that it is not the least degree of patience that they have; for they have given away their souls to Christ, and have respect to His commands, and that must fix the character of the party: for patience will not do where that is a-wanting. If ye grant that, then ye must grant this also, that all the graces of God are there in the habit. And then the exercise of this grace of patience appears in their self-judging and acknowledging that they have justly procured these things that they have met with. It looks like patience when they judge themselves worthy of much more punishment than ever He laid upon them. It looks like true patience, as I think, when there is a cordial justifying of God in what He does to them, and a deliberate submission to Him in cold blood; and when their heart will not go with them, then they appeal to God to make it submit. And herein, I say, lies the nature of true patience. By this ye may apprehend that there is no essential difference

in the work of grace amongst the hearts of His people; because the promises are equally directed to all the several degrees even to the meanest of His people. This says they agree with others essentially. Whatever promises are made to the man that receives Him with open arms are also made to him that but looks toward Christ, and cannot tell if he shall get Him; the promises are made equally sure to both. And this will make it out that there are many a time as good accounts had of the meanest of gracious recipients, and of the meanest sizes, in difficult cases in the day of suffering and testifying for Christ's interest in the world, as there are of them that are of a greater size and capacity; by which we may discern there is no essential difference. It has been often found that some who durst never claim an interest in Christ, nor had the confidence to do so, yet have been as bold for the interest of Christ, when it came to the bit, as those who were of a greater size both for gifts and graces. And many a time the man that could never think to bear an ill word from his neighbour has suffered cheerfully to be dragged to a prison and hanged for the cause of Christ without ever opening his mouth. Many a time the weakest, that ye never made any account of, have, at their death, made a better confession of Christ than the greatest professor in all the country. And the reason is, Christ has got His pennyworth, so to speak, of the man that has been a professor for years past, and was known to be such through all the country before his death. But there is a poor man, or woman, that was never known to have anything before he was taken by death, is seen glorifying God and His free grace to the refreshing of all who stand by. So that all these different degrees of grace are all of one and the same gracious spirit, and the same gracious work, and have the same gracious ends. And that says that there is no difference essentially, although there be different manifestations and administrations. It is unity with Him, and conformity to Him that all these administrations drive on; that is the great end of the whole.

III. The third thing is, Wherefore doth the Lord keep or make these gradual differences in His way of dealing to His people? Ye would think it much better for God to give a great stock of faith, love, patience, &c., to all His people, and that it would be more comfortable to them than when they are kept at such a great distance, and with such a scanty measure of gifts and graces. It is true we think so; but He is much wiser than we. For

1st, He does it because He has resolved to give out divers administrations to the body whereof He Himself is the Head. He will have different members of His body, and different qualifications with which he will be served. He will have in the body eyes, hands, feet, &c. And yet they are but one complete body, and communion of saints; which could not be if they were all alike. "Ye know more than I do," says one, "and have greater understanding in the matters of God." "Well," says another, "but I love more than ye do. Ye think ye would do more for Christ than I would do, but it may be if there were ought to do for the cause of Christ I would fight better than ye would do for all that."

2ndly, By this gradual manner of His administration, the Lord keeps the ransom still in request, and the intercession of Christ in heaven still in request. For if we had gotten it in our own hand, Christ would soon have been out of request with us, and we would soon lose respect to the ransom. But now when infirmities appear from day to day it keeps the ransom still precious to the soul. Oh, but Christ is precious to the soul when it thinks upon this, "I have gotten much from Him, but I want much, and I must have more from Him."

3rdly, The Lord is pleased to continue this diversity of administrations of grace because the earth could not bear grace in its perfection. Therefore hath the Lord given it out

in a small measure. For the Lord hath determined to transplant all the trees of grace into Immanuel's land, where only there is the full and uninterrupted breathing of the Holy Ghost. The creature while here cannot bear perfection. And then

4thly, The Lord is pleased to do so because He intends there shall be a clear difference betwixt earth and heaven. And oh, how sweet will heaven and Christ be, and the fullness of joy that is at His right hand to the poor creature that never could be satisfied with Him here on earth! If folk could get a satisfying sight of Christ here on earth, they would become out of conceit with heaven and eternal glory. Oh, but heaven and perfection will be sweet to those who could never get their corruptions mortified here in this world, but were trampled upon by them day by day; and many a sigh they heaved and many a groan for their redemption while on earth. Oh, but heaven and glory will be sweet unto them! since the hopes of it are sometimes so sweet and comfortable even now in this militant state.

USE. Now for use let me farther obtest you that since there is such difference in the administration of these graces, you do not mistake Him, nor go away with an evil report of Him, though ye find not these things in yourselves that others have.

1st, I obtest you that ye always account these crumbs essential bread and cast not at them though ye get no more at present. As for the being and true nature of grace, never cease till it have an existence within you. Make sure of this, and then have a respect to all His commands. Acknowledge God in this, and thank Him for it, although ye cannot attain unto a greater degree of grace.

2ndly, Although I would have you covet the best things, yet I would have you be thankful for the least things ye have

received. Be thankful, although ye have not attained unto such a frame of heart as you would have desired at this time. And,

3rdly, I pray all of you that ye judge not others because they are not of your own size. It is a miserable evil in these times, that a dreadful spirit of jealousy prevails one of another, of their falling in with the snares of the time; because below them in understanding in the matters of God that are now in debate. And yet when it comes to the point, these may be as particular in their confession of the truth as ye will be, and perhaps may abide better by it. Neither on the other hand are ye to think that those who can speak better in these things than ye can do are under a delusion. And,

4thly, Make this use of it, that if it is so, that gracious recipients under many degrees suffer many foils by corruptions, then what will grace suffer in them that have but a third degree but turn it over again? If he that has but a third degree of grace resist a temptation and comes honourably through, how much is your sin and shame that are soiled and snared by corruption, though you have received grace in the sixth degree? But be it known unto you that it is not the degrees of grace that hold out against corruption and enable to debate with it and to resist temptations, but the sovereignty of grace; otherwise how comes it that he that is in the lively exercise of grace is almost overcome and foiled by temptations when he that is out of frame, and grace much under with him, is not so much undone with corruption? Truly no man can give a reason for it but this, that He hath set a bound to the sea, and said, "Hitherto shall thou come, but no further." He hath set bounds to a man's corruption that such a length it shall come and no further. Therefore trust much to Him and His sovereignty, and little to grace received in the highest degree that men usually receive in the administration of it; for many times those from whom least is expected prove most forthcoming

for the glory of God. Who would have expected this of this Canaanitish woman? And oh but she proves a frugal and wise woman!

But let us then, Sirs, for farther use of this doctrine, observe, 1st, That the gradual degrees of grace and parts is not from the disagreement of natural properties; for many a time those persons that have but little promising-like, and are but like striplings, will get as well through as those who are of a greater stature; shrubs will sometimes stand, yea, even small plants in God's garden, when the most tall cedars will split, fall, or break in pieces before the wind of temptation.

2ndly, It is most consonant to the nature of grace that where least is expected most should come forth to the praise of God. Because grace runs in that channel, "Not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty."

3rdly, This is most congruous to Christ's prophecy: "Many that are first, shall be last; and the last shall be first." And,

4thly, This is disagreeable to the experience of the people of God. In all ages it was still so, that there was most good found in the hands where little was expected. What then are these things that make us expect little at some people's hands?

1. They are come of an evil kind and of an ill education. But it is a small matter with God to make such profitable. For such was this woman. She was come of an ill kind, and of a bad education; and yet she was as wise a woman as was in all that country.

2. Where there is an unfruitful soil, and want of the means

of instruction, it is a circumstance that makes little be expected at their hand. But that will not tell; for there is many an openhearted Christian in the world that no person can tell where he got his knowledge, for in the bounds allotted him there is not one full meal to be gotten; but they have been obliged to break over into some other soil for sustenance.

3. Little profession of the party makes us suspect them and look for little good from them. They were never much heard of. But this is nothing; for truly ye will not know them. And,

4. They have fallen into some temptation so easily, that ye never look for more good at their hand. But what would ye have thought of Peter, that a simple girl put so shamefully out? Yea, but Peter will be hanged for the same cause afterwards for all that. There may be many like Nicodemus, that dare not make much public confession for Christ, and yet there may be rich forthcoming in them afterwards. Yet in these cases there will be,

(1.) In regard of solid acknowledgment and bearing witness to the truth in a declining time, when people that have greater knowledge and parts will make a foul slip and disappear, then others who never knew the tenth part of these things that they knew will stand it out to the utmost. It was so when a deluge of error came through the land. There were some poor folk that kept their feet better than those who had ten times more knowledge. It will be so yet in these times of trial that approach.

(2.) There will be forthcoming in many likewise, in respect of faith and of pure gospel ordinances, where little is expected. When there is no opposition, we use to say it is easy calling in the court when there is none calling again. So it is easy professing the truth and a work of reformation as



long as none are called to an account for it. But stay a little till the trial come as to the faith of the gospel ordinances, and then ye will see one who durst never profess much confidence in these things cleave fast to pure gospel ordinances, when many that now profess much will draw back and fall behind in the truth.

(3.) In point of charity there will be much forthcoming where little was expected. There is much talking of religion; but will ye evidence your religion by works of charity to the banished ministers and others of God's people who are in straits for Him. There are many who have no great profession, but they are liberal in love and kindness to the people of God. And I assure you that is no small piece of religion; true love to His friends in their straits for His sake is not one of the least parts of religion. And,

(4.) Such people as there will be little expected of in point of patient suffering for Christ may yet be as free and frank as can be; nay, go beyond others that more might have been expected of.

But then ye will say, "What makes our Lord Jesus Christ take that away, that in those of whom least was expected there should be most forthcoming for Him and His cause?" The reasons may be:

1. That God loves to take a way of His own with all His works; as we see ordinarily that whenever we pitch upon any way we think most fit, suitable, and convenient for carrying on any matter, it is a hundred to one if ever God take that way but another way with it.

2. He does so because where there is much, people are ready to idolize that stock of grace they have and trust much to it; but where there is but little on hand, there is much or more relying on God by faith in duty.

Then for another USE of improving this. If there be much forthcoming in those from whom little is to be expected, then there may be much expected from you who have received much. It will be both a sin and a shame if ye do not something for Him. And remember this, ye that are great professors, the more that is expected of you, if you come short of it, the more will be the loss and disadvantage to the cause of God and to yourselves also. Misgiving in you will be more shameful than in many others. Ye that are great professors in the country side, I pray you, take heed how ye desire the day of trial; for people will say they will do this, and that, and the other thing, and what not, when they are not put to it; but away with such foolish romances. Ye will find a trial in suffering for truth another thing than ye think. Some think they will do and suffer because of what they have received, and because of their former engagements and great parts, which thought is but a trusting to their own strength. But truly if ye look for standing in that way, it is a hundred to one if ye fall not, and that shamefully. Ye must never reckon upon your stedfastness in one trial, or your resolutions and engagements, or upon this, that other folk think much of you; but think ye still the less of yourselves. For ordinary in the day of trial God uses to stain the glory of all flesh. If others think much of you think little of yourselves, otherwise ye shall perhaps fall into some scrape, ere all be done, that shall make all the country think little of you. Then, if ye would keep your feet in a day of trial, keep up a constant trade with heaven for fresh supplies from God, for that will do it. Be content to be amongst the meanest in respect; for we always hope that the Master shall have most praise from many people's faithfulness and honesty, that have least help or hope in themselves. Then pray for them of whom we have little expectation, for their standing may be much for the Master's praise. Do not think it strange that you hear that some people that ye would have expected little from have given such testimony and not joined with the times, notwithstanding

their little or no profession; for it has pleased the “Father to reveal these things to babes and sucklings,” and hide them from the wise and prudent, even so it hath pleased Him to do.

And moreover, I would gladly engage some of you who are gentlemen, great folk and professors, to bear testimony for the truth. I would have you not to think it foolishness to be engaged in the matters of God. There are many of you gentlemen, and country men, that think we look for little at your hand as to your abiding by the truth and being valiant for it. Well, then, will ye beguile us? Indeed we think much of you, and we hope there is a good turn in some of your hands yet for the cause of God. I would not have you over busy to comply with the folk in the least. Since we look for your hand if there be ought ado, then will ye be commending the controverted truths to your families and poor things under your hand? Keep your hands now free of complying with the wicked party. Do not admit of a tentation, and that will be your peace and credit, and will much commend you to the hearts of the people of God to make them praise Him for you, and pray for you, and say “I have resolved to quit my estate as well as others, before I sin. I shall bear witness that I shall be as denied to it as others that may be promising more, and it may be I shall go to prison as well as others, before I deny the work of God and break the Covenants.”

And then we would have you beware of giving way to despondency. But leave room to the promises when the matter is come to this push, for God will bear your charges and give out the expenses.

Lastly, We shall speak a word to you who are great professors. Oh, but ye have need to study to be much to the Master’s praise both in word and deed; to be particular in faith, in doctrine, in temperance, and holy walking with God,

and generally to make it your study how to be for His glory, for He has taken much pains with you and for your encouragement. The Master's glory is much concerned in your being faithful, and His glory and your standing are twisted together, and that connection is of much value. And further, your standing in these evil times is an accomplishment of the great Gospel promise in the word for your comfort. And further, ye have the very flower of all the people of God's prayers in the three nations with you for your consolation. There is many a beautiful cloud of prayers going up in the three kingdoms in behalf of them that keep honest as they are engaged in the truths of God. And truly if we were not more beholden to others' prayers than our own, it would not be well with us; for though ye be not still at prayer yourselves, yet there is some still at prayer for you. Then behave yourselves honestly. God has given a good account of those gone off the stage for the truth already. God has given us a good break in them that have suffered and are banished. These have given the cross of Christ a noble testimony,<sup>2</sup> a circumstance that speaks much good to us who are to follow after. Then, Sirs, take up your ground and state yourselves. Has God given you Christ? "How much more will He give you with him every good and perfect gift?"

Now have ye gotten Christ? Truly, then, all other things will be but little to that; any other thing is but like a pin in your clothes. This will be your victory, even your faith. Faith is accounted the more precious that it endureth temptations—faith that dares cleave to Him in all opposition gets still the quickest dispatch in anything in the word of God answering it; then faith and patience are no empty things. This woman found it so; she found it even as He had said. It was no bare compliment; it was an effectual word, "and her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

---

Footnotes:

1. This, the second sermon on this text, was preached upon the Monday after the last Sacrament Mr. Guthrie had in Fenwick.

2. By these gone off the stage here, no doubt, is meant Christ's cause in Mr. James Guthrie, the Marquis of Argyle, and Lord Warriston; and by the banished, those seven eminent ministers who were in the years 1662 and 1663 banished to Holland.

## SERMON XVI.<sup>1</sup>

*“Then answered Jesus, and said unto her, O woman,  
great is thy faith: be it unto thee as thou wilt.”*

Matthew 15:28

THESE words, as we have heard before, contain the result and conclusion of the business that passed between Christ and this woman. He commends her faith and grants her her errand to the full, and gives her the word she was waiting for. Ye have heard from these words that the more and greater difficulties that faith honestly wrestles through, the more it is esteemed by the Lord, and well pleasing in His sight. Her faith is called great upon this account, that she wrestled honestly through great difficulties. Ye have heard also that sometimes the Lord bears testimony to grace in His people. Here ye see He gives testimony to this woman's faith: “O woman, great is thy faith.”

I proposed lastly, this third DOCTRINE, *That of all the graces in God's people, faith still proves most victorious, and attains its errand best.*

Faith is still victorious with regard to what it is depending upon God for. It is upon this account that He calls this woman's faith a great faith, because she had so absolutely hung upon Him till she obtained it.

In prosecuting this doctrine, we told you what this faith was: that it was a resolute depending upon God for necessary mercies in His own way, and that this faith was joined with prayer, with diligence, with patience, and with courage, in and under occurring difficulties, and with hope in God in and beyond all these; and what it was this faith overcame; and how it overcomes these things by setting prayer on foot, by engaging the glory of God in the business; by setting former experiences of His thankfulness and kindness against new threatenings; by engaging Christ in

the business; by aiming at glorious ends, and so making the mercy that they got redound to the glory of God, and by turning all disadvantages into encouragement. It cannot be other than victorious when it keeps this way and method. The last thing that we left off at in the doctrine was this, the time when it attains and carries its errand, or is victorious. How it is victorious we have already spoken unto; and that it prevails with omnipotency and how it prevails has been shown you. But though that be true that it overcomes and carries its errand, yet ye must understand that it never carries its errand until the time of the decree. Ye must not be so foolish as to think that the strongest faith in the world can carry its errand before the appointed time come, even the time appointed by the Lord. For faith is but the instrument that brings the decreed thing into the man's hand. Indeed, when God works faith in a soul, it is a good instrument for doing such things as you have heard, and which ye may hear of afterwards. But I say, it doth not carry its errand until the time of the decree. But now ye may be all ready to think with yourselves, "Since faith carries not its errand till the time of the decree, truly we will never wait on it. It may be a long term day." For preventing this, I would put you in mind of these two or three things:

1. Everything is beautiful in its season, as saith the Scripture. And I hope ye will not think that the Lord moves unjustly and imprudently in His purposes. He who had all time in His own hand could not fail to take that time which would be the most proper time. Never think that the time of the decree is an unfit time, since God has made everything beautiful in its season. He has pitched upon the right season of everything, and of the outletting of every mercy. Ye cannot think otherwise of God, unless ye think dishonestly of Him. He who was before all time, and had all times in His eye and option, saw what would be the most fit time and season for the outletting of every mercy. Our time and the timing of our mercies are in His hand, where they are

better than in the hands of any other. There would have been a cold work amongst the saints ere now, if their time and the timing of their mercies had been in their own hand. I hope ye will give credit to God in the works He has done, that they are all beautiful, according to that word, "God will help her, and that right early." This is still a good word at all times, and in all places, "The Lord will help, and that right early." If He let out His mercies right early, then they will still come in season to His people. The mercy will be with you in as good a time as if ye had been watching all night for it. It will be with you ere ye get on your clothes, so to speak. It will be at your hand ere ever ye be ready. So I say, faith carries still its errand in the time of God's decree. All things are "beautiful in their season." "The Lord will be an helper, and that right early." And,

2. When things appear to be for the glory of God, then faith carries its errand. Faith does not carry its errand at every time. No, nor till the thing appears to the praise of God; as Peter expresses it, "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." This woman got an answer, but when was it? Not until she had buckled a while with the trial: not until she came unto this with it, "Be what I will, I shall have that mercy." Then He declares she had faith, and then it was to His praise to grant faith its errand. Whenever faith begins to grow, as it were, unreasonable and ill-mannered, and resolves that no difficulty shall stand in its way, which shall not through God's help be brought about to His praise, then there is hope of obtaining the mercy. "Send her away," said the disciples, "she will affront us all, if she get not somewhat." Then was the time for faith to carry its errand; for then it appeared to the praise of Him who gave it. Ye have been wrestling for the Church these two or three years past, and ye cannot get a good answer; but ye must wrestle better yet ere a delivery



come. If once it were for the praise of God then it will come. Ye must once come to this with it, that if God should drag us through hell, so to speak, we will be at Him; whatever difficulties occur in the way we will be at Him, then readily it will be for His praise to answer your petition. There is a

3. Third thing that speaks forth the time, and that is, patience. "Let patience have its perfect work," and then readily faith will carry its errand. Indeed, I must confess, some folk have been right well exercised this good while, still waiting some chance of it. But patience must come to a perfect work. Folk must resolve to be made what He pleases; and then they will be made something of by God. But truly there are not many of us at this with it. Yet truly the most part of us are but, as it were, binding and lowing with it, yet in somethings; but this must be laid by before faith have its perfect work. Faith's work is to be content to be made anything He will. This woman was content to be made anything He would, provided she could gain her errand. When the person is content He should do anything He will with it; that He should try better try; that He should afflict more afflict—then the person has resolved if all should go to all, still to hang upon Him for the mercy, and is ready to receive every impression but the wrong impression, that he will by no means receive. Faith is content to receive any impression He will; but a refusal of the mercy it will not admit of. There are many things the Lord has upon the wheels yet to be done; and if all these things were done and ready, then faith would carry its errand for the Church of God in her delivery. Ye must not think it long till the number of your brethren have suffered, and several things be done that God hath to do, then faith will carry its business. Ye must let God alone. I mean ye must not peremptorily limit Him to any time for working what He has to do. Ye know not how much He has to do yet ere He deliver the Church. Ye see not all the irons He hath in the fire, so to

speaking; for truly if ye saw them all ye would not speak as sometimes ye do. Though He be coming for the deliverance of the Church, yet there are many things withstanding Him in the way. The prince of Persia must stand in the way till Michael come. The work of God may be retarded for many days till Michael your prince come, and then it will be let no longer. Ye know not but it may be working in America, and going to come down by France and Germany.<sup>2</sup> That will do our turn. Yet the prince of the kingdom of Persia must withstand the work of the kingdom of God for many days. Would ye take patience till these days be over, the prince of the kingdom of Persia must withstand the work of God till Michael your prince come. But ye shall be no losers by this, for he will come at the set time; and ye shall see good reason to bless God that He chose out the time for the Church's deliverance.

Now for USE of this doctrine: It is no wonder that many folk lie in the mire with regard to many things that they have depending before God. Why, they never set faith on foot to help them. Faith is a victorious grace. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt;" "All things are possible to him that believeth;" "And they could not enter in because of their unbelief." I say, it is no marvel many folk's business lies low, because they do not set faith on foot to carry its errand. Would ye have anything that ye have to do with God to come good speed with you, then set faith on foot and make it move in the business. Now, I know as soon as I speak this, it will raise this objection in many (for I know it is the thought of many of your hearts) that the thing that ye have depending on God is what ye cannot get faith acted about. Ye cannot make faith move, nor yourselves believe it. I am pressing you to set faith on work for doing anything that ye have to do. Now ye object to this that ye cannot get faith acted anent anything ye have ado. Now that I may speak to this, there are several things that I shall tell you of that hinder faith from going out, from acting and moving

as to such and such a business. Now ye must either remove these, or else ye will never believe anything that ye have depending upon God, so as faith may move, act, and carry its errand in the business. And,

1st, The first thing that ye would remove out of the way is, your delight in known iniquity; for wherever there is any regard to any known iniquity, faith cannot move. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Whenever a man is condemned in his own heart for cleaving to any known iniquity, faith, so to speak, will never go out at that man's door for the bringing of anything from God to him, for it never expects to see him more. Remove this then ere you send out faith. Ye that are still saying that ye cannot act faith as to such and such a business, ye should know that if your heart condemns you for any known iniquity, without a resolution to quit it, all the world will never cause you to act faith as to any business that ye have to do with God.

2ndly, Ye should understand this, that unless a necessity be both pressed and received, ye do not act faith as to any business. Faith moves best on a clear ground. Faith is such a grace as cannot move but upon serious and necessary things. That which this woman has to do here is serious and necessary business. Faith always moves best when it is distressed with wants. The children of Israel, ye know, were under distresses and want, and their faith moves (Judges 10.). So if ye would have faith move anent anything ye have dependent on God, ye must remove indifference anent that matter out of the way, for faith moves not but in serious and necessary business.

3rdly, Faith moves only when folk are diligent in duty. It is but a fancy to think that faith will move without diligence in duty and uprightness in your walk. Faith has still hopes of meeting God, when the person is diligent in duty; but so

to speak, faith has neither hand nor heart to move in matters that it has dependent upon God, unless there be diligence in duty, for “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” Faith is made to move, and look for good, when the soul is diligent in duty, working righteousness, and walking uprightly before God. And,

4thly, Faith has no skill in moving, when it cannot say that the thing that it would have shall someway redound to the praise of God. Says James, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” Faith moves always best, and can believe most, when it can say, “If God give such a thing, it shall redound to His praise.” This is an argument the Psalmist makes use of for the Lord to arise and deliver His Church. “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.” And that a generation unknown should serve Him. In this case, the thing redounds to the Lord’s glory. “Spare me, and I shall shew forth thy loving-kindness to this generation.” Therefore, it were still best to send out faith with a vow in its right hand; for faith never moves well but when it has a vow in its right hand. When such a particular receipt of mercy shall be in such a particular way for God’s glory, then faith moves well. And I tell you ye should put some argument in faith’s hand, for it is not good enough for us to hold at generals. No, truly, we are not well known by generals; we must come to particulars with it, or else faith will never move when God gives you such a mercy as ye are interceding for. Then say that such a particular mercy shall redound to the Lord’s praise. Lay on the vow, and say that it shall be for the glory of God. Promise that at such a time ye will do such a thing. Will ye say this, and lay on the vow? Will ye say, “Unto thee shall vows be performed, O Lord”? I would have the people of God specifying some particular way for the attaining such a particular mercy as they are seeking, in

which it shall be for the glory of God. Once come to particulars with it this way, and then faith will move. Think ye that Scripture useless, "Thy vows are upon me, O God"? And ye know that when Jacob went to Padanaram, and left his own country, says he, "If thou wilt be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, then shall the Lord be my God, and of all that thou shalt give me, I shall surely give the tenth unto thee." So, I say, faith moves always best when it has a particular aim and a vow in its right hand, and that particular aim must be to the glory of God. Ye remember that which I spake to you not long ago: "If I deliver you," says Jephthah, "then shall I be your head." If Christ shall deliver us, He shall be our head; He shall be the Head of the Church Himself; there shall not be a rival that shall get a part of it. It is true He shall be our head whether He delivers us or not. But I would have you to come to some particulars with it, that if He shall help you through this evil time, ye shall do such a particular thing that shall be for His glory. The last thing I would say is this, that faith never loves but to go upon known grounds. The thing I mean is this, faith would still know what to say; it would still have its mouth filled with arguments when it has anything to do, and then it will move and go boldly on. I am persuaded the great reason why our faith in this generation never gets out fairly for anything we have to do with the Lord is, that we are never at the pains to fill its mouth with arguments. I grant that true faith is the evidence of things not seen, yet it is as true it desires not to go upon unknown grounds; for ye must understand faith is no fancy; it doth not move without some grounds, therefore ye should fill its mouth with arguments that ye may move the more boldly. For all that we are intending is this, to see if we can get faith to carry its errand for matters that it has depending upon God (as ye heard the last day), so that it may prove victorious at last.

And there are only these three cases I would condescend

upon; and I believe a great part of you would gladly have faith moving as to all the three, in bringing you a good answer from the Lord concerning them all. I believe ye will think them cases of importance and conscience. And faith is to be waited on and employed in all these three cases. But unless ye fill faith's mouth with arguments, it will not move nor bring you a good answer from the Lord as to any of these; therefore we shall endeavour to let you see what arguments will be fit to put in its mouth, so that it may the more confidently move and bring you a good answer anent them all. The

1. Is the case of your souls. I am sure some of you would know amidst the revolution of the times what will become of your souls. I am sure there are some of you have been waiting a long time to hear what God will do or say anent your souls. Well, we shall tell you what arguments you should put in faith's hands, that faith may bring you a good answer as to your souls.

2. Another case is as to your through-bearing in this evil time. I warrant there are some of you would gladly know if they shall be carried honestly through in this evil time. Ye cannot make faith take footing well in this business. Well, we shall tell you what arguments ye should put in faith's mouth that it may take footing, and move on these arguments if it move at all. The

3. Case is anent the Church of God. I am sure some of you would gladly have a good answer from the Lord for His poor Church; therefore we shall tell you what arguments ye should put in faith's hand for this, that we may expect some good thing from the Lord's hand to the poor Church, notwithstanding all these sad things that our eyes do behold. I think these three comprehend the substance of the great work that now we have to do concerning ecclesiastical affairs and matters of religion. Now, these three are the

most important cases under the sun. Well, then, if ye would have faith moving and bringing you a good answer from the Lord, as we have said, there is a necessity of filling its mouth with arguments. Let us then see what arguments are proper, that we may the more confidently believe and look for good from God concerning all these three things.

I now return to the first of these—the case of your souls. Ye would gladly have that perfected which concerns your souls. It may be ye have been labouring to set faith on foot; but it would never move that way yet. Well, we would now press you to take trial of faith further. There are very many arguments that we would have you to put in faith's hand as to this. If faith move not with these arguments, truly, if we may so speak, faith is far in the wrong to you. And on the other hand, if ye have bidden faith move and have not put these arguments in faith's hand, truly ye are far in the wrong to faith. And if ye cannot appropriate these to yourselves when ye hear me pronounce them, I have the worse notion of you, and so may continue to have this twelve-month for anything I know. Now the

1st Argument I would have you to put in faith's hand is this, "I have even been one of those to whom the Lord hath discovered his lost condition." Have ye this to say, "I wot well, I saw myself lost upon a thousand accounts? I have seen myself verily guilty and liable to wrath." I am sure that must be a good argument for you, since "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." It is likely ye may think little of this argument, but truly I'll tell you, you will put many arguments in faith's mouth ere it move if ye put not this in it. "Let God do with me what He will; I am liable to death on a thousand accounts." And then,

2ndly, Have ye this to say, "Well I wot I feel my lost condition, and mourn for it and the causes of it as one mourneth for his first born." In a word, this has come nearer your

heart than anything ye ever met with in the world. Have ye this to say, that you have been made to mourn over your lost condition, as one for an only son; and that it has gone nearer your heart than anything that ever you met with in the world? This indeed is a great argument when ye dare take the Lord to witness, that now and then, though seldom, this business has gone nearer your heart than anything ye ever met with. Indeed if ye can say so, ye look like one of those to whom that promise of washing is made by that fountain “that is opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” It was opened for them that mourn for this, as “one mourns for his first born, or an only child.”

3rdly, Have ye any more to say? Yes, I have this to say, “I have lost all hope of relief in myself.” Well ye are then like those folk that have no confidence in the flesh, whose rejoicing is in Jesus Christ. I would not wish for a better argument than that; take heed to these arguments, and remember them, and gather, and keep them well together: you are one of them to whom God has discovered their lost condition; and when ye were made to see it, it went so near your heart, that ye never found anything go so near it before. Ye saw there was nothing in yourself self. Ye might well make the plea worse, but ye could never make it better, and therefore you cast off all hope in yourself. Very well said indeed, these three agree very well together. But,

4thly, A fourth argument, Have ye any more to say? Can ye say this further? that your eyes have been thus far opened, though ye wot not well how, that you now see where your help lies, so that ye are not afraid to say this, “I wot well, my help is in Christ if I could attain it; I would seek no other thing from God, as miserable as I am, but what that ransom Christ paid did procure. I will have no more, and I will have no less. I will tell you more, if I had a thousand souls in one, I would venture them all that way



upon that purchase. I would not venture one of them upon another way." A very good argument, truly! I cannot see ye can be well refused. Ye see ye want help in yourself, and ye see where your help lies if you could have it; and ye will not go another way for it. Ye grant God has made you see where your help lies both suitably and satisfyingly for your state and condition. Ye say ye dare venture upon it for all need, both for the present and for the time to come. Indeed it is very likely ye hear of something promising-like concerning your soul. For "he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." There is good in that argument: it is much to believe that He that suffered without the gates of Jerusalem is the Son of God, and to be content to take what He has purchased by that suffering for their help. To believe that is no small matter indeed.

5thly, A fifth argument, What more can ye say? Can ye say any more to faith ere it go? Yes, I can say this farther: That he is happy that gets this though he were burnt at a stake; I have such an esteem of it, that I think if God would uphold me I would be content to be burnt at once myself for it. Truly that is very well said. Indeed Christ is the pearl of great price, and that treasure hid in the field to you. And I think you are the merchant that would sell all he hath to make that your own. I will assure you that is a valid argument if ye hold on. Such faith could not be long till it brought you a good answer, believe it, if ye follow on in that way. And,

6thly, But have ye any more for faith to say before a throne of grace? Yes, I have this to say, that in such a way as I could get it done, I closed with Christ with complacency and satisfaction, my heart bended towards Him, and acquiesced in Him, and rested on Him, so that I thought I was content to close with Him as my Prophet, Priest, and King. I was content as I thought to have Him with all the crosses that follow Him. Truly that says more yet, and is a

very strong argument. Indeed, there is much strength in it. I warrant you, if ye hold on, such faith would betake itself to its feet very soon. I dare not well say that I have the thing you call closing with Christ; but I wot well in the way I thought I was to close with Christ I closed with Him. I wot well I thought my heart was content to take Him in all His offices, as well as King to rule me, as Prophet to teach me, and Priest to intercede for me.

7thly, Have ye any more to say, or add to these? Yes, I have this to say more, that of all these my heart condemns me not for the contrary. I wot well for ought I know I closed with Him this way; and my heart condemns me not for the contrary. Oh, good argument indeed! For if ye have not a mind to beguile yourselves, God will not beguile you. And what more have ye to say? Are we parted? Have ye any more to say that ye think will do any good in this case?

8thly, Yes; I have this to say, that from that time forth, I know not how it was, the fear of God fell upon my heart; from that time forth, I have felt it otherways than ever before, and ever since, I have had a respect to all His commandments. Indeed that is a very good argument for a poor man or woman that has not many high school terms. But have ye any more to say to faith, that it may go the better about this business?

9thly, Yes; I have this to say, that in all the business that I thought passed betwixt Christ and me, I was still afraid that I had been deceived, and therefore with what I thought to be seriousness as far as I could attain to it, I appealed to the God of heaven and earth, that according to His verity and faithfulness, as He was a just and a faithful God, He would not only prevent a poor thing from beguiling itself, but that He would let me know whether I was right or wrong. I appealed unto Him and bade Him try me, and let me know whether I was in the right or wrong way. Well

said; truly there is much good in that argument. I assure you, there is as much in it as in other two. Light draws still to light and darkness to darkness. The wicked with their evil deeds draw still to darkness. Oh but I love this well! It is always promising-like, when man dare appeal to the God of heaven, that He would “search and try them, and see if there be any wicked way in them.” There is good hope in that, when folk have cordially and seriously appealed to God that He would let them know whether they are right or wrong. Then ye can say this, that ye appealed to God the Lord and desired Him as He was faithful and just, and delighted not in the death of sinners, not to suffer a poor creature to deceive itself unwittingly and unwillingly. Have you this to say further, that the answer that came back from His word to you came as an answer of peace, at some solemn and supplicating time when ye have put it upon God to give you a return, you found the return come from His word though by the mouth of a stranger ye knew not? But there came an answer of peace to you, and it came in such a strain and on such a Scripture ground that ye knew well from whence it came. A good argument indeed! Ye put yourself into the hand of the Lord, and having appealed to Him in the thing, the answer from Him to you was peace, and ye thought yourselves more happy than ye were wise. But,

10thly, Have ye any more, for in my mind ye that have that have more to say? Yes, I have this to say to prove that this answer took effect on my heart, when it came; I mean, as I said before, in all this my heart condemns me not. Indeed that is far said. I marvel, then, if ye have not confidence in God; if it were not for your ignorance I wot well ye would have it. If it were not for your ignorance I assure you ye would not be without it. But indeed ignorance will mar this; for if there be any challenge for sin in the conscience, it will not be; for there are many folk who take challenges off the conscience for heart-condemning. But of a truth I

take it not so. But when ye have this to say, "My heart doth not condemn me" — that is, "I hold not nor allow myself in any known iniquity, nor do I desire or allow myself to omit or shift any known duty competent to me in my place and station." Oh, but that be a strong argument to put in faith's hand! That is not the question. I may be free of heart-condemning in that case, for heart-condemning is when my heart condemns me for allowing myself in some known sin of commission, or in some known sin of omission of duty; but without I know this, I shall be condemned of my own heart for no judicatory in the world can condemn a man by law without they can instance some capital crime they have to lay to his charge. Law will not condemn a man before it hear him. Think ye that the greatest rebel against God at this time will condemn a man upon suspicion that he is a rebel, because he went under the name of a fanatic, while they could not instance wherein he was treasonable, but only because he was called a "Remonstrator." Well, shall I be condemned of my own heart while it cannot instance or inform myself of a particular wherein I am dealing deceitfully before God. This were the greatest ignorance in the world, I would not be condemned of my own heart unless it can instance some particular for which it condemns me, as I said before. Ye ought not to receive from your own heart a sentence of this kind; but when ye know a particular sin ye are given to and ye will not have deliverance from it, or some known duty that ye slight and do not go about it, in that case I am heart-condemned; but I am not so if my heart cannot charge me with a particular that I am guilty of as to any known sin, or slighting known duty. It is a strong argument if ye can truly say ye allow yourself in no known sin, nor shift any known duty.

11th, Have ye any more to say? Ye have said right well since ye began; but have ye any more to say? Yes; I have this to say, that the business I have been speaking of is not a new start got up with me, but I have been labouring on

therein this long time. Indeed, that is a very good token too. Ye have not been hypocritical. Job's friend thought very wisely, that a hypocrite will not always call upon God; indeed it is well said, and I would that many had this to say. But,

12th, Can ye say any more? Why, I have this to say, that I have been labouring or drawing at this business a long season—seven years and more—and I dare even say another word too, to conclude all with. Truly I would love you much worse for all you said, if you would not say this; and it is even this, and see if ye can say it: “I dare say that God has determined my heart at this time to join with Him, and to continue on His side, and to win and lose with Christ and His people.” Dare ye say that God has at this time, determined thy heart with Moses, to choose affliction with the people of God? Have ye this to say, that ye have looked through all the business with deliberation, and closed with Christ and His cross? Indeed this is a very good closing argument, that these long seven years or more ye have been following religion, and have had these blessed transactions forementioned as signs betwixt God and you; and now ye have even this word to close all with, ye will choose affliction with the people of God. I daresay that there is many a soul of you here that has never been at these things with it. There are many of you that have been hurling after religion these long seven years, and more, too, that never knew things; and I put it to you this day, What have ye to prove your interest in God, or what arguments can ye make use of at this time to prove that it will be made perfect that concerns your souls. If ye cannot make use of one of these I have told you of, I wot well ye are far in the wrong; for I have told of a considerable number of arguments that the people of God have to make use of, and they are all very significant, full and clear in their exercise. Now judge with your own hearts whether or not ye have done your duty to faith, and have bidden it move and fetch you a good answer

from the Lord concerning your souls when ye could not put this into faith's hands. I believe this is a thing ye have been looking to these many years past, what would become of your souls? Now, if ye would have that made perfect which concerns your souls, put these arguments in faith's hand, and see what answer faith will bring you back from the Lord.

Now dare ye hold by them all? Can ye say that God has made you see your lost condition, and has brought it so near your heart that He has made it bitter to you, and made you mourn for it as one mourns for his first-born? Has He emptied you of all hope of helping yourselves, and made you see where suitable help lies, even in the blessed Jesus, whose name was as ointment poured forth unto you? Did He deal with you in such a way that ye bended your course towards Christ, and closed with that help that is in Him and was well content with it and all the inconveniences that follow it? And in all this does not your heart condemn you? From that time forth did the fear of God so fall upon you as made you have a respect to all His commandments? Again, after that time, and in all this business were ye afraid that ye had been deceived? Ye appeal to Him that He would make you know whether ye were in the right or wrong way; and did you get a good answer and a return back from the Lord? Does your heart not condemn you for any known sin you have committed, or any known duty that ye have omitted? Have you been following on these long seven years after religion? and to conclude, Have you now chosen affliction with the people of God, and resolved to win and lose with them, to stay at home or be banished with them, being contented to take your lot with them? If they should never rise again, are you content never to have a joyful day in this world again? Truly there is a good stock of all these, each of them speaking much good, and much more when they are all together. Now, I am sure, if ye have put this furniture in faith's hand, faith will run and bring you a

good answer concerning your souls.

The second case I promised to speak to was this: If ye would have faith going to bring some good tidings concerning your being honestly carried through in this evil time, believe that God will bear you honestly through in this evil time. Truly this is a great and comprehensive case. But I will not promise to give you such sure grounds for this as for the other. I could infallibly say of the other, that if ye would put them in faith's hand that faith should be made perfect as to what concerns your souls. But I cannot give you such sure grounds for this. But I shall give or advise you to put arguments in faith's hands, that if it move at all and bring you a good answer, it will be upon these grounds or arguments, and I think, faith being your friend, ye may come to receive that good from God amongst the rest. Then that bodes good yet; therefore put some good argument in faith's hand, and see what it can do in order to your being honestly borne through in this evil time. If it move at all it will be upon arguments. And as we said of the other, look if ye can say this from the bottom of your heart.

(1.) And first have you this to say that the Lord has called you by His name? that is, "I am a professor of godliness; His glory and my good name are interwoven together." Ye are content to give out yourself for one of His; and ye cannot, will not, dare not deny this; though I confess folk should not make too much noise about this. For it is a great disadvantage to that man that has had such a name, if he hath not been real, or if he lose his feet in a day of trial. But it is a great advantage to him and to others that look on, if he has not been dealing deceitfully with God, but has been professing God in reality and has had the inward coming up to his outward profession. Oh, but he has a great plea in law when he has this to say, "I am one of those who professed thy name." This was an argument that the servant of the Lord, David, had. "Put not away thy servant in

anger; thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.” Wherefore that? why they will say, there is one who would still be called the servant of God go where he would; but see how he owns Him now and look and see if thou wilt have much credit by it; if you are likely to lose a step in the day of trial when there are so many on-lookers; put in this word in faith’s mouth, His name and your name go together, His glory and your glory go together; and His credit and honour will suffer with yours. Make this go, and ye will get the belief of this; “for to the pure He will show himself pure.” He will deal faithfully when He finds honesty. But,

(2.) In the next place have ye this to say, “I have no confidence in the flesh?” Truly, if ye be not come this length I fear very much that you give but a foul testimony. But if ye are got this length ye are far forward. Ye have left Peter a step behind you already. It is true, indeed, it is very good to resolve well, “If I should die with thee I will not deny thee;” a good resolution! But I doubt that perhaps you will make two of that ere a year or little more come about. But if ye can say ye have no confidence in the flesh; but, in your own mind will or would be a poor apostate if God helped you not; indeed that is a very good argument, and my mind is, that ye that think so your confidence is upon surer grounds than ye imagine.

(3.) Well, can ye say any more? Have ye this argument also? That ye are losing every weight that presses you downward? Truly ye will sail the better for that if you are going to Barbadoes.<sup>3</sup> Truly if ye be for this ye must be loosing the ties betwixt wife and children, houses and land, and whatever more ye may have, putting your affairs in order. But if you have not these ties loosed, but your heart and eye will be in them (for it is even that which they would have, and if they cannot get a hair in your neck, as we commonly say, they will even do it for your means), I say if ye loose not



yourselves from these, ye will come foul off some way or other; therefore loose yourselves from these things that tie you to them. If you do not I am persuaded there will be a rack amongst you. Lay aside every weight that presses you downward. Either you must have that argument to use, that your heart is fully loosed from these things, or ye will get no answer about your being honestly carried through in this evil time. You must loose your hearts from your estates and farms, otherwise, there will be news of it. The house and the land have been long called by one name, and ye are loath that it should go out of that. No, truly, you must loose that weight and let it go. Now have ye that argument to use, that every weight that ye know that presses you downward ye are laying aside and ye are loosing the ties where ye find them fastest? This is a good argument indeed, as good as some two that I know, so that if ye would have faith moving as I said, then ye would

(4.) In the fourth place have this to say, that there is nothing now that ye are afraid of at this day of trial; but what to do and what to say ye know not if Christ help you not. This is no bad argument; ye are not vexed what will become of this and the other thing; what will become of wife, children, house, and estate, portion, and all the rest of it. But this is your anxiety: "What will I do or say, for a subtle enemy will accuse me; and if I, a poor ignorant creature, speak a wrong word they will take occasion from that to reproach religion and the name of God, and much more." If I am even vexed what to do or say, lest His name or religion be injured by me, this is a good argument; and I think ye will get an answer for good with that same argument. It seems that that special promise hath a relation to you, when ye shall be brought before kings and governors. "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall

speak.” I trow that promise is made for your mouth; for truly that promise is made for that party who is careful for nothing, but what to do and what to say for the glory of God and religion. To such it shall be given in that hour what they shall do and say lest they should wrong the glory of God and deny His truth. They are careful for nothing but that they get not a word to say for the glorious name of Jesus Christ. They are only careful how to debate the cause for the glory of God, and how to do answerably to what they say. For such, says Christ, I pass my royal word upon it that it shall be given them in that hour what to speak or say. And,

(5.) Then ye would have this argument to make use of, if ye would have the faith of being honestly carried through in this evil time, that all the hope and expectation of your soul is only upon the account of free grace in Christ—not because ye have done this or that, not because ye have cast away every weight that presses you downward—I look not to be carried honestly through because of that, but I look only and solely to free grace in Christ Jesus.

(6.) And then ye would have this further to say, if ye would have a good answer from the Lord concerning this, that as far as ye can ye are dealing faithfully in the little that God is putting into your hand. That is also a good argument; better than two friends up at court yonder. It is better than the favour of a Lord of the Seal up at Edinburgh. It is good to be still faithful as to anything God hath put into your hand. It is very likely that when ye are faithful in the little that God has put in your hand, that God will make you faithful in that which is much also. But let me tell you, if ye keep to the last with those that still defer, saying, “We will keep our testimony to the last and great shock,” I fear ye may come foul off; for if ye be not faithful in little, I am afraid ye will never be faithful in much.

(7.) Have ye any more to say? Can ye make use of this argument, that as you are able you are helping them that are foremost in giving a testimony for Christ? Help is good in all places, and “with what measure ye mete, it shall be meted unto you again.” It is no small matter to have so many thousand honest folks’ prayers to light at your door, so to express it, for your good every day. This is no small business indeed.

Now, these are the arguments ye are to put into faith’s hands. If ye can make use of them, it is well—though I cannot say these are infallible grounds for faith to move on, for bringing you a good answer from the Lord for your being honestly carried through, as I have said of the other, concerning your soul; but if ye have not these arguments to use, ye are far behind, and if ye have them, ye are far forward. For,

1. It is a great thing to have it to say, “My name and thy glory are interwoven together.”
2. “I have no confidence in my flesh, nor anything that I have received, but only in Christ.”
3. “I am loosing all weights that press downward, and letting them go.”
4. “The great matter that vexes me is not these things I have let go; but the thing that troubles me is, what to do and what to say.”
5. “The hope I have as to the business is, even free grace in Jesus Christ.”
6. “As I can, so as I am called, so I resolve to give a testimony even in little things.”
7. “As I am able to lend them a lift that are called to give a greater testimony than I am yet called to give.”

But I go no further. If ye dwell much upon these things, I am assured that very soon faith will bring you an answer

of good from the Lord, that ye shall be honestly carried through in these evil times.

---

*N.B.* There is another sermon upon this text, wherein Mr. Guthrie begins upon the third particular here not spoken to, viz., church deliverance.

Footnotes:

1. There are other two sermons (in manuscript) preached before on this text, and also some following which could not now be published.

2. If we apply this to the Revolution and what followed upon it, it may be considered as respecting the coming of the Prince of Orange from Holland, and the accession of the Prince of Hanover, one of the principalities of Germany, to the British throne; or perhaps it may apply to the present commotions in Britain, France, Germany, and America — commotions which may perhaps bring about much good to the Church of Christ.

3. Here it is to be remarked that in this instance Mr. Guthrie seemed to be a true prophet in regard that several years afterward a number of his hearers were banished to Barbadoes for the cause of Christ, although there was no appearance at this time of their being exposed to such hardships.

## SERMON XVII.

*"I wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion."*

Isaiah 8.17-18

THE prophet, in the former part of this chapter, has been threatening the adversaries of Zion with an overthrow; then he comes to threaten sad judgments on the married bands, which they should not be able to resist or escape; and withal he inhibits the Lord's people from joining with those who decline in an evil time. In order to prevent their destruction, he exhorts them to "sanctify the Lord of hosts, and to make Him only their fear," and to cleave close unto Him, who promises to be a sanctuary unto them; but all that join with decliners in an evil time he threatens with utter destruction. Yet the prophet, thinking these words would not have weight enough, except with a very few, further says, "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Here he hints at the duty of the godly in an evil time, which is to wait on the Lord. While he speaks for himself, he likewise speaks in the name of all the godly. Truly he speaks what will be the case and condition of those who resolve to be waiting, namely, that they shall be for signs and wonders in Israel.

Here he hints not only at the lot of the children of God, begotten by his ministry, who should be made signs and wonders amongst the profane and ungodly, but also those children who, by their abiding faithful, though reduced, should signify good to the Church. Then he warns them against charmers—not to make application to these dead dogs, in seeking the living amongst the dead, but to cleave to the true God, to the law and to the testimony. To encourage them to go to God, and keep them from going to these charmers, he denounces dreadful judgments upon those who make application to them; such as, that they "shall curse their King, and their God, and look

upward.” They shall receive comfort from none of these whom they have followed. Now in the text there is,

1st, The sad lot of the Church of God held out in these words: “That hideth His face from the house of Israel.”

2ndly, Ye have the ordinary lot of the Church of God in that case, that they are made signs and wonders in Israel, to be mocked and gazed at; but there is a mystery in it, in regard that it is from the Lord of Hosts. As if he would say, “Seeing it is from the Lord, we ought to bear it better.”

3rdly, Ye have in the words the duty of the people of God; and that is to wait on the Lord until their sentence come forth from before Him; until He plead their cause, and execute judgment for them. Many a time it falls out to be the lot of the children of God, that He hides His face from them. “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour.” And this is often the complaint of God’s people in Scripture.

Now for clearing of these, I shall speak a little unto these things.

1. What is signified by the Lord’s hiding of His face.
2. What are the causes why the Lord does so.
3. I shall speak of the duty of the Lord’s people when He thus hides His face from them.

I. Then what is signified by the Lord’s hiding of His face? and for answer to this:

1. By the hiding of His face is meant: The Lord’s seeming to stand aloof from noticing the cause of His people. Hence the Psalmist complains, “Why standest thou afar off, O Lord, why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?”

2. By the Lord’s hiding of His face is meant, or understood: The refraining of His Spirit on the ordinances, or withholding His influences therefrom, so that the Word of the Lord has not that kindly effect, and operative power upon the heart as it

has had formerly. But your hearts are hardened from His fear. Hence the prophet complains, “Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?” A complaint put in beside these words, and where is the sounding of thy bowels.<sup>1</sup>

3. By the Lord’s hiding of His face must be understood: The Lord’s refraining of the Spirit of prayer. “We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away.” “There is none that calleth upon thy name; that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.” We have not an heart to pray and he gives the reason for it, “Thou hidest thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.”

4. By the Lord’s hiding of His face is meant: The Lord’s keeping of His mind from His people. The Lord is doing strange things; but His people have no open vision. Hence they complain, “We see not our signs; there are no more prophets; neither is there any amongst us that knoweth how long!” Job likewise complains that the Lord passed by on his right and left hand, but he could not perceive Him, or what He was doing. I confess when the Lord wraps up His mind in the public ordinances, it is the saddest of all these ways mentioned of the Lord’s hiding of His face from His people.

II. A second thing from this doctrine is: Why it is that the Lord hides His face from His people.

I confess it is hard to speak of all the reasons the Lord may have for this. It is very hard so see or conceive this. Say ye, “The Lord hides His face from a whole land for trial;” but the Lord may hide His face from particular persons for the trial of their faith; but He will not readily do it from a whole land, but for the punishment of their sins; and that, because there is no land so clean and upright, but that He may have many things to charge against it. But the reasons I shall specify why it is that the Lord hides His face from His people, are:

1st, Sin. Sin separates many a time betwixt God and us. Many

gross and grievous transgressions have filled this land, and defiled it so that the Lord has no more honour or credit by His people therein.

2ndly, The Lord hides His face in the public ordinances for the deceit of the people in their approaches unto God. There is hypocrisy and deceit in our frequenting of ordinances. Few come with a design or resolution to improve what they hear. "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" Do not my words do good to those that walk uprightly? That is, if ye deal not deceitfully with God; and thence I give this reason as particularly relating to the former cause of the hidings of God's face from His people. But,

III. What is the duty of the Lord's people in that case when He hides His face from them? And,

1. His people should search and try their ways, and turn unto the Lord. This is thought a common truth, yet it is a good old truth. Many look for vain things to be done as their duty; but I will assure you, till the land, especially the godly in it, search and try what is the evil of their own ways and doings, and turn from them, ye need never expect peace from God or that He will be at peace with you again. For this was the way His people took of old, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord." Therefore acknowledge your sins, and the evil of your own ways, or you shall not soon have a comfortable visit of God again. Yea, and more, if ye do not search and try your ways His vengeance shall be upon these lands.

2. When God hides His face, it is the duty of His people to justify Him in all that He does, and to judge themselves to be guilty. Lay aside then your ornaments, and lie in the dust. It is not a time now to dress up yourselves in a gaudy manner. No, ye should sit in sackcloth if ye would expect manifestations of favour from God. Be humble before Him. Many of you are ready to say, "The king, the nobles, and ministers have all the blame of what is now upon the land." But no man says, What have I done? But till everyone look what himself hath done, I



justify the Lord, and say He hath done nothing contrary to the covenant, which is, "If ye forsake Him, and break His laws, He will chastise you with rods, yea, with the rods of men." I say, until ye do so, ye need never expect your troubles will cease. Remember that this is told you in the name of the Lord. You are ready now to make light of this word. But it shall find you out and witness against you one day or other yet.

3. When the Lord hides His face, it is the duty of His people to strengthen what remains. Is there anything left! Go, I pray you, and strengthen that, "and take unto you words, and return unto the Lord." Is there no more left but words, make use of these; and speak the oftener to one another.<sup>2</sup> Is prayer left? I pray you, ply it well. Can ye pray better with others than by yourself alone? then improve social prayer well. Whatever duty ye come best speed in, ye should make it your care to go about that duty. Whatever remains, ye should strengthen that. It is the will of God you should do so. If ye do not, ye know what is threatened. "Be watchful, strengthen that which remains, which is ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." And then He threatens to come upon them as a thief unexpectedly and suddenly.

4. When the Lord hides His face, it is the duty of all His people, who are doing these three things mentioned, to wait on the Lord and expect good from Him, both unto themselves and to the Church. "Let Israel wait upon the Lord, from this time forth, and for ever. Wait upon the Lord, and be of good courage; and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, upon the Lord." Reflect again upon the ground of hope ye had long since, and see what more grounds ye had then than ye have now. Had ye the hope of the Lord's work thriving then when it was very low before? Then what ground of hope want ye now that ye had then? Are armies gone? the spirit of prayer gone? Shall the hope of Israel depend on these things—on a few men in arms, and on the blowing of the spirit? Is this all our hope, that we have armies in the field whose rottenness is too visible this day; or shall the ground of your hope and expectation be founded upon the breathings of the spirit of

prayer, which proceed more from the prosperity and success of arms than from any other thing? Or did not many of you say, betwixt God and you, after Mr. Macdonald's<sup>3</sup> days, that ye would no more be ashamed of your hope? Did you not say so, in the Duke's days,<sup>4</sup> and likewise when the English invaded the land;<sup>5</sup> and why should ye be ashamed to hope and trust in the Lord now, as well as ever ye did?

For USE, I wish ye were all convinced that God is hiding His face from His people at this time. There are, no doubt, some who think these are the best days ever they saw. But dreadful is the case of such. "Let not my soul enter into their secret." There are some that say the ark is returned out of the land of the Philistines. I shall say no more for confuting the opinion of such but this: I fear ye shall, ere all be done, miss in that ark these two principal things:

1. The two tables of the law written by the finger of God Himself. And

2. Aaron's rod blossoming. But when our covenanted God hides His face, then turn unto Him and take with the evil of your ways. Be serious in all the parts of God's worship, and diligent in them all. Wait upon Him and expect good from Him in the use of all these means.

DOCT. I. *When God hides His face, then faithful ministers and their converts are for signs and wonders in Israel.*

So much says the text, "Behold I and the children which thou hast given me are for signs and wonders." David says, "I am a wonder to many."

Now, in speaking to this doctrine, I shall notice these things:

1. It supposeth that faithful and honest ministers have some children begotten by them in the work of the Gospel.
2. Those children are the gift of God.

3. There is a mutual interest between these two, viz., the minister as the parent, and the converts as the children being converted by his ministry. And,
4. It is ordinary for faithful men or ministers to be put first upon the brunt of the trial. And,
5. Let the minister and his converts suffer what they will, it is ordinary that they are both one, especially in being made signs and wonders in Israel in an evil time.

1st, For the first of these, it supposeth that faithful ministers have converts; and,

1. For ordinary, when the Lord lights a candle there is a great light; so when the Lord plants an honest and faithful ministry, there is some work there, though they are often but few in number.
2. These converts for ordinary are hid from the minister himself.
3. And yet in the hour of trial they appear who are His children; for, if they appear not in the time of trial, I have little skill or hope of them.

2ndly, These converts are the gift of God; and I would have you remember that the minister cannot convert any of himself; and therefore hath little to glory in or boast of, so that people have no ministers to thank for their conversion. And yet it is their duty who are ministers to labour as it were in birth, to see if they can be instrumental in forming Christ in any of these over whom they have the charge and oversight in the ministry.

3rdly, There is a mutual interest between the minister and his converts. And that is,

1. In regard of spiritual things, "They have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism;" and that which edifies the people may be edifying to the minister himself.
2. In regard of sympathy, what troubles the one affects

the other also; what makes the one sad makes the other sad also, and when the one rejoices, the other is glad and rejoices also.

3. As to giving and receiving, there is a mutual communication even of things temporal. All things are, as it were, common—if the one have, the other will not be in want.

4thly, It is most ordinary for ministers that are most faithful to be first put upon suffering in an evil time, and the reasons are:

1. Because they are for ordinary most free in the discharge of their duty in an evil time, a circumstance which lays them open to the malice of the adversary.
2. It then comes to pass that those children begotten by their ministry are discovered, and made appear, who were in some measure latent and obscure before.
3. It is because those that are good have in providence a thorn in the flesh given them, that they should not be exalted above measure. This serves to keep them humble for all that the Lord hath made them forthcoming for to Him. He exposes them to straits and difficulties; and then it were good for all to judge of them as the Lord doth. There is a time when the Lord appears in the Church openly, and shines upon them, and then they are honourable. Again, there is a time when He hides His face from them, and they are troubled and despicable. They are then for signs and for wonders in Israel.

5thly, The last thing in this doctrine is, that oftentimes ministers and their converts share in one and the same lot, especially in being for signs and wonders in Israel. And,

1. They are noticed and taken for strangers and singular persons who are the troublers of Israel.
2. They are signs and wonders in Israel, as they become and are made the common talk or discourse of the

- country side and the times they live in. And,
3. They are said to be for signs and wonders as to their usage and entertainment. The treatment they meet with gives a proof of their temper and disposition. According as they are dealt with, men may judge of the goodness or badness of the times wherein they live in the world.
  4. Again, they are for signs and wonders as to their carriage or deportment. This is a clear proof that may be expected or looked for of the choice that His people make of God for their party in an evil time. Ye should consider:
    - (a) That nothing falls out to the people of God but what is according to His determinate purpose. There cannot an hair of their head fall to the ground without His providential hand or disposal, hence it is said of Christ, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." No more than this they could do.
    - (b) Again, He hath thoughts of peace towards His people, come what will. "I know the thought that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." And seeing that the Lord hath thoughts of peace towards His people, it says that He doth not arrays afflict them, and therefore they are to search out the causes of their affliction. And,
    - (c) Although the thing falls out according to the purpose of God, yet instruments are not the less culpable or guilty, nor shall they escape His judgments for their wickedness in due time. It, however, concerns all the people of God to take Him for their party, and to study to have Him upon their side as their second; for this is the great work the people of God have to do upon such an occasion.

USE 1. This should quell and compose the hearts of God's people very much, that nothing more nor less can be done or fall out towards them but by His determinate counsel.

USE 2. Let the faith of this be fixed in your hearts that He hath still thoughts of peace toward you. Let me see the man or woman that hath chosen Him as their God and treasure, even that treasure hid in the field, and hath accounted Him the pearl of great price, valued at the highest rate. Such may wait for peace, according to His word, "He shall sit and rule upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." What two? The offices of Christ as king and priest, that are so fixed, and the peace of His people as settled between them; so that as He can no more remove these two offices of Christ, so neither can the peace or safety of His people be removed, for they are equally fixed and made sure.

USE 3. Lay aside all passion and rancour, then, at men; go and secure your interest with God in Christ. Get Him on your side, otherwise all is in vain. Man is not your party or second in this, but the Lord God Almighty and His strength.

DOCT. II. *Let God hide Himself as it pleaseth Him, yet He is still within doors, so to speak.*

For here it is said that the stroke is from the Lord, that dwelleth in Mount Zion. He hath His abode there. Wherefore ye should remember:

1. That the Lord dwells not in His Church as One who is not affected with her case and condition. No; He is mindful of her concerns, and those who touch His people touch as it were "the apple of his eye," thus He is concerned in whatever, either good or evil, befalls His children and people.

2. As long as God dwells amongst His people, He hath always some work to work amongst them. He is not there without a cause as an indifferent spectator.

3. Although it be true that He is in the Church, yet He is not

confined unto any particular Church in the world since the days of Israel. He engaged Himself unto His people of Israel until the Messiah came; and He hath engaged Himself to return again unto them when the fullness of the Gentiles is brought in.

4. Although it be so, that He is not engaged unto any particular Church, yet there are some Churches have more ground to expect His abode with them than what other Churches have. And I take Britain and Ireland to be of that number, for the following reasons:

(1.) I take Great Britain and Ireland to be a part of the ends of the earth that are given to Christ. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." Besides it is the very parcel or plot of ground that He intended for that end or use; for the Lord did take possession of these lands beyond any other land since the apostolic age.

(2.) These lands have sworn away themselves unto the Lord most solemnly, singularly, and frequently. Seven times hath Scotland been sworn away unto the Lord, in little more than the space of an hundred years.<sup>6</sup> I grant indeed, that these covenants have been broken, for which breach the Lord hath been plaguing these lands; and as there hath been no breach of covenant formerly like unto this, so I think there hath no plague come like that which we may now expect. And yet seeing there is still a party in the land who adhere to these covenants, and have given a testimony for them, and that party is and will be accounted to the Lord for a generation, or the holy seed and substance of the land; since this is the case, God and these witnesses will not part yet if they shall abide by and adhere to these covenants.

3. A ground of hope that God will not quit His interest in Scotland, England, and Ireland is, that there was no land or nation wherein the Lord's work was carried to such a pitch, such a high pitch, as it hath been in them, since the days of the

apostles. And do ye think that the Lord will eradicate and utterly overthrow that work? I think He will not.

The last ground I observe is this, that according to the text the Lord is in His Church in Britain and Ireland. And it is good token that He is yet amongst us and that “God will help her, and that right early.”

USE 1. We are then a people and a part of the Church of God, seeing there is so much of the true ordinance of God to be yet found amongst us.

USE 2. Seeing God is in the Church, He is not far off if ye will seek Him. Seek Him therefore seriously; for He is most willing to be found of you.

USE 3. Although God be not absolutely bound or engaged to any one particular Church, since the days of Israel of old, yet from the foresaid grounds we are not left without hope that the Lord will yet dwell amongst us, “and the God of Jacob will be our refuge, Selah.”

DOCT. IV. *That when a people are shaken out of all self-confidence it is their duty then to wait upon God.*

We are to do so

1. Because we are commanded. “Wait on the Lord” is often commanded in Scripture.

2. We should wait on the Lord because of the promise that is annexed unto this exercise. “Those that wait upon the Lord shall never be ashamed.”

3. To wait upon the Lord is the most quiescent and composed posture one can possibly be in. In an evil time “it is good to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”

4. Wait upon the Lord, for it hath been the work and practice of the people of God, even in the days of old. Says the Psalmist,



“My soul waits for the Lord, more than they that do watch for the morning.”

5. To wait upon God has always a joyful issue. “Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him, we will rejoice in him.”

But that you may the better know, when it is your duty to wait upon the Lord, I shall in the next place, show you, (1.) What proceeds, or goes before waiting upon the Lord. (2.) What it is to wait, or what this waiting doth import. And (3.) What follows upon a right waiting upon the Lord. And,

1. The thing that goes before waiting upon the Lord, is,

(1.) The duty itself is fully holden forth in this chapter. “Say not a confederacy with them to whom this people shall say a confederacy;” that is, Let not their words make you afraid. “But only sanctify the Lord in your hearts;” that is, be only afraid of offending Him.

(2.) Consider that there is a promise held out to those who make Him their fear, “He shall be for a sanctuary unto them.”

(3.) There is a threatening pronounced against the common multitude who decline and join with the times. “He will be for a stone of stumbling unto them.” It is but a promise held out to those who walk aright; while it is a threatening against those who go wrong and comply in an evil time. And then there follows a wrapping up of the law and ordinances amongst the disciples or people of God, for a time.

2. There is the duty of waiting, which imports,

(1.) The termination of the heart, with an expectation fixed only upon God for help, and upon none else. “My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him.” That is, Wait upon God, and upon no other. Similar is that word, “Help us, Lord, for vain is the help of man.”

(2.) To wait upon God imports this also, that their expectation

is more on God Himself than on any created means. God can give you means; but if you get not Himself no matter what ye get. He may send back your means for a plague unto you and not for your good; therefore plead with Him, and be positive with Him, and say, "Go with us, Lord, or else carry us not up hence." So I say, ye should plead more for God's presence than any other means under heaven.

(3.) To wait on God imports a submitting to the seasons of the outgate from your present condition, and the ordering of it and all that concerns you, while under the trial.

(4.) To wait upon God imports a resolution to abide at the duty of waiting, until He show you what else ye should do. For waiting on God is still your duty while ye are in the dark, and can use no other means for your relief.

3. These things follow after waiting, and are clear from the text.

(1.) You must resolve to be for signs and wonders in Israel; if once ye resolve to be a waiter on God ye must resolve to be mocked, reproached, banished, imprisoned, and every other way persecuted for Christ.

(2.) A great many temptations follow a waiting upon God.

(3.) There will be few left to preach the gospel or to consult with in that dark time. He says, "Go to the law, and to the testimony." Ye must then make use of your Bibles instead of your ministers. But,

(4.) The manifest vengeance of God shall be upon those who turn aside. That shall be their lot who oppose the work and people of God.

USE 1. Have ye your work and duty in a dark time? Then go to God and do not pretend ignorance, and say, "What shall we do?" I say, "Wait upon the Lord," and judge yourselves happy, that the thing which is your duty men cannot take from

you though they may take your life from you.

USE 2. Lay your account with temptation, under that lot to cause you to turn aside. Therefore study to be clear in your judgments, as to the honesty and justness of the cause, and for that end be well acquainted with the Scripture, and there see what is your duty.

And to conclude, believe this, that God's wrath abides on those that turn aside from Him; and all which they before took pleasure in shall forsake them, or shall be embittered to them in that day, when the waiters shall enjoy what they waited for.

---

Footnotes:

1. See Sermon V. upon this text.
2. I suppose he here means society or fellowship meetings, a duty instituted in Scripture, and however much neglected and flouted at, yet was much practised in our land when religion flourished.
3. This Macdonald rose with Montrose, and fought with the Covenanters, and killed 30,000 of them.
4. Duke Hamilton went to England with an army to assist Charles I., A.D. 1648.
5. By the English I suppose he means the invasion under Oliver Cromwell.
6. According to Knox, Spotswood, Calderwood, Petrie, Defoe, Stevenson, Crookshanks, and others, what they called the first Covenant was entered into at Edinburgh in December, 1557; the second at Perth, in May, 1559; the third at Edinburgh, 1560. What is called the National Covenant was entered into in 1581 and again subscribed in 1590; again renewed by the

Assembly in 1596; and afterwards sworn with great solemnity by all ranks through the laud in 1638. The Solemn League and Covenant was sworn in October, 1641. These Covenants were again taken by the king and others in 1650, and were renewed by the handful of witnesses at Lanark, November 20, 1666. What a sad reproach it is to the present generation that they seek to cast off the obligations that our forefathers came under to the Lord! There are many in our day who not only slight and neglect the duty of covenanting, but deny the warrantableness of it, though we have manifold Scripture examples of covenanting (Josh. 24.25, Nehem. 9.38, 2 Cor. 8.5). We have prophecies of it, as what would take place in New Testament days (Isa. 19.18,20). We have precious promises of it (Isa. 44.5). We have precepts for it (Psa. 76.11, Mat. 5.33).