

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.¹

“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-ock 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 acceptation; 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.