

## SERMON X.\*

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Daniel 9. 25:

*—The street shall be built again, and the wall, even  
in troublous times.*

**T**HAT we may the better discern the reference of these words, we shall give you a very general and brief account of the contents of the chapter, which consists more especially of two parts; a prayer, and an answer thereunto.

We have first, the prayer made by Daniel on the behalf of ruined Jerusalem, and captive Judah. The occasion of which we have an account of, premised in the first and second verses of the chapter; to wit, that at such a time as is there mentioned,

\* Preached at Haberdashers' Hall, September 2, 1678.

\* It plainly appears, that this sermon was preached on occasion of the fire of the city of London, (which began September 2, 1666) and its restoration again to its former splendour, in a few years time. In order to illustrate some parts of this discourse, some account will be given of this affair, towards the conclusion of it, in a marginal note.

Daniel did understand by the books (that is, no doubt, by consulting the writings of Jeremiah) how long the desolations of Jerusalem were to continue, and that God meant to accomplish seventy years in those desolations. Hereupon he knew that the time was near expiring. There was a way opened very far, for the restitution and deliverance of this people. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was finished; and those of Evil-merodach, and Belshazzar past; Cyrus had succeeded; and having taken Babylon, transferred the monarchy (which had continued for many years among the Assyrians\*) unto the Medes and Persians. This Cyrus is called the servant, or the anointed of the Lord, (Isa. 45. 1.) by whom he meant to make way for the deliverance and restitution of his people; and by that Darius also, who is mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, and who, as some conceive, was at this time a viceroy under Cyrus.† Hereupon he applies himself to serious seeking of God's face; and makes that prayer, which you find continued unto the twentieth verse of the chapter. From thence, unto the end of it,

Is secondly, The answer to this prayer by the angel Gabriel, sent while Daniel was yet a praying. In which he acquaints the prophet with the measure and compass of that time, wherein the great things were to be done; which he now not only immediately prayed for, but which he further had a commission to acquaint him with; namely, that seventy weeks were determined for the bringing these things to pass (manifestly weeks of years, as is the Scripture way of computation sometimes) all which amount to four hundred and ninety years. Within the first seven of those weeks, that is, forty-nine years, the angel gives him to understand, that Jerusalem should be rebuilt: namely, the street, that is, all the inward part, or the houses of the city; and the wall that should encompass it about; that after the expiration of sixty-two weeks, added to those seven, the Mes-

\* I suppose the author means the Babylonians. For the Assyrian Monarchy was dissolved, on the death of Sardanapalus, after it had stood above 1300 years, by Arbaces and Belesis. The latter of whom, who is also called Nabonasser, founded the Babylonish empire, which continued only 210 years; that is, to the time of Cyrus' taking the capital, who laid the foundation of the Persian Monarchy.

† The opinion of those, whom the author alludes to, seems to be wrong. Darius, the Mede, was uncle to Cyrus, and without doubt is the same with Cyaxares in Xenophon; who both engaged, according to that author, in the war against the Babylonians. But Cyrus, who was general of the Persian army, commanded at the

siah should come ; \* and that in the last week, even in the middle of it, he should be cut off. A prophecy to which afterwards the event did so very punctually correspond, that a very noted philosopher speaking of it was wont to say ; that surely that prophecy (as it was called) must have been written after the things were done.

But the words that we are to consider concern what was done within the first seven weeks, or forty nine years ; for at the beginning of that time did the command go forth for the rebuilding of the temple and Jerusalem, as it was said it soon should. But the work was very soon after intermitted, as is reckoned for about three years ; and then dispatched in the forty-six years that followed. Unto which the Jews have reference, more particularly speaking of the temple, “ Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days ? ” John 2. 20. As it was not a total destruction which it suffered afterwards ; so it was not a rebuilding from the ground, but a restoration, which it had by Herod.

This is that which is, in short, foretold to Daniel here, in reference to Jerusalem : that though it would be a troublous time, in which such a work should be attempted and carried on ; yet the work should be carried on, and completed notwithstanding. And therefore what the words do more obviously present us with and offer to our observation, is ;

That God takes care for the rebuilding of his Jerusalem, so as to effect it notwithstanding the troubles of the times.

But that we may consider this matter with the more use and profit to ourselves, it is requisite that we understand, that Jerusalem was capable of being considered under a twofold notion : either as spiritual, or as civil. In the former sense, by the name of Jerusalem is usually in Scripture signified the church

seige of Babylon ; and took that city by a remarkable stratagem, of which Dean Prideaux gives an account, both from Herodotus, and the eighth book of the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon. The city being taken, the whole Babylonian empire fell into the hands of Cyrus ; who, as long as his uncle Darius, otherwise Cyaxares, lived, allowed him a joint title with himself in the empire ; and out of deference to him, made him not merely a viceroy, but yielded him the first place of honour in it. Nine years are generally allotted by chronologers to the reign of Cyrus ; the two first of which he reigned in conjunction with his uncle, and the seven following (Darius being dead) he reigned as the sovereign, and supreme head of the whole empire.

\* The Author undoubtedly means, in his public character.

of God ; and we are not to think that this sense was unintended in this colloquy, as I may call it, or interlocution about Jerusalem between Daniel, and the great God by his angel. Neither had Daniel a reference to it in his prayer, nor God in his answer by the angel, only considered upon a civil account ; that is, as it had been a great, and an opulent, and a famous city, of much account in the world. It was not, I say, upon this civil consideration, merely, that either Daniel was so concerned : or that the great God did seem so directly, and with so special a care and providence, to concern himself about it : but as it was the seat of the divine presence, and worship ; and had been the throne of his glory, though he had suffered it to be disgraced to a very great degree. And therefore both Daniel in his prayer, and the angel in his answer, speak of it under the name of the *holy city*, as you may see in the sixteenth, nineteenth, and twenty-fourth verses of this chapter ; in which they do, as it were, mutually and *certatim* interest one another. And so the thing we have to observe and consider is this ;

· That the great God doth mercifully provide and take care, that the building of his church should go on, even in troublous times.

· It will be worth our while to consider this point a little. The people of God are by the apostle Paul called his building. “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are his building.” 1 Cor. 3. 9. The conversion of souls is the building the church. The growth and improvement of the converted, is the building up or edification of particular souls. Such building work as this the blessed God takes care should go on ; should not be laid aside altogether, even in times of difficulty and trouble, but should go on notwithstanding. For the power is greater by which God doth manage such work, than that by which he can be resisted in it ; and the mercy is greater with which he is intent upon it, than to be diverted from it. If he have such work to do, who shall let it ? If he will work, who shall hinder him ? And if his merciful inclination hath once made him intent upon it, he will never suffer any thing to divert it. His power, I say, is too great to be resisted ; and so is his goodness, to be diverted from such a work.

· Yea, and he not only takes care that it should be carried on, notwithstanding the troubles of the time ; but also that it shall be carried on in some measure by them, or that they shall be in some sort subservient thereunto. For he so orders it, as that even by the troubles of the times,

· First: His under-agents, his instruments or builders whom

he employs, have their diligence so much the more quickened. Those that were employed in the building of Jerusalem, appeared so much the more eager and intent upon the work; by how much the more Tobias, Sanballat, and some others did bend and set themselves against them in it. Yea, and

Secondly: By the means of such troubles too are particular souls, many times, stirred up, and made more serious and impressive; more apt to prize, and more ready to improve all good seasons, which tend to spiritual edification, as they do occur. When the word of the Lord is more precious, when it is enjoyed upon very uncertain terms, it ought to be always so; and sometimes it is so, by God's gracious disposition. Then it is usually most savoury! then it is most operative, and doth most good! And so this work of building the church of God is carried on, not only notwithstanding; but even in some measure by the troubles of the times. Some brief *use* we shall make of this, and so pass on.

1. We should learn from it not to account and reckon, that in times of trouble and difficulty there is nothing to be done, but to sit still; no further endeavours to be used, for the carrying on of God's spiritual building. Far be it from us to think so! For, our own parts we have reason thankfully to acknowledge, that it is somewhat a quiet time with us hitherto; but it is a troublous time in the world round about us; and too prone we are to stand at a gaze, as amazed persons wistly looking round about us; and having our eyes in the ends of the earth (as Solomon says concerning the fool) and in the mean time to neglect our own proper work. We mind what others are doing, in their busy hurries up and down in the world; and do but little consider what we should be doing. Our own work lies still too much neglected, as if we had no such thing to do as the building up ourselves in our most holy faith; as if we had finished our work, and had nothing more remaining, nothing left us to do. And,

2. We should take heed too of mistaking our work in a time when there is so much of hurry and confusion in the world; and when things are so blundered, that it is not very easy to discern what is to be done, and what not; or what way is to be taken, and what not. There are many who are so very intent upon this or that little mean design, in reference to this building, that it very much disturbs those, who are serious and in good earnest in reference to the main of the work itself. And there are those, who think there can be no such building at all, unless it be all according to their own model; and that the building of Jerusalem is nothing else, but

the building up of their own party ; that they are all the church, and that none have a share and part in it but themselves. But the main things, which belong to the constitution of the church of God, must be in our eye, while we are promoting the building thereof according to our capacities, and in our several stations ; and whatever tends to promote real and substantial truth and holiness, is what we should be most intent upon in this work. But then again,

Jerusalem was to be considered too under a civil notion ; as it was a great and a famous city, very much favoured by providence, and which flourished under the benign influence of it, through a long tract of time. And so we may by analogy enlarge our observation ; and render the truth we observe applicable unto other cities and places, which are considerable, in some respects in the same circumstances, with Jerusalem. And the thing we have to observe, is,

That a city, or place, being ruined by its own wickedness, when it is restored, the restitution of it is owing to the fixed purpose, and active providence of God, who brings it about notwithstanding whatsoever difficulties.

All this we have exemplified in Jerusalem, and it is applicable to other places. Jerusalem you know, was reduced from the height of its prosperity and flourishing state, into a miserable ruin ; and it continued in that desolate state according to the measure of time which God had appointed it. It was at length restored, repaired, rebuilt, and in a very troublous time. If you read over the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which give us the history of that affair, which the prophecy in our text refers to, you will find it was a very troublous time ; and that the troubles of the time were directed in most express opposition to this work, the rebuilding of Jerusalem. There were those that bore ill will to that city, who sometimes mocked the builders of it, sometimes threatened them, sometimes stirred up the Persian princes against them, to hinder the work ; representing to them that, that city was anciently “ a rebellious city and hurtful to kings.” Ezra 4. 15. And though by this means they sometimes prevailed to have the work intermitted, yet by the favour of those very princes, some or other of them, God orders it that it is carried on, and brought to a perfect issue at last. The rebuilding of Jerusalem is enacted by a law, and enforced by other additional laws. You have Cyrus his decree ; you have Darius his decree ; you have Artaxerxes his decree, in the seventh year, and again in the twentieth year of his reign ; if it was the same person, which I dispute not. So that by decree, upon decree, is the carrying on of this work

reinforced ; and all by the favour of the princes of that empire, the power whereof was endeavoured to be engaged against it ; and sometimes it was, in some degree, upon the solicitation of its enemies. And solemn acknowledgements hereupon are made to the great God, that he did put it into the heart of the king, to ordain and decree so and so, in reference to this affair, as you find in sacred history.

Now consider, and compare the words of the text with the event, and the matter is plain ; that it was by fixed purpose, and active providence, that the affair was brought to pass. The text says expressly, that “the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.” As if it was said, Let not the more formidable aspects of the times discourage you, as to the belief of this ; the thing shall be done notwithstanding. And it was done.

This also affords and challenges too an application ; and there are several things which by way of inference we may collect, and gather for our own use. As,

1. We have this implied, that a place or city long favoured by God, may be reduced to a very ruinous condition by its own wickedness. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the prediction here that it should be built again as it is expressed, does suppose such a ruin. “The street shall be built again, and the wall.” What ! of Jerusalem ? is there a mention of building that city again ? This plainly implies then, that Jerusalem was in desolation. And so it was ; and we are told plainly enough how it came to be so. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and before them Jeremiah, in their solemn confessions and lamentations, do own the cause. They had sinned, they had deeply revolted, and therefore God had brought upon them all the evils that were written in the law of Moses. So they came into that desolate state. Their city was burnt with fire, and all reduced even into an utter ruin.

And it is our business this day to consider a like case to this. You know this has been the case of your city too. The mention of the rebuilding of Jerusalem bespeaks it to have been ruined before. And you can have no occasion to consider the rebuilding of London, but it will lead you to consider the foregoing ruin of it. That is our direct business, which lies in our way to consider ; but especially the causes of it.

The ruin itself is first to be considered, that dreadful ruin ! In reference to the ruin of Jerusalem we find the prophet, in the name of the people of God ; or we find the people of God, whom he represents, laying it as a charge upon their own souls,

to remember the misery, and the affliction, the wormwood and the gall, and to have their souls humbled within them. And what! can a dozen, or fourteen years abolish in us the memory of such a ruin, as that of London was? Can it be forgot how the lofty city was brought low; and how the more lofty flames triumphed over the riches, the pride, and the glory of it? The thing itself surely deserves, and claims to be long remembered, and deeply considered and thought of.

But especially the cause of this desolation deserves to be considered: namely, the provoking, and the punishing cause; the wickedness of London, and the divine wrath which was engaged thereby against it. The very fury of those flames, those flames themselves were the indications and issues of the greater and more furious heat of lust, and the more intense and hotter fervour of divine displeasure. And if it be considered, methinks it should even yet melt hearts to think, that there was wickedness more outrageous, and wrath hotter, unspeakably hotter, than those flames!

And we should have no reason to think that there was a disproportion in the deserving, to the punishing cause; if the particulars of those evils I allude to were to be recounted and reflected on. But I am afraid we are very apt to deal by the judgments of God, as we are too commonly wont to do with sermons. We hear them, and they move us (it may be, if at all) a little only for the present; and all the impression of them is soon lost and vanisheth, as if we had never heard them at all. The judgments of God are audible sermons. They have a voice. The Lord's voice crieth to the city, "Hear the rod and him who hath appointed it!" Micah 6. 9. Divine judgments are loudly audible, they have a crying voice; and it is strange that the voice of such a cry should be forgotten! that so dreadful an event of providence should be but as a nine-days wonder! that though the wound be healed, the scars should be worn out, and no remembrance left of it; but all returning to their former course, as if no such thing had been done among us!

But the consideration, as was said, of the thing that was done, would receive a great deal of weight by considering the doers; namely, God and ourselves. That the inhabitants of London, should be, as it were in a conspiracy to destroy London seems very strange. And yet was not that the case? How full have men's minds been of severity towards such, as they have thought, or suspected, to have been the designing instruments; but how merciful in the mean time to themselves! Every one added something to the burning; and especially

every one that allowed himself in the ways of such sins, as we cannot but know are very provoking to his jealous eyes, and which God will least of all spare for, when they are found among them who profess his name.

And that it should be God's doing is never to be forgotten. That God should have such a controversy with a people, who had so long borne his name; and with a city, wherein he had so long dwelt! And yet, "shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3. 6. Are not we to acknowledge his own doing in the case? He is said to do, whatsoever creatures do; whatsoever second, or subordinate causes do, while he has them in his hand, or in his power: either to restrain, or let loose their inclinations and natural tendencies, as he pleaseth; though he do not prompt them to this, or that thing. And again,

2. We may collect hence for our further use, that such a desolation and ruin, followed by such a restitution and recovery is to be looked upon, as an argument of the divine displeasure not prevailing so far as unto a total rejection; and abandoning of such a people, or such a city. There was great displeasure against Jerusalem, and the breaking out of that displeasure into such a judgment and vengeance, as came upon it, was indeed very formidable, if you consider that alone. But if you consider the promise, that "the street and the wall shall be built again", and that notwithstanding the greatest difficulties that troublous times may lay in the way of such a work; this shews it was not a displeasure, to a total abandoning that city. And we for our parts have reason to acknowledge the divine goodness in this, and that mercy has been remembered in judgment: that there has not been upon the ruin of this city such a curse or malediction, as was that of Jericho; "Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho! he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Josh. 6. 26. We have reason, I say to bless God that he has not so cursed us. And,

3. We may collect further, that much less is such a ruin, (when by the divine favour it is followed with such a restitution) to be looked upon as an argument against our religion; against the religion of our people, and our nation. Some might perhaps be too apt to make such an invidious interpretation and comment upon such a piece of providence; but the following issue of things is some refutation, a refutation good enough for such an argument. And it was the occasion of saint Augustine's writing those twenty-two books (as he himself tes-

tifies) concerning the city of God; that there were, in his time, such conceits and apprehensions, upon such a like event that happened to a famous city. For the Goths having invaded Rome and sacked and ruined that city; the pagan enemies, of that time, had an apprehension among them, and talked it commonly, that this ruin was fallen upon Rome, upon the account of its having become so much Christian, as it was at that time. It was the design, I say, of all those books to contend against the folly of such an opinion as that; at least this was the occasion of Augustine's writing them, and that design is carried on very much throughout them. And again we may note,

4. That it argues a very favourable divine providence, when God does so fixedly purpose, and effectually bring it about, that a city so desolated should be restored and raised again, God's hand ought to be acknowledged in the raising, as well as in the ruin of such a city. Both were indeed alike strange as to our case. Before that desolating judgment came, in whose thoughts was it? who suspected such an event? As before that judgment came upon Jerusalem, that calamitous state and desolate judgment which befel that city, you find it said, "Who would have believed, that ever an enemy should have entered within the walls of Jerusalem?" So who would have believed that such a calamity was approaching as that of London's fire before it came? that all the power of this city should not be able to withstand the fire at first; but that it should diffuse, and spread so universally, so irresistibly; who, I say would have thought it? And who would have thought that it should have been so soon raised up again? and how much besides, and beyond expectation was it? \* As in reference to Jerusalem, who

\* For the illustration of this and some other parts of this discourse it may not be improper to give the reader a short account of what the author here alludes to; I mean, the ruin of the city of London by fire, and its sudden and wonderful resurrection again from its ashes. Of which surprising events many of our historians have given us a very pathetic account; though possibly some of my readers are not much acquainted with them, and consequently will not be able to read this sermon with equal pleasure and advantage.

The dreadful fire, so often alluded to, began on September 2, 1666; near the place where the monument now stands; by which one of the noblest, and most magnificent cities in the world, was turned into ashes in a few days. A raging east wind we are told fomented it to an incredible degree: which in a moment raised the fire from the bottom to the tops of the houses, and scattered prodigious flakes in all places, which were mounted so vastly high into the air, as if

of those, who beheld it in its ruins, would have thought or hoped that they should again with so much joy behold Zion the city of their solemnities, and see Jerusalem as before, a peaceable habitation? When God doth things not looked for, they ought to make the greater, and deeper impression. When he bestows unexpected mercies, he expects impressions of deep and lasting gratitude; such impressions as are not to be worn out. For what! will we refer all these things to chance? or to mere human industry? Is it by a casual concurrence of accidents that such a thing as this is brought about? With respect to a particular house it is said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psal. 127. 1. And will we disinterest God in so momentous a work as this is, the restitution of such a city? And again,

5, Take both the ruin and the restoration together, and we

heaven and earth were threatened with the same conflagration. The fury, as an English historian observes, soon became insupportable against all the arts of men and power of engines; and besides the dreadful scenes of flames, ruins, and desolation, there appeared the most killing sight under the sun, the distracted looks of so many citizens, the wailings of miserable women, and the cries of poor children, and decrepit old people with all the marks of confusion and despair.

The inscription on the famous pillar or monument, erected by that celebrated architect Sir Christopher Wren, in memory of this calamity, tells us; "The fire with incredible noise and fury destroyed eighty-nine churches, among which was the cathedral of St-Paul; many public hospitals, schools, libraries, a vast number of stately edifices, thirteen thousand two hundred dwelling houses, four hundred streets &c. The destruction was sudden; for in a short time the same city, which was seen in a flourishing condition, was reduced to nothing: and after three days when the fatal fire had in appearance overcome all means of resistance and human counsels: by the will of heaven it stopped, and was extinguished." This was a sight, as Dr. Calamy observes, that might have given any man a lively sense of the vanity of this world, and all the wealth and glory of it, and of the future conflagration of the world itself.\* I shall only add, without inquiring into the causes of this dreadful calamity which the author has hinted at, in one part of his discourse; that all persons, as Echard tells us, were indefatigable in the great work of rebuilding, and making provision for the resurrection of this city: and that Sir Jonas Moore having raised Fleet-street, according to the model appointed; from that beginning the city grew so hastily towards a general perfection, that within the compass of a few years it far transcended its former splendour.

\* Abridgment of Baxter's life, vol. 1. p. 314.

have mighty incentives, and strong obligations to study more the pleasing of that God, and keeping of his gracious presence; who must be our keeper; the keeper of you, and your city. We read of a certain city in Italy, whose inhabitants chained the statues of their gods to their particular stations; upon the apprehension they had of how great concern it was to the weal of their city to keep their deities among them, or that they should not be deserted, and forsaken by them. I need not trouble you with the particular occasion of it. But,

God is only to be held and kept among us by bands of his own making; by his own covenant and his own promises, by which he is most strongly held, if we do not make a violent rupture ourselves, and break off ourselves from him. But it is much to be feared the divine presence is little coveted, or desired; and it little appears that God hath a dwelling in many of the new built houses of this city, where men little concern themselves whether they have God with them or no. How many families are there, who, after so monitory a judgment, and after so obliging a mercy, yet call not upon the name of the Lord! or wherein that wickedness dwells, which will not permit him a dwelling there! Is this just dealing? that when he provides you houses, you will not permit him a dwelling there? He furnisheth your habitations, and you spoil his. We find mention made of a people, who say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:" (Job, 21. 14.) and yet he filled their houses with good things. Ungrateful, and unworthy wretches! He fills their houses with good things, and they bid him begone. But as it follows there, "the counsel of the wicked is far from me". Job 21. 16. Let it be far from you also. That vile temper, that wretched disposition of heart far be it from me! Let not my soul enter into their secret; into the secret of those, who have the heart so to requite the Lord! I only add, in the

6. And last place, that such a ruin, and consequent restitution, are no assurance to such a place or city that it should never be ruined again. Let us so far improve the instance of Jerusalem here. Upon such a prayer so solemn, and many a prayer besides offered up by spirits wrestling and deeply engaged about this business, here comes a gracious prediction and promise; to wit, "I will favour Jerusalem, the street shall be built again, and the wall, and the work shall be carried on, let the difficulty be never so great, and the contentions against it never so high and earnest." Why, one would have thought divine favour had been now so fixed to Jerusalem, that it should never have been off more. But how much otherwise

was the case! Jerusalem suffered many a distress after this rebuilding. For after this it was harassed much by the Grecians, Syrians, Parthians, and the Romans; and by some of these several times. And last of all it was taken, and so dreadfully ruined, (I mean the destruction brought upon it by Titus) that ever since one may go (as once was said of another place) and seek Jerusalem, in Jerusalem, and all in vain. But God forbid that this should be the issue as to London! God grant that it may never be so! that the prevailing and growing wickedness of this city (for it seems to be growing) may never bring things to that pass, as that one may as vainly go to seek London, in London.

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