

SERMON V.*

Isaiah 63. 10.

*But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit : therefore
he was turned to be their enemy, and he
fought against them.*

IN the forgoing part of this chapter you have a representation, as it is generally agreed, of our Lord Christ in triumph ; returning as a conqueror from his victories, with garments discoloured with the blood of the slain. “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save,” The enemies, whom the Messiah is supposed to have engaged against, are represented and set forth by Edom, and the metropolis thereof, Bozrah ; because they were the next enemies to the church of God, mostly confined within Palestine, upon which Idumea bordered, and who were continually vexatious, and afflictive to them : by these, I say, are the spiritual enemies represented, which our Lord Jesus Christ was to set himself against. And so I have taken notice of a certain author

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(though I profess not to like all his allegories) who allegorically speaks of the carnal part, under the name of Edom. "The mind or spirit ought to follow God unweariedly, without deviating or turning aside, lest he come into Edom:" alluding no doubt to the word itself edom or earth, as the name of Adam comes from the same root. Against these spiritual enemies, that readily fall in with our carnal, earthly part, did our Lord Jesus Christ use his prowess, unto a glorious victory and triumph. This being represented, how ready the Redeemer was to undertake on the behalf of them, who were to be defended, and saved by him; a reflection is made upon God's former dealings on the behalf of this people, and their unequal carriage and deportment towards him, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses. But I cannot go distinctly over them. Unto which this complaint is subjoined; "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

There are two things, which present themselves to our view, and consideration, from these words: namely, that the rebellions of a people professing the name of God, are very vexatious to his Spirit; and that such vexations engage him against them as their enemy. To speak to both these together, for the sake of dispatch, I shall do only these two things.

I. Inquire concerning the evil done; that is, vexing the Spirit of God, by rebelling against him. And,

II. Concerning the evil suffered; and that is his turning against them, so as to become their enemy. Upon which,

III. The use of all will ensue.

I. As to the evil done, we are to inquire in the first place concerning the nature of it; and then in the next place, the cause thereof.

1. Let us consider the nature of the evil done, namely, the vexing of the Spirit of God. We are not to understand it as if the blessed Spirit of God was capable of such vexation, as we are in ourselves; that is, of real perturbation or passion. That, common reason will tell us, the divine nature is not capable of. But yet notwithstanding, this doth not signify nothing; there is some great thing lies under this expression, which we may conceive of in these two particulars.

(1.) His will is really crossed; somewhat is done, that is, against his will. I mean his will concerning our duty, not his will concerning the event; against his preceptive will and consequently against that good, which he wills to us upon the supposition of our compliance with his just and righteous will. He really wills many things in reference to men, which he doth

not will effectually to procure that they shall be done. He wills our obedience and duty; and, as this is connected with it, he wills also our felicity and happiness. The will of God in the former part, is expressed by his precepts; in the latter, by his promises, so far as they are of a general tenor. But there is a will of his in reference to the event, of which it may be truly said, "Who hath resisted his will?" Rom. 9. 19. When the commands of God are disobeyed, and persons by their disobedience rush upon vengeance, and put themselves under the effects of divine displeasure; then is that done, which is averse to the legislative will of God; as it is signified to us by his word. And this is implied in the expression in the text of his being vexed; namely, that there is a matter or object lying before him, at which he may take offence, or resent.

(2.) It is implied also, that he doth apprehend and resent this matter; though without any commotion, or perturbation. He resents it so as not to look upon it as a matter of indifference. It does not escape his notice, as profane, atheistical spirits are apt to fancy; who say, "The Lord shall not see, neither will the God of Jacob regard it." Psal. 94. 7. No, there is no such thing to be imagined. God takes notice of the matter, and resents the wrong done to him; yet so calm is the resentment, as every way agrees with the felicity of the divine nature. It is this which he lays up in store, as it is emphatically expressed by Moses, and seals up among his treasures. Deut. 32. 34. This he keeps by him as the just matter of a controversy, which he will manage; and will animadvert upon it in his own time, and when a fit and proper season shall come. So much then are we to conceive as spoken of God, or of the Spirit of God, under the expression of its being vexed.

2. We are now to inquire concerning the cause of this vexation; or shew, what it is that thus vexes the Spirit of God. We may well understand in the general that sin does so; being in its own nature a direct contrariety to his good, and holy, and acceptable will. But especially rebellion against the Spirit of God is vexatious, which is a higher pitch of sin; and implies a continued course of disobedience. Rebellion speaks a prevalent, and continued malignity of sin. "They rebelled, and vexed his Spirit."

But to be more particular here; we may understand what sin is more especially vexing to the Spirit of God, if we allow ourselves to consider what the titles and attributes of this Spirit in Scripture are. By these we shall know what is the tendency of the office and operations of the blessed Spirit of God; and

so more easily conceive what tends to vex, and to grieve it, as you know the expression is elsewhere. "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephes. 4. 30.

(1.) The Spirit of God is styled the Spirit of truth. John 14. 17. It is therefore very grievous, and vexing to this Spirit, to have a light esteem of divine truth; to be indifferently affected towards it; to have a loose adherence to it; an easiness to part with it; and much more a proneness to oppose it, and run away from it. This, I say, must needs be vexing to the Spirit of God. And because I foresee I shall be able to speak but little to the use, I desire you as we go along to make reflections on each head; and to consider how far you may suppose yourselves guilty, and how far this age (professing the truth of God) is guilty of vexing the Spirit in this, and other respects. Again,

(2.) It is mentioned in Scripture under the name of the Spirit of grace. Heb. 10. 29. It is therefore very vexing to this blessed Spirit when that grace, of which it is the author, and which it is its office and business to convey and apply, or effectually to reveal, is rejected; when in that gospel under which we live, and which is the ministration of the Spirit, grace is offered and despised; when there are few that express any regard to, or any desire or value of the Spirit of God: this is a most vexing thing to this Spirit.

(3.) It is called the Spirit of faith. 2 Cor. 4. 13. Infidelity therefore must needs be reckoned a most vexing thing to this Spirit. When persons continue under the gospel in obstinate unbelief; and the great things, there revealed and discovered to us, are but as a tale that is told; or regarded no more than we would regard the word of a child; a most vexing thing to the Spirit of God this must be understood to be. Moreover,

(4.) It is a Spirit of contrition and repentance. This is an effect that is attributed to this Spirit as the author of it. The Spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured forth, as it is promised in Zechariah, and then it is that souls shall mourn over him whom they have pierced, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. Zech. 12. 10. An impenitent hard heart, a heart that cannot repent, is a most vexatious thing to the Spirit of God. We cannot conceive a greater vexation to him, than to find hearts hard as rocks and stones, under the dispensation of the everlasting gospel.

(5.) It is stiled the Spirit of love; which is the great prin-

ciple, that disposes and inclines the soul towards God. He hath given us the Spirit of love, (2 Tim. 1. 7.) that principle which influenceth, and is the life and soul of all the communion there is, between the blessed God, and those that do belong to him; which itself therefore is called "the communion of the Holy Ghost." 2 Cor. 13. 14. A cold heart then towards God, a heart that is disaffected to him, that keeps at a distance from him, that will not be engaged in sweet communion with him through love, is a most vexing thing to his Spirit. Again it is in the

(6.) Place, called a Spirit of power and of life. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, says our Lord. John 6. 63. And again St. Paul tells us, God hath given to us the Spirit of power. 2 Tim. 1. 7. It is a very vexatious thing to this Spirit, when any indulge themselves in deadness of heart; when they allow themselves to be formal, lukewarm, and indifferent; neither cold nor hot, as it was said of the Laodicean church, whom our Lord threatens therefore to spue out of his mouth; a strong expression of his being vexed, and of his resenting the matter with very high displeasure. Rev. 3. 15, 16.

(7.) It is stiled the Spirit of holiness. Rom. 1. 4. And here in our text it is said, They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit. This is a most vexing thing, when persons professing the Christian name indulge themselves in a liberty to walk at random; are impatient of restraints; affect libertinism; have not refrained their feet but have loved to wander: therefore the Lord doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. Jer. 14. 10. When no bonds can be endured; when the yoke and burden of our Lord Jesus Christ are apprehended uneasy, grievous, and intolerable; and the resolution is come to this, "Let us cast away his cords, let us throw off his bonds from us, he shall not reign over us;" when the law of sin and death contesteth to that height against the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, as to engage us to comply with the lustings of the flesh; this is a most vexatious thing to the Spirit of our purity and holiness.

(8.) It is a heavenly Spirit; and the design of all its gracious operations upon souls is to fit them for heaven. "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." 2 Cor. 5. 5. And again says the apostle, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God:" even those things which "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath pre-

pared for them that love him." 1 Cor. 2. 12, 9. A worldly heart therefore is a vexation to this Spirit; that is, when we mingle with, and suffer ourselves to be swallowed up of the spirit of this world: the inclinations and tendencies of which spirit are earthly, and running downwards; while the Spirit of God is aiming to lift us up towards God and heaven. Again,

(9.) It is a Spirit of prayer. So it is called in Scripture, the Spirit of supplication. Zech. 12. 10 It is the great business of this Spirit to act souls, and to raise them to God, in the way of prayer. It is a very great vexation therefore to the holy Spirit, when persons grow to a prayerless disposition; do not care to converse with God in this duty; are slow in the business of prayer; either not minding it, or doing it as though they did it not: this, I say, is a very vexing thing. So he interprets it, and speaks of it with resentment: "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou art weary of me, O Israel." Isai. 43. 22. When persons, who formerly loved prayer, are now grown out of love with it; when those, that have taken pleasure in being in their closets, and shut up in corners, are now grown strange to him, and care not to come nigh him in that way; this is especially to provoke and grieve the Spirit. The very bent and tendency of such a soul runs now directly counter to his proper design and business; which is to engage the souls of men with God in that great duty, wherein they may enjoy continually a fruitful and useful commerce with him. But they decline, and will not be brought to it by this means. This is also a very bitter vexation. And again,

(10.) It is a Spirit of sincerity and uprightness; and wherever it obtains, it makes men upright and sincere. Thus it is called the Spirit of a sound mind. 2 Tim. 1. 7. Hypocrisy therefore, or a deceitful dealing with the blessed God in matters of religion, is a most vexatious thing to his Spirit. When there is only a shew and appearance of love, and devotedness to him; and this only made a cover to a false disloyal heart: this is an abomination unto God. He loves truth in the inward parts, and his countenance beholdeth the upright; giving them pleasant, smiling, complacental looks, which are plain indications of his approving, and being well pleased with them. So again, he cannot but frown with displeasure, where there is falsehood and deceit; where there is an unsound heart; a latent hypocrisy, as if we designed to impose upon him by a cheat and shew; to deceive and mock him, who cannot be deceived, neither will be mocked.

(11.) It is a Spirit of union, peace, and meekness, among them that belong to God. It is designed to form the hearts of believers to these things; and so far as his Spirit is given, one heart and one way are also given; as we may see from Ezekiel 11. 19. compared with other scriptures. Animosities among the people of God; heart-burnings, whether they be upon a common, or a particular, personal account; are the most vexing things imaginable to the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of union, peace, and concord, and the very soul of the mystical body. It is a very vexatious thing when one member of this body goes to fight with another; and it may be some against the common interest of the whole. And it is in the

Last place, A Spirit of sobriety and temperance, in opposition to grossly sensual lusts. It is a very vexatious thing to the Spirit of God, when among a people that profess his name, there is a general profusion, and running into vile sensual lusts. Some are sensual, not having the Spirit. Jude 19. The connection is very observable. Whereas God gives his Spirit, to form a people to that purity, that they may be different from the rest of the world; they allow themselves to run into the same excess of riot. And I believe there are few of us that ever heard, or read of an age, in which there were more gross instances of impurity among professors, than the present. How many instances do we hear of this kind! It must needs be very vexatious to the holy Spirit, whose design it is to form a people unto God, to bear up his name in opposition to a commonly dissolute, and debauched age.

You see then as to the evil done, what it is, and what is the cause of it; namely, sin, and more especially rebellion in those instances, wherein the designs of the Spirit (as represented to us by various titles and attributes in Scripture) are most opposed. We are therefore now,

II. To inquire concerning the evil suffered hereupon; or which we may expect will be inflicted on persons on this account: namely, his turning against them so as to become their enemy. Here we should speak distinctly,

1. Concerning the nature of this evil; and,

2. Concerning the issue of it, and how justly it does ensue in this case.

1. Let us consider the nature of this evil, and shew what is imported in it. And here something is expressed, and something is implied in the words of my text; "therefore he turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." It is implied, that he shall cease doing for such a people as he hath done. If

he was wont formerly to be a bountiful, liberal benefactor, he shall stop his hand. And especially it is to be expected, that we should be so dealt with in that very respect, wherein we have been vexatious: that is, Have we vexed the Spirit of God? then it is natural to expect that the Spirit of God will retire. This is certainly implied in his becoming an enemy to us. If he become an enemy, it is not likely he should hold that friendly commerce, which sometimes he hath done. If God become our enemy, his Spirit shall withdraw from us; shall not strive, nor wrestle with us. And then also these words express some positive evils against such persons; which I might instance in many particulars, but cannot now mention them.

2. I am to consider how justly this penal evil does ensue in this case; namely, that God should turn against those, who rebel and vex his Spirit. This is to be collected from the greatness of the evil done. Consider therefore how just cause and matter of provocation, this injurious dealing with the Spirit of God doth carry in it. Particularly,

(1.) Consider that this is very spiteful dealing, to do that which will vex his very Spirit. Sinners of this kind are expressly said to do "despite unto the Spirit of grace." Heb. 10, 29 And surely to do that, which must directly contradict the very business and design of the Spirit, is a most spiteful kind of wickedness.

(2.) Consider that this is a wickedness, wherein the most immediate kind of affront is offered unto God. He deals with men in a more distant way when he deals with them in his providence, or the outward manifestation of his will in his word. But when he comes to deal with the spirits of men, and to have his work within them, and their spirits resist and oppose him; there is then a most immediate contest between the blessed God and them. And we cannot but think this is a high provocation unto God, and reckon upon this issue, that he must hereupon become our enemy. And,

(3.) It is to be considered that sinning so as more directly to vex the Spirit of God, does carry with it a withstanding of the Spirit in that which is its proper office; which is a great aggravation of the wickedness. It is one thing when I withstand a person in a thing, which he does casually and by the by; and another when I withstand him in that, which is his stated business. It is, you know, reckoned a high affront among men to be resisted, and withstood in an office. To oppose an ordinary, private person, is but a small matter in comparison of affronting an officer, in the execution of his office. The Spirit

of God, when it is about the work of diffusing gospel light and grace, is in the work of its own office. And when persons do such things as are vexatious in this respect; that is, oppose and withstand the holy Spirit in its proper stated business, this must needs be highly provoking. It is a bold and insolent affront done to the blessed God; and therefore may well infer upon such a people that dreadful thing that God should turn against them, and become their enemy.

III. Now as to the use (though these matters have been more lightly touched and considered, than the matter required for want of time) we may infer the following things.

1. We may infer hence, that among a people professing the name of God, the Spirit of God is wont to be at work; and where it is not doing any work, we cannot suppose it to be thus vexatiously resisted, and contended against. It was the testimony that Stephen bore against this people, even dying, that they constantly rebelled, and vexed the Holy Spirit. "Ye do all ways resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye." Acts 7. 51. Now what doth this imply? Inasmuch as it is said expressly that there was a war kept up against the Spirit of God, from age to age, and from generation to generation; it implies, that as they were from age to age a professing people, so from age to age the Spirit of God was still, more or less, striving with them: or else how could they be said always to resist? Where there is no striving, there is no resisting. We ought therefore to consider this, that ordinarily where the gospel is professed; there the Spirit of God is at work, more or less; though not always so, as to prevail. It is a free Spirit; and works, as the wind blows, where it listeth, and to what degree also. But I conceive, that in all those who live under the gospel, the Spirit of God moves at some times, in one degree or another. For it is hardly to be imagined, that any should wear out a life's time under the gospel, and not, one time or other, have the injection of some good thought, some check or rebuke, as to their evil course; and some inclination, at least, to return, and alter their course. And I doubt not but there is a parity between these two cases; that is, as in matters of consolation the Spirit of God co-operates with our spirits, so he doth in matters of conviction, whether it ever becomes effectual or no. So that I reckon it most safe, and most honourable to God, when any injection of that kind is made in the conscience of any man, that lives under the gospel, to ascribe it to the Spirit in its common operations.

2. We are hereupon to reflect and consider, whether this may not be much our case and the case of the generality at

this time, even thus like the Jews to have vexed the holy Spirit of God, which hath been for a long season dealing with us. Recount with yourselves the particulars mentioned; and think whether there has not been a great deal of vexation given the Spirit of God in those several ways. But I cannot stand now to remind you of them.

3. Let us be hereupon persuaded to hasten the taking up this controversy (for it is a dreadful thing to have it depending) by humbling, and abasing ourselves in the dust, before the Lord; for ourselves on our own account, and on the behalf of the generality of those among whom we dwell. Surely this ought to be much the business of such a day as this, even deeply to humble ourselves before the Lord, for the vexation given to his Spirit; and that our temper, course, and spirits run so directly counter to him. We should not want matter of humiliation for many such days, if we did but seriously consider this case; though every day should be kept a fast, and as a day of humiliation on this account. And indeed it is sad, when the matter of humiliation is so very great and manifest, there should be any appearance of declining these occasions, or of shyness in closing with them. We desire to bless God for it, that it is in the hearts of any to join us, but yet it cannot but be observed that there is too great a coolness; and many persons are easily diverted, it is to be feared, from closing with such occasions as these. And methinks it is more especially to be observed, that but few masters of families do appear before God, at such times and on such occasions; who might represent their families, and in the name of them come and lie prostrate at the foot of the throne of grace.

Give me leave but to reflect upon a passage, which is not unworthy of our notice upon this occasion. They are the words of those idolatrous women that burned incense to the queen of heaven, who said to the prophet Jeremiah; "When we burnt incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her without our men?" Jer. 44. 19. 'Did not they come and fall in with us?' It is a sad case, if the men of our times cannot be as forward to fall in with the ways and methods of atoning God, and pacifying his displeasure against us, as they were in those days in ways of so high provocation!

4. Let us apply ourselves particularly and with great earnestness to supplicate the continuance of the Spirit, where it remains breathing in us; and the restoring it, where it had been in any measure restrained. O, how loud and impor-

tunate should our cries be upon this account ! It is a fearful thing to lie under the guilt of continual vexation to the Spirit of God. You know there is a particular accent put upon such wickedness. You know there is such a thing as the sin against the Holy Ghost, in an eminent sense; and we had need to take heed of every gradual approach unto it. I do not think that every sin against the Spirit of God, is that sin against the Holy Ghost ; but we had need, I say, to look to ourselves as to any gradual approach to it. For how great is the censure laid upon that sin ! It is therefore a fearful thing to have our heart and way bent against the way and course, the tendencies and motions of the Holy Ghost.

And when we consider the matter in this light, what reason have we to cry out, as we find the Psalmist does ! “ Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.” Ps. 51. 11. It is a great matter God hath against us, when he hath this to charge us with, namely the vexing of his Spirit. It is a part of the charge against Sodom, that they vexed Lot’s righteous spirit. 2 Peter 2. 8. It is mentioned as a high aggravation of their wickedness that they vexed the spirit of a righteous man. But how much more heinous a thing is it to vex the Spirit of God ! Is it (says the prophet Isaiah) a small thing to weary men, but will ye weary my God also ? Isai. 7. 13. And the more we apprehend the heinousness of this matter, the louder should our cry be, “ Take not away thy holy Spirit from us, that Spirit, which we have vexed, grieved, and done so much to quench.” And to this purpose consider, before I conclude, these two things.

(1.) The exigence of the case, and the necessity of having this Spirit. Alas ! what will become of us when this Spirit is gone, quite gone and breathes no more ? What do we conceive of ourselves, we that carry about with us bodies of flesh, animated by a living soul ? What becomes of us when that spirit retires, and is gone ? into what noisome putrid carcasses do we turn in a short time ! and what a miserable carcass will that church become, out of which the Spirit of God is gone ! a body without a soul ! an unmoving breathless thing ! If God should leave us the gospel, and the external frame of ordinances, what will that avail us when the Spirit is gone ? The matter would be with us, as with some noble stately mansion-house, that is deserted of its great inhabitant. There you may come in, and walk from room to room, and find no body, where there was once great resort, and a great deal of splendour, pomp, and joy, but now, nothing but desolation ! Such a thing will that church be, out of which the Spirit of God, the great Inhabitant, is

gone. You might have gone to that ordinance and the other, and have met with life ; but now no such thing : there are the empty rooms inhabited by no one.

We should therefore so apprehend the exigence of the case, that our spirits may be awakened and stirred up, even with the utmost importunity, to obviate and avert, as much as in us lies, so great a calamity as this, and so great a death. The presence and influence of the Spirit would stand us in the stead of a great deal of mercy of other kinds. It was supposed, that to have ministers and teachers in the church would overbalance a great calamity, where it is said ; "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers." Isai. 30. 20. But how much external misery would it outweigh, to have this Spirit (so teaching as none does) remaining among us ! So that it may well become us still to be praying ; " Lord whatever thou doest, withdraw not thy Spirit from us ! Rather tear our flesh, pour our blood like water upon the ground, than cease to be pouring out thy Spirit among us !" We should make this much the design of all our prayers on such a day as this.

It may be, many are come before the Lord this day, to try to deprecate and avert that wrath, which threatens us with external calamities ; or that they may do something for the saving their estates, and their pleasant delectable things : but this is a low design. Rather say, " Let all these things go, if thou wilt Lord, but let thy Spirit remain ! let that breathe, and work in us still ; and do with us, in all external respects, what thou wilt."

Let us labour thus, I say, to apprehend the necessity of our case. It is not necessary that we should be rich, or in quiet, or at liberty ; it is not necessary we should have such, and such external accommodations ; but it is necessary we should have the Spirit : for they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his. Rom. 8. 9. And again,

(2.) Apprehend too (wherewith I close) the possibility of succeeding well, in our strivings and wrestlings with God, yet to obtain more of his Spirit. It is itself a Spirit of grace, and supplication ; and according as it is complied with in that, which is its proper business and office, so we may expect more and more plentiful effusions of it. We are therefore to look upon this as a hopeful case, if we set ourselves to strive with God for his Spirit, that it shall not withdraw. But if it be an indifferent matter with us, then are we lost before we are aware. We feel death creeping upon us by degrees, and we regret it not ; death drawing near our vitals, but we mind it not.

This is a sad case ; but if we, feeling a decay and languishment, cry with importunity to God, the case is not hopeless. He hath said, that he will give the Spirit to them that ask for it ; and that he will pour out his Spirit upon us. Christ represents it as given to a child, as a boon from the Father ; and that this gift is comprehensive of all good things. Matt. 7. 11. compared with Luke 11. 13. Nay, that the Spirit is to us, as bread to a child ; for we can no more live without the Spirit, than a child can without bread.

If we would therefore set ourselves a craving in good earnest, and represent our case to the Father of spirits and mercies, his bowels would work towards us ; and he would not long withhold his Spirit from them, whom he sees to want it, and ask for it. Therefore beg of God thus : "O Lord, behold a poor company of creatures gasping for life ! thy Spirit is vital breath ; we are ready to die, if thy Spirit breathe not. Pity thine own offspring, thou Father of mercies, and of all spirits !" Surely then this Spirit will return ; for why should not we rest upon his promise, who has said, that God will give his holy Spirit to them that ask him ?

And we may the more boldly ask, because we may suppose ourselves to be nearer those days, wherein there shall be a more general pouring out of the Spirit ? And we might argue that those days are nearer indeed, if there was a more general, and importunate, and loud cry for this Spirit. This would import that a great measure of it is already come, and that far greater measures are coming. It would be an argument, that it would be a Spirit of consolation and joy, life and vigour ; which would make religion a glorious thing, and christians shine and live, both at once.
