

## SERMON XXVIII.

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.*

IN recommending to you several requisites for a continual course of friendship with Christ, I did not mention that of trust, than which there is not a greater requisite to friendship. But that I intend to be spoken to by itself. And therefore have pitched upon this text. Now to proceed gradually, and in some method. There are four previous things which I shall premise. As 1. Where do we find Abraham to be called the friend of God? for it refers to a former scripture, as fulfilled, that God did treat him as a friend. We find him expressly so called, 2 Chron. xx. 7. There was a numerous, potent enemy that did seek to keep out the people of God from possessing that land which God had given to the seed of Abraham his friend. And Jehoshaphat urgeth this to God in prayer. So we have it again, Isa. xli. 8, where there being an occasion to mention Abraham, he is spoken of also as the friend of God; "But thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." But 2. We are to consider and take notice under what notion Abraham is spoken of by that glorious title of the friend of God. It is true he was an eminent saint. But was this spoken of him under that notion? or is it not under a common notion as a believer? So it seems to be in the text. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God." This is a notion common to him, and to all believers; and this still must then agree with the rest of believers. Then 3. We are further to consider what sort of faith this was in which Abraham is accounted a righteous person, and called the friend of God. It is plain that that faith did not consist only in believing the general promise of having a numerous seed. It did not terminate on God, abstractly without

a reference to Christ. It did not stand in a cold and ineffectual assent to any divine truth whatsoever—for the whole context shews the insufficiency of such a faith. But to speak to this positively, and briefly, we shall consider the object and nature of this faith. As,

1. For the object of it, is evident that it did comprehend and take in four representations of Christ. How distinct and explicit his understanding thereof was we cannot determine. But he had some notion of it: for our Lord himself saith, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad, John viii. 56. And this must be a truth with us which none can question. And we are told, that very good promised to Abraham did eminently intend that one seed, which was Christ, Gal. iii. 16. And we are there also told, verse 17, that the covenant, that was not at first made but renewed with Abraham, was the covenant of God in Christ. And we are likewise told that this seed of his was to possess the gates of their enemies; and that nations should be blessed in him. So that his mind was directed, that from this seed of his, himself should expect blessedness. And it cannot otherwise be supposed. And ergo, that as the eye was fixed upon Christ, as his seed by promise, and through that to be blessed himself. The prophets themselves did not fully understand their own prophesying of him. Some prophecies they must be supposed to have, though not most distinct and clear to themselves. So we find, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” And,

2. As to the nature or kind of that faith, in reference to the object, it must be such as, according to his understanding of the discovery he had there, must be an embracing of his heart and will towards this object. He doth close with Christ according to the representation he had of him. Christ was the sum and substance of the Gospel—faith in the mind and heart of Abraham, as far as the discovery was made to him.

And now the way is plain to that which I principally intend for the ground of discourse from this text, to wit:

*Doctrine.* That there is much of friendly commerce between the blessed God and the souls of men in and about

the production and exercise of that faith upon which he counts them righteous, and doth justify, and will finally save them. This is the substance of what I intend to insist upon from the whole of this text. I take it to be clear that Abraham's faith was the same for kind and nature with that by which all believers are justified and saved. And he was called the friend of God. And then I say there is much friendly converse between God and souls in the production and service of that faith which justifies and saves. Now take notice,

1. That I do not consider that discovery of friendship in the single act of faith, but take a further latitude, as to the production and exercising of that faith. There is a friendship in that whole ingratiation between God and souls, when he is about producing, and they about the exercising, of that faith. And again,

2. Take notice, that I do not speak of faith here as justifying only, but of faith as saving also, being led thereto by the context, and by my own design. By the context, which speaks of faith under both notions, as *justifying*, in the words next following. And as *saving*, in the 14th verse: Can such a faith save him? And upon account of my own design, i. e. of discovering the friendship which appears in this matter, which certainly is eminently seen at the last in salvation, as that is the result of all the transactions between God and the soul in these matters. And again,

3. Take notice that hereupon this friendship is not to be considered merely as begun, but as continued unto the last: for friendship doth not lie in a single act, but a state. And ergo, there must be a continued course of friendship, frequent repetitions of such a kind and manner as there was in the inchoation, the beginning of this friendship. There may be intervals of it, after some notable failure on the one part or the other. And there must be somewhat done to the keeping of it on foot throughout; for that it never be totally broken off with them whom the end, the perfection, the consummation of it, shall take place at last, to wit, their final and eternal salvation. And,

4. Further consider this, that wheresoever there is true friendship (admitting it to be called so in the best and proper sense) it must be mutual. A man cannot truly and properly be said to be a friend with an inanimate subject, and there may be a disparity both natural and moral. As I can have no friendship, or there can be no entire and full friendship between me and a stone; so neither can there

be between me and an enemy. Though I may have friendly propensions towards such an one, yet an actual, friendly intercourse there cannot be, if there be an incapacity in the other subject, either natural or moral. Ergo, to speak to the subject of the intercourses of friendship, that are in this transaction between God and the soul in and about this production, and exercising of that faith by which he justifies and saves, it was fit to premise these things. And these things being clear. I am to shew,

I. What there is of a friendly propension on God's part towards the souls of such with whom he so negotiates, in the management and conduct of this matter. And the friendship herein, on his part, appears in general in these two things.

1. In friendly instructions and counsels; and,

2. In friendly performances, or actual communications.

1. In friendly instructions and counsels: so he is a wise friend; as in the other he is a powerful one. His wisdom appears in his instructions and counsels; and his power in his performances and communications; but neither of these exclusively of the other. And,

(1.) It is much of friendly propension, that God discovers to men in bringing about that faith which is justifying, in the friendly instructions and counsels he affords them in order hereunto. And we must take in this, that what as to his purpose he speaks by his word to them, he doth by his Spirit impress upon them. This is as the seal to the wax, which makes and leaves its impress thereon. What he speaks outwardly by his word, he speaks internally by his Spirit, which makes use of the word to enlighten their minds with, and begets correspondent characters on the soul, so as to make the word effectual. And,

He instructs them concerning their undone and miserable state while they remain strangers to him, and enemies against him. He speaks copiously to them of this by his word; and must be understood to speak correspondently hereof by his Spirit. Thou art in a state of separation from me, who am the Author of thy being and blessedness. Thou art insensible of this state, and thou thinkest that thou needest not God, thou canst live without him in the world. Whereas thou art lost, a guilty creature, liable to wrath: and thou art an impotent creature; thou canst not escape or deliver thyself: and what will become of thee, thou hast not righteousness nor strength! It is necessary that the soul do apprehend and feel this, and the misery of his state

while he hath no God, no interest in him, nor righteousness to recommend him to God. Men have not a word to say for themselves in this case. The power of God is engaged against them. Against his justice they can say nothing, and against his power they can do nothing. When there is a design of friendship on foot, then God takes the soul aside, and shews it all this, to convince it. God now brings things home with a strong hand, and makes the soul consider what it may expect, if it continue in a war against Heaven. Then,

(2.) He instructs them (and there is much of friendliness in it) concerning his own reconcileableness to sinners. God declares it in his word, and he speaks it over again to their own ears and hearts. Men will not mind what is said in the word. They might easily see that he is placable and willing to be reconciled; his giving them much of his goodness, and his exercising patience and long suffering towards them, and all this to lead them to repentance. He expostulates the matter with men on plain evidence of the things themselves: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Rom. ii. 4. But he hath spoken out to men in the gospel, wherein he opens his heart, and declares his counsels to them. But all this needs to be spoken to men inwardly. He urgeth and inculcates his mind and will to them; reasons and argues with their souls. Why hast thou not understood all this hitherto? but thou understandest it now that I am a reconcileable God, if thou now fall not in with my method for this end. This is of mighty importance for bringing about such a friendship; for while men apprehend God to be irreconcilable, that will lead them to despair, and be an hell upon earth. But to behold a gospel of grace and reconciliation, and having it set on so as to apprehend the thing indeed, this engageth the intention and mind to consider the terms offered. And then,

(3.) He instructs such souls about the great reconciler and mediator of their peace, into whose hands he hath put all this affair; unto whom they must be beholden, from whom they must receive all that grace that is requisite, either to the changing of the state, or the changing of the frame. And if men be not inwardly and with efficacy instructed concerning all this, the very doctrine of reconciliation itself would very slowly enter against those mighty objections, which it might meet with in a considering mind. For any

one that understood the nature of God, and considered him as a being absolutely perfect, and so apprehended his holiness and his justice to be in the highest perfection in him, as well as his other governing attributes; if one thought should arise in the mind of such a person, about contracting a peace and friendship with his God, Oh, how shall he answer it to himself, when his own mind tells him, *his* nature admits of no change, and my nature, by any power of my own, admits of none. God will not change his nature, and I cannot change mine. This very nature and natural state put me into a posture of direct hostility against his sovereign authority, against his justice, and against his holiness, all at once. If a man in this case hath no way in view how God can consistently with the honour and dignity of his authority and government, and the unalterableness of his eternal law, be reconciled to a sinner, and lead him into communion with himself: here lies an objection in the mind of such an one, against the sum of the gospel, if that were held faith only in general. That is, that God is willing to be reconciled to sinners. For what? Is he willing to deny himself? To come down from his throne to quit his government? or is it possible to him to change his nature, to be less just and less holy than he essentially is? But when there cometh to be a distinct explication of the way and method wherein God can honourably, and consistently with his truth, justice, and holiness, be reconciled to sinners; to wit, by the discovery of the doctrine of the Mediator; and when this discovery is inwardly applied and brought home; that which was before a stumbling-block, and a mountain of opposition raised up in the soul against the truth and purpose of the gospel, vanisheth, and the way is plain, smooth, and open to it; and so nothing remains but to fall in with it. But oh, how friendly is this, not only to speak this in an unregarded, external relation, but to speak it internally to the mind and soul, and make it apprehended and understood. To shew unto man his righteousness, who it is that he must be beholden to for all that is requisite for the changing of his state, and for changing his natural frame and inclination, when he must have righteousness and strength. To declare all this by inward, internal light, oh how friendly is this converse! These things are spoken thousands of times over, to the stupid and inadvertent generality, and they never take notice of it. But when he comes to make light, and to shine through that darkness which enwrapt the heart, then

hope begins to take place. Then saith such a soul, "I see it is a feasible thing, a practicable thing that the gospel proposes; I see God hath put the management of all these affairs into such a hand as can at once both reconcile his attributes to one another, and reconcile him to us, and us to him. And then,

(4.) He instructs concerning the way and method of coming to have an interest and part in Christ. So as to have both righteousness and spiritual life in him and by him, i. e. upon being united with him. This is the way; and he instructs the soul that there is not only a fulness of all grace in his Son, from whom they are to receive righteousness, and the regenerating spirit also; but there is a way of coming to be interested in all his fulness, and in that renovating Spirit: and, we then must be united to him. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom." Then we are told there must be union. And how is that to be brought about? Why, thou must be in him, in order to this interest and participation from him. This wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, which are in Christ, are nothing to thee that hast no part in him; but his wisdom is thine, his righteousness is thine, his sanctification and redemption thine; but all this upon supposition that thou art in him. There must be such an union in order to that participation. But how is this union brought about? Why, he that is the author of the whole design, is the author of this union; "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom," 1 Cor. i. 20. Thus this union must be of God.

But then you must consider this to be very proper and wholesome counsel to you. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." Job xxii. 21. Sue to him for all such counsel as any wise man would take and follow. As Luke xiv. latter end. "Or what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." This is good counsel, which is secretly prompted unto that. Oh, sinner, sue for peace. Thou canst never, with thy feeble power, oppose and contend in a war against Almightyness itself, that comes armed with terror and vengeance against thee. This cannot be: it is thy way to sue for peace. And we are told in what way God will be reconciled, if ever to

be reconciled ; that is, it must be in and by the Mediator. Here is suitable counsel given thee. He counsels thee, Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." You are externally counselled to all this in the gospel. And it may be there are such direct intimations given to minds too ; it is likely very often but little regarded. But that such counsel should be given is very friendly. What wilt thou do, thou undone lost creature ? Thou hast no clothing, but must appear naked before the divine vindictive justice ; nothing to fence thee, nothing to arm thee against the stroke of vengeance. Thou art running on blindly upon thine own ruin. I tell thee where there is eye-salve for thee, and where there is clothing for thee, and where there is every thing that thy necessitous, indigent, undone state requires and needs ; I counsel thee to betake thyself to him, to apply to him. This is very friendly counsel. It is friendly in the design and aspect and tendency of it, as it presents itself to thee in the external word ; but much more when it is inwardly suggested, when the thing is inculcated inwardly to the mind and heart, and thou art beaten upon by these things, thou art so and so counselled. Why dost thou not hearken to counsel ? Why, in such things as these, there appears much of friendship on God's part ; that is, in the friendly instructions and counsels which he is pleased to give, especially internally and correspondently, as it must be, with the external revelation of his mind concerning these things.

## SERMON XXIX.\*

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

2. THE friendship of God appears in his friendly performances and effectual communications. We are to know that his friendly design towards souls doth not terminate here ; it reacheth further. That is applicable enough in this case which is spoken in reference to lower and inferior cases in the 15th and 16th verses of this same chapter : "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of food, and one

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of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" It would profit as little if God should himself but at the same rate treat men's souls; give them good words, though very apposite and suitable to their case; say to them, Be warmed, be filled, but not give them the things requisite to their souls, what would that profit them? Compare that with 1 John iii. 17, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" What he may shew of kindness and good-will is nothing like the love of God. God's friendly propension towards miserable, necessitous souls, did shew itself at another rate than merely in advising and counselling them, or seeming to wish them well: his friendship exercises itself in the most considerable acts of external benefaction, in doing them good, and rejoicing over them to do them good, "with all his heart and with all his soul," as the expression is, and his own words are. But as to this also, I shall give you instances how this kind of friendship, by way of communication and performance, on God's part appears. As

(1.) That he ingenerates this faith; he works it in us. It is called a "fruit of the Spirit." Gal. v. 22. And it is said to proceed from the "Spirit of faith." 2 Cor. iv. 13. We are told that "by faith we are saved, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8. That faith we are not to take separately and alone: but it heightens the love and gift, that we do believe and are saved by faith, "and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." It is by this faith that the soul is brought into union with his Saviour; by it, it comes to him; by it, they receive him, John i. 12, and it is by this they come to the Son, and to have life. 1 John, v. 11. It is in order hereto, that God the Father is said to draw souls to Christ, and they are said to come to him. John vi. 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." What friendliness is this to induce and draw souls to Christ! We must understand that drawing aright. It is not dragging by violence, but as himself expresses it, that, (Hosea xi. 4,) "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them." It is by a gentle but effectual affection, drawing you to him; making it by reason and love in conjunction,

to appear to be your interest and concern; and so working on love to yourselves that it may be improved into a love to him too. When they are brought in with a love upon indigency first, they may grow into a love of complacency and highest delight afterwards; one love being the loadstone of another—loving because you are first loved. But look into these acts, and you will see what a friendly design there must be in faith which is produced by union with Christ. By the result of that faith, you will see the kindness of it. There must be friendship in him that will engage my trust when it is nothing to him; he gains nothing by it, but it is necessary and beneficial to me. I do in this case take pains with myself to trust in him, working, but only so as one man may upon another in order thereunto; for they cannot immediately touch, and attract, and turn, and draw hearts. They can but use apt and suitable methods in order hereunto; but if they do that, there is much of kindness in the design: when one takes great pains, and uses industrious endeavours to induce to trust in him, he himself having no advantage by it, but I gain by it the greatest things. That the blessed God should induce and engage souls to trust in him, when it can be of no advantage to him; but he knows that without it they must perish and be lost; when he doth not only invite them to trust in the Lord, stay themselves upon their God, rely upon him and upon that truth and fidelity that never failed any; how friendly is this! To insist on it from time to time, not to give over the soul that hath often neglected him in making these overtures; this is wonderful friendly. To draw the soul into union with Christ, and with himself in and by him; this is to bring such into a state of blessedness. “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus,” &c. You are foolish creatures, but he will be wisdom to you; you are guilty creatures, but he will be righteousness to you; you are impure creatures, but he will be sanctification to you; you are enslaved creatures, but he will be redemption unto you: all this is of God. And whereas he doth manifestly design to reunite souls to his Son, and by him to himself; how friendly is this design. He intimates hereby that such and such can never be too near to him, or he too close with them. But,

2. This divine friendship appears in his hereupon counting them righteous, and imputing righteousness to them, as the text expresses it: “he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” This faith was given Abraham, and thereupon God counts him righteous; and

so he does every believer besides. And is not this a most friendly estimate? is it not to count as a friend, to count us righteous who were far from righteousness? He not only pardons, but accepts as righteous. We should count this wonderful friendship, when we consider our state; we were creatures under a law that cursed every one that "continued not in all things written therein to do them:" and we had broken that whole law, in every part of our duty as to love of God, and our fellow-creatures of the same order. From the depraved nature of man, being carnalized into enmity against God, and hatred one of another, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Rom. viii. 7. This is more than the breach of every command; for my quarrel is not against this or that precept, but against subjection; and so my design is against the divine government: now, is not this friendly when he will thus give faith to such, and reckon and impute righteousness to them? I know there is, as to this, commonly introduced a very unnecessary and trifling dispute. What it is that is counted for righteousness? When the matter comes to be thus stated—is it the act of believing or the object believed on? and the question will be easily answered by putting another question:—Suppose it be asked, What is that which clothes a man?—is it his garment, or his putting it on? Sure, a very ordinary understanding would find no difficulty to answer it. The garment would never clothe a man, if it were not put on: and the action that a man uses in putting on a thing would not have clothed him if he had not the garment: and ergo, these two must contribute together for this end, of being clothed, but in different kinds—it is the garment when put on that clothes him, and the action that is used in putting it on is no part of the clothing, but it was requisite thereunto, and that without which he could not have been clothed. All this is so obvious, that I might save the labour of applying it to the case in hand. What is it upon which a man is counted righteous in the sight of God? Why, he puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, and God puts him on, as it were, so that the scripture phrase is intelligible enough. It is that which is put on which is the matter of this clothing, and the action that is used here is no part of that matter, and yet it is such a requisite as without which he would never be clothed.

What is it upon which a man is counted righteous before God?—why he puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, as was said. But how friendly is it that such men should upon such

terms, and in such a way and method, be brought into that state of righteous persons, when, if they were not so clothed, they stood exposed and naked unto vindictive justice, armed with power even to the highest. But now the sword of vengeance cannot touch them; otherwise, thou wert every moment liable. Oh, what friendliness is there in all this! Again,—

3. This friendship appears in this matter herein, that when God imputes righteousness to the believer, he imparts his Spirit: and this is wonderful friendliness, if the distress of the case be considered. Plain it is, that the miserable sinner did need somewhat else besides clothing, and without it he must have been miserable for ever. And most certain it is, that the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ was never designed to be the clothing of a carcase. The soul that was “dead in trespasses and sins” is made alive when made righteous. There is no need of disputing about priority here: the righteousness and Spirit of Christ are given together; they are simultaneous gifts: he doth not give life by the Spirit to such souls because he hath made them righteous; nor doth he make them righteous because he hath given them life, or given his Spirit: but these are co-ordinate streams from the same fountain of divine grace. “Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. vi. 11.—And a horrid catalogue of wickedness was recited in the foregoing 9 and 10 verses, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,—nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” Righteousness and Spirit are given together; and should we suppose these gifts to be separate, the former would avail little without the latter; for heaven would never be heaven to a dead soul: if it were possible for such a soul, upon the account of Christ’s righteousness, to be admitted into heaven, what would a dead soul do there? Therefore, they are gifts of divine grace conferred together. It would be an horrid reproach and contempt that the righteousness of the Son of God should be made a covering for continuing the deformity and loathsomeness of a carcase that should be only hid, and not cured. This is a most un-supposeable thing, and, than which, nothing would be more ignominious, not only to the wisdom of God, but to hi

grace too; for sure it is more abundant grace to cure these two evils together, than one alone; to heal him inwardly and clothe him outwardly at the same time. And again,

4. This friendly inclination on God's part doth further appear in giving repentance to the sinner, which is comprehended in the gift of the Spirit, as every other grace is; only here I must, before I speak more distinctly to this of repentance, enlarge somewhat to shew you under what distinct considerations we are to look on this gift of the Spirit that comprehends all the rest.—The Spirit is given in order to its first working, and in order to its after employment and work that it hath to do in the souls of men. It is not otherwise capable of being given at all, than only relatively and effectively in respect of the relation and effect. But it is not hard to understand in what sense (when a person is the thing spoken of) one can be said to be given to another: it is not the one's being made the other's being: there is nobody so absurd as to understand the matter so: but only such an one becomes related who was unrelated before, and upon that relation doth such works to which relation obligeth, and that he was not obliged to do before. This is the meaning of giving one person to another, in common language amongst men; and so must be the meaning of the Spirit's being given to any of us, that is, that it becomes now related by covenant to us, having been unrelated before; for, when by covenant we take God to be our God, what do we take? not the essence of God abstractly, but we take God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, who all become related to us for several purposes—God to be the prime author of being to us, Christ to be our redeemer, the Spirit to be our enlightener and sanctifier; and all as comprehended in the covenant by which God is said to be our God and we to be his people; as is sufficiently and expressly enough signified by the baptismal form; which baptism brings a signal, a token, a seal, of this covenant. We are ergo baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be continually our God. And now hereupon the Spirit becomes ours by covenant, or, we having a covenant interest in him, he comes to do such work, or to work such effects in those to whom he is now become so related, as he works no where else. And so he is with them, and in them, to that very purpose. It is true, the Spirit is all the world over in every man, in every creature, in every thing: "Whither shall I flee from thy Spirit?" Psalm cxxxix. 5. But he is in such as these, for such

and such special gracious purposes as he doth not effect and bring about in any others, but those to whom he is in covenant so related. And this being so far clear, then we must distinguish between his first operations upon souls, and the consequent operations for which those former do prepare and make way. Whatsoever was necessary to be done previously, all that enlightening, all that conviction, which must immediately accompany and, in some respects, in order of nature, but not of time, be before saving faith, if these do come within the compass of saving *grace* (for there are operations that be only within the compass of common *grace*, which may be before, and long before, in time.) But whatsoever lies within the compass of saving *grace*, they are all at once. There must be very great exertions of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit in bringing men to believe; and in doing so he does, as it were, work as a visitant, but afterwards he works and operates as an inhabitant; having by his former operations prepared his own habitation, built his temple, now he comes to inhabit this temple, to dwell in it, and to exert himself in all suitable communications and operations from time to time there; as in that 1 Cor. iii. 16, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” There never would have been any act of saving *grace* at all without his Spirit; but there be such acts as are antecedaneous to its indwelling presence, and which he doth as a visitant: whereas there are continual exertions of the *grace* and power of the Spirit to be done by it afterwards. And how marvellous friendship is this, that God should give his own Spirit to inhabit (with kind designs, and in order to such gracious purposes and ends) such wretched creatures as we. Of all ways you can think of whatsoever to express friendship to another, if it were within the compass of your power it would be in giving them the same mind, the same spirit, the same sentiments of things that you yourself have, wherein you suppose them to be right; you would have them to have every thing of your mind and your spirit (except what you could of yourselves apprehend to be imperfection, infirmity, and defect :) and there was no possible way, if that were in our power, to express kindness and friendship so significantly as this way. If a wise man, a good man could convey to a son, not only his lands, his tithes, his honours, his dignities, but could convey his wisdom, his goodness, his integrity, certainly here were the greatest kindness shewed in this, that

it were possible for a creature to express. If I would do the part of a friend to the uttermost (and this lay within the compass of my power), wherein I thought my friend and my spirit to be right, I would impart to such an one my mind and spirit, that he may be of the same mind. Herein would be the truest friendship; for where there is the truest friendship, and there is the most agreement in minds, they do insensibly mould and form one another, and impress one another. But hereto there must be a divine power, according to which all things are given pertaining to life and godliness, and the participation (comprehensive of all the rest) of the divine nature, as it is expressed, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." There is a divine Spirit, and thereby we are made partakers of the divine nature,—of all gracious principles and dispositions of one kind and another. How admirable friendship is there in this, that the holy God should give into the breast and bosom of a man, that pure and holy Spirit, to be an inhabitant and indweller there, to chase away the darkness that enwrapt that wretched soul, to inspire it with a new and holy life, to implant the principles most connatural to such a life, and which are to have their constant exercise through the whole of a man's course. Oh! the friendliness that doth appear in this! But when all this is done, and the soul is made capable of acting, here cannot but be, as I said, in the fourth place—

## SERMON XXX.\*

JAMES II. 23. *And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

4. The exercise of repentance towards God; and the bringing of the soul to this hath the most of friendliness that can be expressed. It is he that brings the soul to the necessary exercise of repentance and godly sorrow, whereby men are brought off from sin, and brought home

\* Preached October 3, 1693.

to God. I would now have you to understand, that I do not, by mentioning these things in this order, wherein I do, say that there is such an order punctually observed by God in the effecting and bringing about these things. But where there are many particulars to be mentioned to you, it is impossible they can all be mentioned in one breath; we can but mention one after another. But God's order of doing things may not be always the same. Some acts may be produced first in such an order, and (for aught we know) afterwards in another. And most certain we are, that for the substance of all that is requisite to the salvation and blessedness of the soul, it may, and for aught we know, always is done in one and the same moment, when God regenerates it, visiting it with his Son, and so pardons and justifies it, and entitleth it to eternal life. And it is very possible, that that very moment wherein he first applies himself to the soul to unite it to Christ, may be at the moment of its separation from this body. And so all that is necessary to salvation must be done in that moment, or the soul must be lost; and, for aught we know, it may be always so. But, I say, notwithstanding that when there are many things that are distinct in themselves, that is, that are capable of distinct conceptions in our minds, none of these things are to be overlooked; we must distinctly mention things that do occur, though we cannot mention them all in one moment or breath.

But most certain it is, that there is in this very case repentance necessary; and there is the exercise of repentance necessary. So faith is necessary, not only the principle of faith, but the act and exercise too; for when we are said to be justified by faith, what is the meaning of that? By a disposition to believe: the mere disposition to believe is not believing. We are said to be justified by faith, Rom. v. 1; so Gal. ii. 16, it is said we have believed, that we might be justified. We have believed, not have been disposed only to believe, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ. Why so, after the same manner, when it is said, "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out;" the meaning cannot be, that there be some disposition in you to repent. Acts iii. 19. "Repent, for the remission of sins;" Acts ii. 38. The meaning cannot be, that there be in you some essay, some tendency, some inclinations to repentance; but Repent, except you repent (not except you be some way inclined to it), ye shall all likewise perish. Herein, I say, inasmuch as such a repentance is



so conjunct a thing with a safe state for a sinner, there appears most admirable friendliness in this matter. That an heart that was most adverse and disaffected to God before, should be turned to him; that an heart that was before a stone, a rock, should be so relenting; how admirable a thing is this, if you consider at once both the necessity and the excellency, and the rarity of such a repentance. Take these things together, and it is most admirable friendship that appears in giving repentance. It is spoken with admiration, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts xi. 18. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31.

1. Consider the necessity of it, and you acknowledge the friendliness of it. Any one that understood the state of his own case, if he had but so much sense about him as to consider what he should do, and how incapable he is of doing it, would say, Lord, what shall I do with this wretched heart of mine? I can as soon dissolve a rock as melt it down. I cannot make it relent or bleed. The most proper, the most weighty, most important thoughts I can take up, do all hover on the surface, and never enter, have no molifying influence, are productive of nothing: well, now for God to say, this is a thing that shall be done—I will take away the heart of stone; this soul of thine it must dissolve or perish; thou must repent or die. Thy faint strugglings prove thy impotency; I will relieve in this distressed case. Oh what friendship is here! And,

2. If we consider the excellency of the thing wrought in this case, it is a most friendly work. It restores the lost creature to itself, and brings it to God. A most glorious work! Thy wretched soul is not itself till it repent. Repentance is a becoming wise. It is a soul's return to a sound and sober sense of things, of which it was destitute before. The character that Ecclesiastes gives of the hearts of men generally, which we heard opened heretofore, is—madness is in their hearts. Repentance is the cure of this madness. It is by it they return to a sound mind; and it is by it they return to God. "Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" you find how they are conjoined, Acts xx. 21. A wandering creature, that hath spent its time hitherto in perpetual deviations from the living God, now comes back to him. Admirable friendliness, to produce and bring about this return! Long it

was, and not such a thought taken up, Where is God my maker? There was no miss of God. How is the soul, after the divine touch and impress put upon it, impatient of longer distance? I can live without God no longer; where is God my maker? This resolution possesses it: "I will arise and go to my Father, and say, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Perhaps there were some cold relents before, but now that matter is resolved; and it is the power of divine grace, giving repentance, that resolves and determines it. Now a disceptation is out of doors, laid aside. And whereas the matter was long at this pass, Shall I? Shall I? Shall I break off from this way of sin? Shall I abandon that lust which did domineer, and unto which I did enslave myself? Now the soul will be no longer at this pass; Shall I? Shall I? But when God gives it repentance, he brings the matter to this: the soul says, "I will arise and go to my Father," and throw myself at his feet and cry for mercy, as that which I can no longer live and be without. I can remain in this irresolution no longer. This is giving repentance, and oh, how friendly! When by it the soul returns to itself, and to its God at once. And again,

3. If you consider the rarity of such a work, it is wonderful friendliness. How many are there, who sit a life's time under that gospel, which is Christ's call continually to repentance? "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Many live a life's time under that gospel by which he calls, but his call is regarded no more than the whistling of the wind among the leaves of the trees. "I called, but they gave me no answer: I called, but ye refused: I stretched out my hand, but no man regarded." Prov. i. 24. And what proves the issue of this with, God knows, too many? Ye shall call, but I will not regard; ye shall make many prayers, and I will not hear; "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Consider this as the common case, and what wonderful friendliness is it when he gives repentance! When he enables a poor creature to fall before him in the dust, with self-loathing, clothing itself with shame and confusion before him; when he hath brought it to a supplicating posture; when he hath made it feel wounds and remorse within itself, which the most never feel;—let but these things be considered together, the necessity, the excellency, and the rarity of serious repentance, and it is wonderful friendliness when God worketh a soul to it.

5. Great friendliness appears in his begetting in the soul an universal frame of holiness and rectitude, that is spread through all the powers and faculties thereof. Though this, for aught we know, may be done in the same instant of time wherein he is said to regenerate a soul; yet it is capable of a distinct conception, and so ought not to be altogether confounded with that: for whenever it pleaseth God to touch a soul with a saving divine touch, that touch must be supposed to be vital. He toucheth it, and makes it live. He, by that touch, draws it into union with his Son, to him, so as that it comes to possess him, to have him (in the Scripture phrase); and in having him it hath life. 1 John v. 12. Yet, for all this, the having a distinct, explicit frame of holy rectitude laid out through the soul, is a diverse thing; it is to be distinctly considered, supposing that that be by so quick and speedy an operation effected, as to be in the same moment of time. And so, though these be not separable things, they are distinct things. As, when the rational soul is first united with the unformed matter of a human body, there may be said to be a man virtually, though the several parts of the human body are distinctly formed by degrees. It is very true indeed, that where a spiritual being is the subject of an operation, there it may be quick, and, for aught we know, momentary; it may be done, for all we know, in a moment. Spirit being said to be the production, the thing produced in the case, as John iii. 6, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Why, supposing that, yet that first vital touch, by which it may be said to be regenerated, may be distinguished, though not separated from this intire work of regeneration, by which the frame of holiness is superinduced—that work of sanctification. And so the most do distinguish regeneration from sanctification; as the former is the latter virtually, and the latter is the former actually and completely. And this frame consists of that concurrence of gracious principles that do belong to the new nature, now become explicit in the soul. They were all actually in the new nature when first given, but yet make a formed new man, as the divine Spirit lays out the several lineaments thereof by his own operation and influence. And whether that be instantaneous, or whether it be in a continued succession of time, is a matter altogether so unknown, and so unknowable to us, that it would be lost time and labour to go about to dispute it. Besides, that the determination would be as little useful, as it is possible. But certain it is, that besides the communication of the

new nature and the new life, which virtually contain all holy gracious principles in it, there are holy gracious principles given themselves, which actually and formally obtain and have place in the soul, and are the fruits of the Spirit, which we find mentioned in distinct terms, Gal. v. 22, 23, and in divers other places.

6. With this falls in the mortifying and destroying the body of sin; and it is indifferent whether this be mentioned before the other, or after. It is altogether indifferent. For this work of the divine Spirit, it may be very well wrought, by the opposite thereunto taking place in the soul, and making its own way, and expelling the former form, as this latter is itself introduced. As fire seizing upon any combustible matter, it doth at the same time expel the form of the wood or seal, and introduce its own form of fire. But that is a thing that must necessarily fall in, be the order what it will, and it makes little what the order be. But when there is a new man to be put on, there is the old man to be put off, and there is the body of sin and of flesh to be destroyed, so as that the soul is no longer to serve sin. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is to free it from the law of sin and death. Rom. viii. 2. It is altogether an unconceivable thing, that when the soul is in union with Christ, and intitled to a righteousness by him of His working out, that it should at the same time continue in a stated rebellion against God, and under the governing power of reigning sin; of sin still in the throne, and still giving law, or still being a law in the soul,—the law of sin and death. These things can no more consist. The reign and power of sin is broken in the same instant that any one's state is changed. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" under the law, as it is a condemning law. Why, then, at the same time that the sinner ceases to be condemned, sin ceaseth to reign. If it hath no condemning power, it hath no dominion. To be under the condemning power of sin, and to be under grace, these are inconsistent. And to be under grace, and to be under the power of sin regnant, are equally inconsistent. "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." It will not consist with your state, with that state which you are to conclude is yours, and is proper to you now, that is, a state of holy life into which you are regenerated. "Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

Rom. vi. 11. The Apostle is not teaching these to make a false judgement. He would not have them reckon themselves alive unto God through Jesus Christ, if they were not alive, or if they were still dead. But if they be so alive, if the life of grace doth come to have any place in them, the reigning of sin is at an end, as the next words shew. Sin is no longer to reign in their mortal bodies. And in the 14th verse, "it can have no dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." And you are resigned (as the intervening 13th verse says), "yielding yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead."

Now how admirable friendship is there in this too, considering the base servitude that all were naturally in unto sin before. With how kind an eye doth the blessed God behold from his throne above, the enthralled, miserable state of wretched souls serving divers lusts and pleasures; drudging to the devil for the wages of death, and no other. Not dictated to by those lusts of theirs, which, being fulfilled, destroy them. "The wages of sin is death." It is only then when men come to have their fruit unto holiness that they have for their end everlasting life. Rom. vi. 22. That there should be so compassionate an eye cast upon the miserable state of forlorn souls upon this account, seeing them so injuriously imposed upon, held in so vile a vassalage, so ignoble a servitude, which hath so destructive a tendency, that they are led as so many slaves in bonds and cords to their destruction and final ruin, to which their course and state do naturally tend;—that God should look down with so compassionate an eye upon the distress of these wretched creatures, and determine with himself; lay the design in his wise and good counsel—I will work the freedom of these wretched souls; I have appointed a Redeemer for them, that is proper for their state of slavery;—the notion of redemption most appositely answers the notion of the enthralled state of sinners before. And ergo, it is observable, Tit. ii. 14, that our Lord is said to give himself for us "to redeem us from all iniquity." Not only to redeem us from wrath and from hell, and final ruin, but "from all iniquity."

And that is one consequent of our being in Christ, or our union with him. If ever we are said to be in him, then he is made to us redemption. Sanctification you have heard of (and you have heard of the other before;) that stands in investing and possessing the soul with an entire new

frame of holiness. And Redemption, which stands in the divestiture of the power of sin, that had introduced into it an universal irrecititude, and which is wrought out or wrought off, eadem opera, by the same work by which the new man or the divine image is superinduced. There is great friendliness in this: These wretched souls (saith God) they shall be slaves no longer, I will assert them into a state of liberty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. That Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of the Redeemer and Mediator, when it makes its seizure, and takes possession of them for him, it becomes the law of the Spirit of life in them, making them free from the law of sin and death. And that is a further expression of the friendliness of the blessed God to a soul, in and about the matters that here lie under our consideration.

These are his ways with the sons of men, when he is about saving them from going down to the pit—when he hath found out a righteousness and redemption for them; or when he is shewing man his righteousness that he may deliver him from that state of death and destruction into which he was continually ready to precipitate himself.

There are many more instances of this friendliness on God's part yet behind. But as to what has been thus said, let us make some reflections on ourselves. What have we found of this friendliness between the blessed God and our souls, in any such instances as these? Hath there been any such transaction set on foot between him and us? Do we find any applications have been made to our spirits, such as we have attended to? Indeed God speaks to men inwardly, and often, but they perceive it not. He speaks, but they know not his voice that speaks to them. It is often a whispering voice, which they can easily neglect, and against which they shut and stop their ears. We are not to conclude, ergo, that he hath never made any application to us, if we have had no distinct reflections thereon. But we may conclude, if there have been any application made to us to any valuable purpose, then we have been capable of reflecting and taking notice that it hath been made; our attention hath been engaged, and we must have been brought to consider that God is dealing with my soul about the very life of it; and salvation or destruction will be the issue of the treaty, according as I now comply and co-operate (in a subordinate way) with his motions in me and upon me; or do resist them, and comply not. But how awakening should it be to us to consider that these are

matters of life and death ; that such a treaty with the souls of men hath this design to invest them with a righteousness in which they may be capable of appearing safely before the tribunal of the supreme and final Judge. And we are each of us to consider with ourselves, have I yet such a righteousness, yea or no? Such a righteousness I cannot have of myself, I must be beholden for it, it must be an imparted thing. Have I any of those characters in me by which I may conclude, or whence I may gather that such a righteousness will be reckoned to me, will be accounted to me, and so answer the exigency of my case as certainly as if I had wrought it out myself?

Why, perhaps, though we have often heard our case thus stated, yet the thoughts of this state of our case may be rarities with many. And are there any among us that never think of any such thing, but just then when we are told of it? Do we believe ourselves to have souls made for eternity and an everlasting estate? And do we apprehend it enough for us to think of such matters as these once a week? We cannot help having some thoughts of this kind when the sound of words that import them beats upon our ears. That we cannot help. But is it enough (I say) for things that do concern us with reference to eternity, to be thought of but once a week, when we cannot help it? When things are borne in upon us, and inserted, and we have no way to keep them off, unless we would stop our ears? Is this like persons designing for eternity, and for an everlasting well-being? If I would throw away all thoughts of these matters till the next season returning of hearing of these again, how do I know when my soul will be required? Sure, methinks, I should consider with myself every time I lie down, have I a righteousness about me in which I may safely lie down? To lie down this night under guilt, when I do not know but this night my soul may be required, this is desperate. Who can answer to himself his having such a resolution as this! I will neglect it, I will throw away all thoughts of it. I will run the hazard, I will try what will come of it! But if, instead of engaging our spirits in the serious thoughts of what doth so deeply concern us, there should be not only a not considering but a continual running in the course that tends to involve us in new guilt, so that the person that doth not know but the next night, or the next hour, he shall be required to surrender and give up a loathsome, guilty soul, how amazing is it that a reasonable intelligent spirit should be sunk into this pitch and

degree of stupidity, so little to consider I have a soul about me that is capable of eternity, and of eternal felicity in that state which lies before me : how amazing is it (I say) that an intelligent spirit should be so low sunk as not to be capable of considering the difference between the pleasures of a moment and an eternity of misery and woe, if such moment be mispent in this world. And an eternity of blessedness if it be employed, as it may be, to purposes which it is possible and capable it may.

I would leave a resolution, if it might be, with each one to consider their case. To have a righteousness that will bear me out before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge is my present and most indispensable concernment. And ergo, shall all of us go away now with the resolution, never to be at rest till we can say this righteousness is ours by friendly vouchsafement? We could never work out such an one to ourselves. But by friendly vouchsafement we find such characters to be upon us that speak his righteousness is ours. Then shall we live the rest of our time, rejoicing in the hope of that glory which is also the hope of righteousness by Jesus Christ, through faith, as the Apostle calls it, Gal. v. 5.—But now I go on to add in the next place—

## SERMON XXXI.\*

JAMES II. 23. *And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

7. THAT God doth effectually make such souls to understand, that in his return to them he will be reconciled without expecting satisfaction from them for all the injuries that they have done him. Turn they must, there is an absolute necessity of it. But he makes them understand that this their turning is not for any recompence to him. It is a friendly signification when he doth (as it were) say to them, You are lost if you do not turn, if there be not serious, unfeigned, evangelical repentance : But know that this repentance of yours is no recompence to me, it is not the thing that shall make me your friend. That cannot be, for he gives this repentance. He hath granted (it is said) to the Gentiles repentance unto life. Acts xi. 18. But it is necessary to make you capable of relishing the pleasures of my friendship, which you never can do if you do not turn to me. If your hearts still remain strange and

\* October 15, 1693.



disaffected, there cannot be a friendship between you and me. Not that your repentance signifies any thing to induce me to be your friend; but only to make you capable of relishing my friendship, and of entertaining a friendly commerce with me. As men can have no friendly commerce with one another, unless there be a mutual inclination of mind towards each other; if there be but a disinclination on one side, there can be no friendly converse.

And as much as the gospel speaking thus, and it is the constant tenor of it, that God in being reconciled to sinners expects from them no satisfaction for their own sin, it must needs be that whenever he deals with a soul, in order to the settling a friendship between him and it, he must impress this (which is the very sum and sense of the gospel) upon their spirits. They must be gospelized by it; have their hearts framed according to this import of the gospel, which is, that he never expects from a sinner satisfaction for his sin. Nay, so far from that, that it may be understood, and must be understood, if the gospel be understood aright, for the highest affront imaginable to the Redeemer for any man to offer at making satisfaction for his own sin; yea, and the highest affront imaginable to the offended Majesty of Heaven, to suppose it possible that such a wretch and worm as I can make a satisfaction to the eternal God, for having wronged him by the least wrong that I ever did him. It is to make the Majesty of Heaven cheap to suppose that possible: and therefore by the tenor of the gospel that must be the remotest thought in all the world.

It is to usurp upon and invade the Redeemer's office. 1 Pet. ii. 24, quoted from Isaiah liii. 8. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "He appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb. ix. 26. And having by himself purged our sins, expiated our guilt (for that is a grand part and a fundamental one of their wanting of that purgation) he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having done this by himself. So that if a sinner should offer at such a thing to make satisfaction, what will he say? Dost thou touch him with thy work? This is a thing I do by myself. This is part of my sacred office; dost thou touch my work? Hands off, it belongs to me.

And it is to suppose the Majesty of Heaven cheap and mean, and to suppose the Redeemer impotent, to think that the sinner should expiate his own sin and make God amends, when he hath committed this thing entirely to his

own Son. Thus it is that he doth gospelize the spirits of sinners, when he is designing to make them his indeed, to bring them into a state of friendship with him. That though there be most tender relentings, and deepest debasement and humiliation, and they could lay themselves even as low as hell at the foot of the mercy seat, yet for all this, it is the remotest thing in all the world for them to imagine they can satisfy the Divine Majesty in the least, give the least satisfaction for the least offence or wrong that they have done. Therefore whereas this is the voice of the gospel, "Turn and ye shall live," and, I expect no compensation from you for any of the injuries you have done me, you that have lived in continual neglect of me all your days, wandering from and rebelling against the God of your lives,—if you turn I will be reconciled to you freely; I will most freely forgive you; the pardon and the peace that I am ready to afford you shall cost you nothing; and whatsoever is requisite to your present safe, and future happy state, shall be without the least expense to you. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah lv. 1. Never trouble yourselves for money, for it shall cost you nothing. Those mercies, that flow as waters from a most exuberant and abundant fountain; those gracious, those spiritfui communications meant by milk and wine, these shall all stand you in nothing; you shall have all freely if you will come. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Why this is a strange way to induce men to be reconciled to God, and to become friends with him. You will say, I have offended him highly, lived long in continual neglect of him and rebellion against him; how shall I see his face? How shall I hold up my head before him? What shall I render to him by way of recompence? Shall it be thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil? Alas! I cannot command them, and they would signify nothing if I could. If this whole world were mine, and I could make it one flaming sacrifice to his offended wrath and justice, it would avail nothing. Oh! to have any such objection seasonably and aptly obviated! Why, all that you need, it shall be given without price. Without price! what, such precious things as I need, and must have, or I must perish? Yes, be they never so precious. "The Son

of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Do not think it will reach but to a few. Be they never so many, it is a ransom of sufficient value. "He gave himself a ransom for all, (see 1 Tim. ii. 6.) to be testified in due time." That is, he offered so full a ransom, that if there were never so many to be saved, there needs no addition to the value of the ransom. And none can fall short of being saved, for that reason, because the ransom was too little, because it would not answer the exigencies of the case. That can never be objected.—"To be testified in due time." I rest on that passage, too faintly rendered, and so as to hide from us the true and full significancy of it; "he gave himself a ransom, a testimony;" there is no more than so; which being read as a parenthesis, those words (in due time) are connected with the former, he gave himself a ransom in due time, in the proper appointed time. A testimony; yea, a wonderful testimony. Christ upon the cross! What a testimony is this of the reconcileableness of God to sinners! What pretence hath the unbeliever, or any heart, against the speakingness and significancy of this testimony? When you see Christ dying, and Christ a ransom to redeem sinners by a reconciling sacrifice, is not that a sufficient testimony of the Divine good will? You see this in far lower instances: he did not leave himself without witness, when there was no more to be seen of his kindness, propension, and good will to men, but giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons. But, oh! what a witness is this, when he gives his Son to die as a ransom upon the cross! when he is set forth (as the expression is) "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Rom. iii. 25. A mighty testimony to the grace of God, and a mighty testimony against the unbelief of men. He gave himself a ransom; and here was the testimony that God is ready to receive returning sinners, and to be reconciled to them without any price paid by them. Having such a ransom, such a price paid down already for them; so that now, sinners, whoever you are, that live under the gospel, you have not this pretence left against making haste to be reconciled unto God—"I have highly offended him, I have wronged him; I can make him no recompence, no satisfaction." This is to add wickedness to your sin, to think of making him a satisfaction. He never leaves that upon you; you have not that to say against returning presently, and falling with a broken heart at the footstool of the throne

of grace. You are not to insist upon this; it would be wickedness to stand upon it, to think of making him satisfaction. No, you have nothing to do, but only to fly to him for mercy, implore his mercy, be at his foot; there will be peace between him and you. He is willing to be reconciled, and it shall cost you nothing. And then lastly as to this former head, in the 8th place,

8. He thus at length brings about actual covenanting between himself and the sinner. That covenant into which they enter is a covenant of reconciliation, a covenant of peace, a league of amity, in which they take him for their reconciled God, through Christ the great Mediator of this covenant, and give up themselves as reconciled ones to be of his people. He brings them to this, desists not, gives not over the treaty with such as do believe to righteousness and salvation, till matters be brought to this issue and result. A covenant is struck between him and them. The sinner seeing this state of the case, I must perish if I do not turn; if I do turn, reconciliation and pardon and acceptance with God, will cost me nothing, I shall have all freely; then I have no more to say, but to resign and say, Lord, I take thee for my reconciled God; I give up myself to thee as a reconciled one, to be of thy people. Here is the issue and result of things between God and sinners. Then, when he is dealing with them, in order to the producing of that faith in them, upon which they are justified and saved. . . . Now the state of friendship is settled, and all things are concluded between him and them by a solemn covenant. "Now (saith he,) I have the sinner reduced and under bonds, safe and happy bonds, I am content to be under bonds myself to him; at the same time I require him to be bound, I bind myself. I will be a God to thee, though thou hast been an offending creature." And so the poor soul it hath no more to do but to accept God for his God, and to resign himself to him as a reconciled one, to be of his people. Now, I say, the state of friendship is settled by all this between God and the sinner; and being so, there are sundry other great expressions of friendship consequent upon the settlement of this state. As,

1. That God takes possession of such an one as his own. He takes an entire possession of him. Now thou art mine; not in right and title only as thou wast before, and as all the creation is, but mine by consent, mine by covenant; mine by claim, and thy own solemn act indeed. He accordingly takes possession of the soul as his own; comes in

upon it with the fulness of that Spirit that designs here to fix his abode, and vouchsafe its constant inhabiting presence.

I told you, before, the distinction between the Spirit's visiting and the Spirit's dwelling; and, if you will, of its building and its inhabiting. In all the former work it did visit, and it was a building preparing for itself. Whatsoever was done or wrought in the soul in all the forementioned kinds, it was all the work of that Spirit approaching the soul, and forming it for the purposes for which it was designed. And being so prepared and formed, now it comes and inhabits the soul so prepared and brought into such a state by the Spirit: for it is now its temple. It is become a temple. He was to build first; he finds all in ruins and rubbish; the ruins of an old temple. But now there is a new fabrick erected. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. In whom we are builded together, that is, in Christ; in whom the foundations are laid of this temple, and who is himself the original temple, replenished with the fulness of God. "Destroy this temple (meaning his body,) and in three days I will raise it up again." Here, I say, was the original temple, and the model and platform of that temple, which every regenerate person becomes upon union with him. All are brought as so many lively stones to that "living corner stone, and so built up a spiritual house." 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. And so that, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephes. ii. 22. Here, ergo, now the Holy Ghost is to dwell—a mighty friendship! I will have my very spirit be in you. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. I will put it into you, so that there it shall have a fixed abode. Hereby we know that he dwelleth in us and we in him, by the Spirit that he hath given us. That is the mutual indwelling which speaks the nearness of the union, and is indifferently expressed by God's dwelling in us and our dwelling in him. We could know nothing of this, but by the Spirit in its vital and discernible operations. By the Spirit that he hath given us, (which is an active, powerful principle in us,) we know that he dwells in us and we dwell in him; it speaks itself by efforts that may be felt, that are most perceptible. And,

2. He hereupon holds a continual communion with such souls: that is it for which he will dwell with them by his

Spirit, in order to constant converse ; as they that cohabit can converse together more freely and more constantly than others. Indeed, cohabitation is not fully expressive of this case, of this mutual inhabitation, which comes a great deal nearer ; so that the conversation that can be between them who inhabit in the same walls, and under the same roof, is too defectively expressive of vital communion, that living intercourse which is between God and such souls : for as he doth inhabit by his Spirit, he converseth by his Spirit. This fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, but by the Spirit, called the communion of the Holy Ghost. Compare 1 John i. 3, with 2 Cor. xiii. 14. That fellowship which believing souls are said to have with the Father and with the Son, is called the communion of the Holy Ghost : the immediate agent between the blessed God, Father, and Son, and the soul, that must move and work towards him. And so this communion is not like that between men and men, be they never so near and never so dear to each other, never such friends ; they cannot converse but by words or by external signs and tokens. But here is an immediate converse of spirit, a vital converse ; the Holy Spirit moving the soul inwardly, and making it move under its motions back again towards God in Christ : for God is not to be conversed with otherwise than in his Christ. And so the matter differs as to this sort of operation by the renewed soul, from the operations that are exerted and put forth in it, by way of preparation and introduction unto this state of friendship ; for in those the soul is but passive, barely passive, it is wrought upon ; but now it comes to be active ; it is so acted upon as to procure a continual re-acting, and it is so in every gracious act. Such is the vouchsafement of grace on God's part, and such the exigency of the case on the soul's part, that there shall not be one act but, saith God, I will have a hand in it. He mingles with the renewed spirit in every gracious act that this communion speaks. As it is in playing on a musical instrument, there is no string that sounds untouched, and every string as it is touched ; here is action and re-action throughout ; so it is in this communion between God and the soul through Christ and by the Spirit.

Here is the greatest friendliness imaginable on his part to bring it about and procure that a soul which was alienated from him, and a stranger and disaffected to him, which chose to live at the utmost distance from him, now acts all in God. " He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his

deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God." John iii. 21. There are such works, such motions, such modencies, such suspirings in the soul, as speak him to be the author; as carry their own proof, their own evidence in them, that they are wrought in God. Men would be no such thing if God were not in the matter. But O! what friendliness is this, that he will procure that there should be such a converse, such an intercourse; his own blessed Spirit mingling with the spirit of a poor soul, which he hath now put his own impression upon, and gives his vital formative touch unto. 3. His friendship appears upon all this, that now he taketh all due care of their growth, of their improvement in all spiritual excellencies. He takes continual care, I say, of their growth, all due care, all that it befits and becomes him to take. And you must know, that his friendliness in this thing is not to be estimated merely by the success, by their actual discernible growth and improvement; because his care and his agency must be suitable to the subject. This the divine decorum doth require, that his agency should be suitable to the subject, and the subject must be considered as an intelligent subject. And, ergo, how are such to grow? They are not to grow as the lilies of the field, not to grow as the grass and trees grow, without any thing of care and concern. Indeed, we are directed by our Saviour, in reference to our external concerns, to be void of all perplexing care, considering how the lilies of the field grow without it. But there is no such thing directed with reference to our souls and spiritual concernment. But we are there put upon seeking and striving to the very utmost. Seek first the kingdom of God, principally, with all the intentions of your souls. That kingdom of God, which in its first and inchoate state must be within us, that we are to intend and take care of, and to labour every day to have our spirits near, and more cultivated and wrought into a compliance with, and subserviency to, the laws and rules of that kingdom: this must be our business. Our souls ought to be a garden, a paradise, which we are to till and cultivate, and to take a continual care of. Therefore, I say, that the friendliness that is to be seen in the care of God for our growth, is not to be estimated merely by our discernible growth, but several other ways. As,

1. By the kindness of his design: he designs our spiritual increase. And,

2. By the aptness of the means that he useth thereunto, both internally and externally.

(1.) Internally. He hath implanted vital principles ca-

pable of growing, capable of improving, a new life, a new nature, whose tendency is to perfection.

*Natura intendit perfectissimum.* It is an universal law, concerning all nature, that it ever intends that which is most perfect. And certainly the new nature is not most unnatural, it is not the least of all natural; it doth not deviate from and fall below the rules of universal nature. He hath implanted principles which naturally tend to perfection, and that affords continual influences to co-operate with and cherish those principles from that Spirit; from which it is possible he may retire, may be grieved, and so infer miserable infeblements and languishments upon the deserted soul, deserted in a degree, and deserted for a time. And,

(2.) He affords the most suitable external means. The sincere milk of the word is to be received for that very purpose, that we may grow thereby; and we are directed continually to supplicate and draw down by believing, by the exercise of that principle of faith, influences from above that may cherish all the rest, and to have that faith exercised and breathing in all the external duties and acts of worship, which from time to time are to be performed. And herein there is a great appearance and demonstration of God's friendliness towards regenerate souls. He so far takes care of their growth, doing what becomes and befits the wisdom of a God to do in his dealings with intelligent creatures, reasonable spirits now inspired from himself, and planted with new principles from above; yea, and in this matter his friendliness must be owned to appear,

(3.) In the very rebukings themselves, which he gives, when, through slothful neglect, languishings do ensue. For we must know, that such decays as are consequent upon the Spirit's being grieved, and retiring and withdrawing in a degree, are at the same time faults and chastisements. If my spirit languisheth, be faint and feeble, this is a defect,—the want of that spirit and liveliness that should be in me, and, ergo, blameable. But it is corrective also; "thine own backslidings shall reprove thee." Jer. ii. 19. See now "that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken me," that thou hast withdrawn thyself, that thou hast retired and neglected me: "thy own backslidings shall reprove thee." And then,

(4.) The friendliness that appears in that care, which God takes of our spiritual growth, is seen in the excellency of the plant that is to grow, or whose growth or improvement



he takes this care of. And what is that? A divine and heavenly principle, and all additional degrees, by the accession whereof it is said to improve and grow. They hold to the kind, they are congenerous, and are of the same kind. So that if there be growth, there is always a suitable communication from heaven, from God, which is in its own kind and nature a divine and heavenly thing. That grace which is to grow, is an heaven-born thing; a thing born of God. It is God's own production; yea, it is his very image; for the creation is his production—he hath made all things. But this is a production of his own image, his very likeness. The new man is created after God. He is himself at once the author and exemplar of this work and production. Ephes. iv. 24. “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Coloss. iii. 10. God is now introducing his own image into the soul, when he is new creating it. And this is a work not to be done in the dark; it “is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Now (as if he should say) I am now going to raise up a new creation in a dark, dead, ruined, desolate, forlorn soul: It is a glorious work I am about, let it be beheld, let it come into the light. I will have the soul itself know what I am doing upon it: it is renewed in knowledge, a light shining upon the soul, by which it may perceive that God is bringing in upon it his own likeness. Mighty friendliness this is. As it is often a way wherein a man expresses his kindness to his friend, by giving him his picture, so doth God express his friendliness, gives his picture, and gives it so inwrought into the soul itself. Wherever thou goest, I will have thee carry my picture, even in thy breast. Great friendliness. And this is an image that can grow; for it is a living image, not a dead show. It is a vital image that is capable of improvement, and growing liker and liker, and still of growing liker and liker, as the image is. “By beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Cor. iii. 18. What a mighty friendliness is this! But then I should come, in the fourth place, to shew

4. What friendliness he expresses towards the soul, upon its backsliding, after all. How graciously he recalls the backsliding soul, and what his workings towards it are herein and hereupon. But methinks the hearing of all this should set many an heart on work among

us. Oh, who would not have such a friend? Who would want such a friend, if he be to be had. If friendship with Him be a possible thing, Oh, why should I live upon earth without it? They are dark and gloomy days wherein generally men go from morning to night, and know nothing of this friendly converse with Him. Oh, why should not my soul be open to the entertainment of such a friendly overture? Why should not I fall in with it? Why should such a day be lost to me? Why should such a day as this be past over? the day of treaty betwixt the blessed God and wretched souls. Why should I lose such a day, and not be immediately and out of hand taken into this blessed state of friendship with God, and give up myself absolutely and entirely to him? But now to proceed:

## SERMON XXXII.\*

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

4. It is a further expression of friendliness on God's part, towards these believing ones, that when they wander and backslide from him, he recalls them and recovers them—takes a course for their reductionment—will not let them go so as at length to lose them, by not using the most apt and fit means for their recovery and final salvation. How often is his voice heard crying out, “Return, return, ye backsliding children.” How full of affection to this purpose are there many verses in Jeremiah iii. Pleading, striving with backsliding wanderers, that they would return. Indeed it is such an aggravation to the sinner, as it might make it astonishing to us, that such as have been treated with such kindness and friendliness as doth appear in all the forementioned instances, should yet be so prone to backslide and deviate. How might it confound us to think that such a spirit should be in us, that no enticements, no endearments, will stay or hold us in with this our great and blessed friend, but that we should still be so apt to make excursions. What with convictions we have continual reason to discern, and with sorrow and

\* Preached October 22, 1693.

shame to confess in this kind, is what we find in the word of truth, and in the sacred records often. "My people are bent to backslide from me." Hosca xi. 7. A people that might call themselves his, and whom he calls his, that there should be such a bent in them, not a weak inclination only appearing now and then, and usually overcome, but a stiff and steady bent, as the expression signifies—this is very amazing. And that there is a continual bent and proneness this way, the Apostle's caution to Christians doth too plainly signify. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. iii. 12. They who believe have still reason to say, "Lord help our unbelief." They who have that for the nature and kind of it which was the faith of Abraham, and whereupon God imputes righteousness to him, they are not throughout always of his practice, do not constantly walk by that faith. Though that faith, in the nature and kind of it, was spoken of as so common to him with all believers, that it is designedly represented and held forth to us, as neither confined to the circumcision nor to the uncircumcision. And, ergo, so mighty a stress is laid upon this thing, that he had this upon which God judged him righteous before he was circumcised; that so it might be understood that this faith, and the justifying, saving effects of it, were not confined to the Jew or Gentile, but common to believers of both sorts by the same faith; God justifying the circumcision and uncircumcision too, through the same faith, as you find Rom. iii. 30.

But this faith hath its remission (as to degree, and as to its exercise), its great and sinful intermissions; for all intermissions of acts are not sinful; but there are sinful intermissions too of the exercise of faith very frequently, and then what is the issue and effect? Departing from the living God, backsliding, drawing off from God, as faith is a coming to him. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Believing is coming; disbelieving, not believing, ceasing to believe, that is departing from him—going off. Take heed of "an evil heart of unbelief," which lies in that departure from the living God.

But as that is indeed on their parts a most unfriendly thing, oh, how friendly is it, that, when they depart, he calls after them, "Whither are ye going?" Rather might he have said, and with infinitely higher reason, "Be gone

then. Will you be gone?—then depart for ever.” I say with higher reason, than he who once said somewhat like it. It is said of that morose philosopher (who was wont to be called the Cynick), that his servant Manes was leaving him, withdrawing himself from him, and was gone. Some of his friends would have had him send after him, to have reduced him. ‘Fetch him back? No, (saith he,) that is a mean, that is a turpid action. It is very mean and dishonourable (saith he) that Manes should think that he could live without Diogenes, and Diogenes should not live without Manes: never send after him.’ Oh! with how infinitely higher reason might God have said so. “That is mean, that they should think they could live without me, but I cannot live without them. If they will be gone, let them go.” But he doth not do so; and, ergo, you may understand it is pure friendliness towards them, that when they are departed and gone, he ever calls after them; that he should direct his proclamation to be made in such cases. Go and proclaim these words, “Return, return, O ye backsliding children,” as it is in Jeremiah iii. That he should insist upon it, urge and inculcate it, as he doth. You have the same thing again, Hosea xiv. 1, “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.—I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.” ver. 4. How gracious an invitation doth he send after such as are backsliders, revolted and gone, to return and come back again. He orders that they “shall hear a voice behind them, a word (as Isaiah xxx. 21), saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’” As if he should have said, Alas! you mistake your way, whither are you going? This is the right way. You are going away from your God;—you seem most dangerously to mistake your way, when you are going to the right hand, or going to the left hand. This is not your way to God, and to rest, and blessedness, and peace, and a finally good state. And by many media, and sometimes immediately, he causeth, and he maketh such a voice to be heard, “a voice behind them,” or that shall, some way or other, reach their ears, and reach their hearts. Sometimes he takes care that they shall meet it in the Bible; drops a word into their minds, which they have heretofore read, or providentially puts it under their eye. How many such seasonable voices have there been to poor wanderers, that if they have taken up this Book (and sometimes it may be very carelessly, and without design) they

have met with a passage that hath struck them. I am out of the way, I must go back to my God again. Sometimes they meet with it in a sermon; sometimes in the conversation of a pious friend; sometimes in a providence, in an affliction, a loss, a sickness, a pain. Sometimes stroke comes upon stroke, in such kinds: and if they will wander in by-paths, God hedgeth up the way with thorns, and they are constrained to retreat and go back: they can find no other way but to return. It is the world commonly, that ensnares and entices away men's hearts from God, that he imbitters to them. And sometimes they meet with so great losses in worldly respects, that thereupon they begin to say, Why at this rate I may lose all, sure it concerns me to ascertain to myself somewhat that cannot be lost. And the effect is sometimes such that they must say, If I had not that loss, I had lost myself. If I had not lost such and such a part of my estate, in all likelihood I had lost my soul, that was going.

God hath by such a means reduced me, recovered me, made me bethink myself. I must make sure of my relation to God, of a portion in God, or be ruined for ever. But whatsoever the means be, there is wonderful kindness and friendliness in the thing.

Sometimes this voice comes more immediately. And indeed if it do not so, he doth afford media; if he by these doth not himself work the effect and touch the heart, it is never brought about. He speaks inwardly by his Spirit, striving by that; striking the soul by convictions, rouseth it by terrors; and when it is seasonable allures it, and by pleasantnesses and sweet relishes of better things than they can gain by their wanderings. And then also he sets conscience on work, and makes that to fall out and fight with themselves, and they are engaged in soliloquies and in discoursing and debating the matter with their own souls. What shall I get by this course of wandering, to which I seem to have indulged myself a liberty? what will come of it? He makes their own hearts and reins to instruct them in the night season, and then to commune with themselves on their bed, and be still, in great silence, to discourse and reason the matter with their own souls; and so one way or other reduceth and calls back the poor wanderer. Oh how great is the friendliness of all this. And then,

5. It is great kindness and friendliness, when they do return, and are reduced, that he so freely forgives them; that he pardons so copiously, so plentifully. As there is

plenteous forgiveness with him, he is ready to multiply pardons beyond what they can have the confidence many times to ask; that when they must upon occasion, and when their hearts are touched with a lively sense of their own disingenuous dealings, when they come to present and prostrate themselves before the mercy seat, they must be in such postures as that holy man—"I blush, I am ashamed, I am confounded, and not able to lift up my face before thee." He is in this case more ready to forgive than they can be to ask forgiveness. Not unto "seven times, but unto seventy times seven." They would be soon ashamed to ask at that rate. And when they are convinced thoroughly, and in good earnest, they are very unapt to forgive themselves as God is apt to forgive them. And indeed he is so much the more ready to forgive, by how much the less apt they are to forgive themselves. Self-lothing, self-accusing, self-abhorrence; they are the best part of the claim that they can make to forgiveness; to say, that to them belongs shame and confusion of face, but to him righteousness. As to any thing that is in them, or can have place there, there is nothing that hath more an aspect and look towards forgiveness from God, than their severity towards their own souls. They think with themselves, taking measure (as they are too prone to do) of God's greatness by their own littleness, of his immense goodness by the narrowness of their own spirits; and what they find their own inclinations to be towards others that offend them, implied by that question of Peter to our Lord, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but Until seventy times seven." Matt. xviii. 21, 22. On hearing this, the disciples say altogether, "Lord, increase our faith." Luke xvii. 5.

We do not know how to conceive of so large and so copious a forgiveness, or promise to forgive, as this, Lord, increase our faith, if such a thing as this be looked for from us. We know not how to comprehend it. So much more incomprehensible and inconceivable is that readiness to forgive which resides in the fountain, in him who is the Father of all mercy, and of all compassion, and who hath made himself known by the name of "The Lord God, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Ex, xxxiv. 6, 7. Men do

not know how to conceive this of God, and ergo reason thus with themselves, I should not know how to forgive another offending me so oftentimes. Alas ! saith God, " For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isa. lv. 8, 9. They are apt to measure God by their span and inch. As the distance is, and infinitely more, between heaven and earth, " and as far as the east is from the west, so far he removeth our transgressions from us." It is in the same context we are told he multiplies to forgive, or he abundantly pardons. " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," or will multiply to pardon, that is the emphasis of the Hebrew expression. But how can this be understood, that God should pardon so numerous, so multiplied transgressions as ours ? Why ergo, those words come in, My ways are not as your ways, &c. Indeed if any should think here-upon to turn this grace into lasciviousness, that is to turn themselves quite out of it. " For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. These are inconsistent terms, to be under grace and under the dominion of sin. Most certain it is (as hath been told you before) that God doth impart the righteousness and the sanctifying Spirit of Christ together, never separately. " And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 11. If any should say in their own hearts, Now I may sin freely, grace will abound. Let us sin, because grace abounds, or that it may abound. " God forbid (saith an Apostle;) How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom. vi. 2. To reason so is to reason yourselves quite out of all interest in grace at all. To leave yourselves nothing at all. Because that grace is in those streams and communications of it inseparable from itself. That is pardoning grace, and renewing, sanctifying grace, they run together *pari passu*. And God justifies none in their rebellion. I will pardon you : I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely. Only acknowledge thine iniquities. Jer. iii. 12, 13. and thence to the 19th verse. Here you have God pleading with himself on the behalf of these backsliding ones, what he shall do with them. How shall

I put thee among the children? How shall I ever look upon thee as a child more? Why, saith he, thou shalt call me "My Father," and not turn away from me. How shall I do this? Why I have but this one way, to do it inwardly, to touch their hearts. How shall I ever treat you as children again? Why I tell you the truth, I must inwardly prompt you to betake yourselves to me with inward, child-like, filial humiliation, contrition and repentance, so as to make you own me for your Father with relenting, tender, broken hearts. Then I shall assign you the pleasant portion among the children, not disinherit you, not put you out of the family. But these works of grace must be carried on towards you conjunctly, or not at all. Therefore, that soul which remains under the power of sin reigning in it, and wherein it hath a throne, that soul hath nothing to do with pardoning mercy, while this is his case; for he hath nothing to do with pardoning mercy out of Christ. And if he be in Christ, then Christ is made unto him "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 2 Cor. i. 30. But again,

6. Friendliness appears towards those that have made a defection, and in great degrees gone off from God, that he doth not (while it is but in such degrees) withdraw his Spirit. "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me," says the penitent Psalmist, Ps. li. 11, "and cast me not out of thy presence." The Spirit is all this while not yet gone; it doth not desert them. It hath formed such into habitations for itself; "made them habitations for God through the Spirit." Ephes. i. 11. Temples they are of the Holy Ghost. He will let it appear that he is not easy to remove; not apt to withdraw and quit his habitation, and to make a sacred habitation or temple desolate. Ergo, prays the Psalmist, "O do not take thy Spirit from me, nor cast me out of thy presence!" The Spirit was not totally withdrawn, even as to his sense; he apprehended it to be with him still. When he saith, "take it not away," he apprehended he then had it; and when he saith "cast me not away from thy presence," he apprehends himself to be in God's presence: I am yet with thee. And yet there was a seemingness, a look, an aspect, in the present state of things between God and him, as if he was about to cast him out, according to "O do not cast me out of thy presence!" that's death, that's deadly to me. Oh! he dreaded to be cast out; but at the same time he apprehends himself not cast out, according to that in Ps. lxxiii. 23. "Nevertheless



I am still with thee : thou holdest me with thy right hand." "I am ever with thee," saith he in one place ; and saith in the other, "cast me not out of thy presence." And lay this together, and they carry this signification and sense with them, that the hand which seemed to thrust, held at the same time. The hand (I say) that seemed to throw them away, it held them to him at the same time.

And such semblances there are between friends, when on the one part there is occasion given to resent unkindness ; one may thrust at such an one, as if one would have him be gone, yet hold at the same time, as loth to let him go. And again,

7. This friendliness further appears in the same case in the recomposing of the frame of your spirits, when all was miserably shattered and discomposed. In the wanderings of such, they waste their strength ; they fall and break their bones. All things are put out of frame with them. Oh ! what kindness it is to recompose that shattered frame ! It comes to this sometimes, that Christ is to be formed again in the soul, as in that, Gal. iv. 19, "Of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." The work of the new creation is (as it were) to be done over again. "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. li. 10. Here is more creating work to be done again, new creating work to be done. Not as if there were nothing left, as though there were no residue ; but there is much to be done *de novo*. "I create the fruit of the lips peace, peace." Whatsoever is to be produced out of a foregoing state of non-entity, this must be still creation. This heart was become unclean ; there must be a cleanness now wrought in it by creation. "Create in me a new heart." The frame of my spirit was all wrong—"renew a right spirit within me," saith the psalmist.

And how much of friendliness is there in this. The back-slidden, wandering soul hath, in its departure from God, put all out of joint and frame ; every thing is amiss. The heart was enwrapt in darkness, and he enlightens, and with his beams penetrates that darkness. It was dead, and he quickens it. It was grown a vague heart, and he makes it serious. An hard heart, and he mollifies it, softens it again, makes it tender. The conscience was stupefied, but he awakens it to the work and business of its office. Love was grown cold, he makes the fire glow again. Desires faint and languid, they become now strong and vigorous. The soul was grown terrene and worldly, thinking to compen-

sate and make up to itself out of this world what it had lost in God, and in his communion, and in the enjoyment of his Christ, and so was fallen into a friendly treaty with God's enemy. "Know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God?" He opportunely breaks this league, renders this world again a contemptible thing, brings the poor soul to overcome it. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," gets it under his feet, triumphs over it; so that the soul is enabled to say, What a vile, despicable thing is all this world, to become (as it were) the competitor and rival of the great God, for an opposite and a ruling interest in my heart and soul!

This is wonderful kindness, to recompose the frame of the soul when all is out of course. He finds the poor creature wounded, and he heals the wound; doth the part of the good Samaritan, pours in wine and oil; when the wretched creature was fallen among thieves, got into bad company, and there wounded and broken, maimed, and made miserably decrepid, he heals all. If you turn I will heal your backslidings. "Heal my soul that hath sinned against thee," saith the Psalmist. Psalm xli. 4. I am sensible of wounds, bruises, and broken bones; heal my soul. Experience makes such say as they come, "Let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." Hosea vi. 1. This is still great friendliness. And,

8. When it is most seasonable, he restores them peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; "the joy of his salvation," which the Psalmist supplicates for in that penitential Psalm li. And,

9. He helps them in conflicts all along. Their life is to be a continual conflict. This is friendly to stand by them when they are in conflicts with flesh and blood, and conflicts with principalities and powers. "Satan hath desired to have you," saith our Saviour, speaking directly to Peter, but in the plural number, Luke xxii. 31, "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He would have you; Satan hath a mind to you, he covets you; but I have prayed. God hath put these believing ones out of doubt concerning his kind propensions towards them in reference to this case of their being tempted, by this, that he hath set over them "a merciful and faithful High Priest, who himself having suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb. ii. 17. 18. and ch. iv. 15, 16. And in the last place,

10. This friendliness appears on God's part in introducing them at last into the heavenly society, who are all to be associated with himself and his Christ for ever. He enables them to overcome, and they then must sit down with him upon his throne. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. xx. 6. This is great friendliness indeed, that can never be satisfied, but with eternal converse, to be everlastingly of the same society. Then those that were of Abraham's faith, with those other great worthies that we find mentioned together often, and particularly in Hebrews xi. are all now gathered to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, where all these friends are to be entertained together in one society. This is an agreed thing, and the known and declared pleasure of God and Christ; a matter concerted between him and his Son. "I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am in glory." And he tells us elsewhere, he is always heard; ergo, the matter is agreed between him and his Father. So that this faith, upon which persons are counted or called (as Abraham was) the friends of God, who do believe as he did, doth not only now justify, but finally save. And that indeed ought to compose our minds, and lessen the wonder with us, when we find that God is so frequently gathering and drawing up, one after another, out of this world of ours, divers from among ourselves, gone into the bosom of the earth, and into Abraham's bosom, being believers with Abraham's faith, and now got into possession of the same blessedness that he hath been so long possessed of. Let us all wait; God will gather us up all in time. For those who have lived by this faith, they are all designed to one and the same state. They must be for ever together with the Lord; and, ergo, we ought to comfort our own hearts, and to comfort one another, (as the apostle concludes I Thess. iv.) with these words: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

## SERMON XXXIII.\*

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

Now we have spoken of the former part of God's friendliness towards believers; and in reference thereto we have considered this friendship objectively and passively. Abraham was called the friend of God; that is, one towards whom God did express a great deal of friendship. We are now to consider this friendship subjectively on our part, as that whereof we are the subjects, if we be believers; and to consider what appearances there are in the exercise of such a faith of a friendly mind towards God.

What hath formerly been noted to you, must still be remembered, that there can be no true friendship between God and man, but with the reservation of the order of superiority and inferiority between him and us; for such friendship as shall be inconsistent with that, we must still reserve this always in our thoughts, that he is infinitely above us; and we are upon all accounts most inconsiderable, mean, and little, (next to nothing) in comparison of him; that he is a friend to us, as he is all-sufficient, infinitely full, and self communicative; but that our friendship towards him is such as belongs to indignant, craving, necessitous, empty creatures, that can at best only be brought into an aptitude to receive and take in his communications. And indeed that faith is the receptive principle upon which Abraham was said to be accounted righteous.

This must be always remembered; and being so, then I say such friendliness towards God as can consist with our state, and with a state of things between him and us, doth eminently appear in many great indications, in or about the exercise of that faith towards him, upon which he justifies, and is finally to save.

There appears to be much of a friendly mind towards him in this matter upon this account, that the world is so generally obdured and set against God by infidelity; so that such a faith in him is a very singular thing in the world. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm

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of the Lord revealed?" as the complaint is, Isaiah liii. 1, when the design was to give a representation of the Son of God in his descent into this wretched world of ours, and that low and mean state of humiliation which he submitted himself to here, when he became a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. Here is a report to be made of these things unto the world. But who believes our report? Where shall we find those that will believe or regard it? We speak every where to deaf ears, and represent these matters to blind eyes; hearts obdured and shut up in unbelief. But where any eyes and ears are opened, hearts made attentive and flexible, though this be of God's own promising, he looks upon it with a kind eye. Well, now I find then there are some among men that are not so under the power of a vicious prejudice, but they can hear and receive what is reported and revealed to them about those great and glorious things which the gospel contains. "They have not all obeyed the gospel," as the apostle speaks, Rom. x. 16, referring to and quoting this passage (Isaiah liii. 1,) "For Esaias saith, who hath believed our report?" We may go whither we will, and scarce can find any one who believes what we say, though we speak the greatest and most glorious things, things of the most pressing necessity and highest importance to the persons themselves to whom we speak. If there be here and there some in a corrupt and degenerate world that will give ear and any regard to what is spoken from heaven in the name of the Lord about the great concerns of souls, these are the persons that have found favour in his eyes; he looks upon them with a kind eye, as he did upon Noah in such a corrupt state of things. "Thee have I found righteous before me." Therefore, for thee I am resolved there shall be an ark prepared, that thou mayest be so far subservient to that design of thine own preservation, as to be employed in preparing that ark. And whence came it that he did so? It is referred to his faith. "By faith he being warned of God, and moved with fear, prepared the ark, to the saving of his house." Whereas ergo, it is said, Gen. vii. 1. "Thee have I found righteous before me in thy generation." I will take care of thee; thou hast borne a friendly mind towards me, and I will do the part of a friend towards thee. I say, wherein this is said, we find wherein this faith stood. Wherein it was, (*i. e.* in reference to the productive principle) that Noah did come to approve himself one that bore a just mind towards God. It is referred all

to this principle, and resolved all into this as the productive principle, to wit, "that Noah would believe God," would take the word of God when no one else would; "all flesh having corrupted their ways;" for it is said, "he being moved with fear, and warned of God, prepared an ark." There was the same previous warning given to the generality, of God's intention to animadvert upon the wickedness of the world; and Noah was made use of as a "preacher of righteousness" to warn men hereof, to give them premonition; but nobody regards it but he and those few of his family that were saved with him. This, in general, God looks upon as a piece of friendliness towards him, when any (though first taught and influenced by himself) do single and sever themselves out from an infidel world, and do receive the report he makes from heaven of the great things he hath designed, and hath put into a method in order to the recovering and saving of lost souls.

But this I do only pre-lay as a general. That I may more distinctly speak to this matter, I shall shew you what friendliness is shewn towards God in and about the exercise of this faith, the faith that will justify and save in such things as, 1. faith doth suppose, 2. such things as it includes, and 3. such things as it infers and draws after it. Things of all these sorts will appear to have in them great indications of a friendly mind towards God; and such as are indeed the peculiarities of those few believers, in comparison, that are to be found among men.

I. Such things as this faith doth suppose. And when I speak of this faith, I especially mean that very unitive act of faith by which the soul closeth with God in Christ, and so whereupon it is mediately in a justified estate, and entitled to a final and eternal salvation. Speaking of that very act which is formally unitive betwixt God in Christ and the soul, there are several other acts that may come under the general notion and name of faith, that are among the things presupposed unto this act, and so are to be spoken to under the head of things supposed; but I shall begin somewhat lower, and at what is more remote, as,

I. The soul's listening and enquiring after God, which this believing in God must needs be understood to suppose, in an ordinary course at least. They that at length come to believe in him as Abraham did; they must be supposed, however inwardly and secretly prompted hereunto, to have made some inquiry after him first. The most content themselves to be as without God in the world: but when

he hath once touched a mind with a vital touch, it begins then to rouse and stir itself. Why, what? Must it not have been some infinitely good and absolutely first Being that hath made me and all things? Why have I lived in that contented, voluntary ignorance of him so long? The most are habitually "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart," as the expression is, Eph. iv. 18.—"They are willingly ignorant of God," 2 Pet. iii. 5.—"They like not to retain God in their knowledge," Rom. i. 28. It pleaseth them not, it is not grateful to them; "They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Job xxi. 14. But when he secretly prompts a soul and saith to it, "Seek my face," there is immediately an answer in the heart,—"Thy face, Lord, we will seek:" we can live without God in the world no longer; this is a wearisome, gloomy sort of life. Why, then, the soul is awakened to enquire, when it saith (what so few say) "Where is God my maker, that giveth songs in the night?" Job xxxv. 9. Here is the first appearance of a friendly mind towards God, when the soul grows impatient of distance from him, unacquaintance with him, and ignorance of him. The most can go from day to day and have nothing to do with God; they can open their eyes in the morning, when the eyelids of the morning open upon them, and never say, where is God?—walk all the day long, and never concern themselves with him, as if they were a sort of absolute beings, and that this were the sense of their hearts; "We are lords, we will come no more unto thee," as in Jer. ii. 31. Full of themselves, and full of the emptiness and vanity of a world made subject to vanity; and so there is no room for God, and they have no business with him. Why, when this habitual aversion so far wears off, and is counter wrought, as that the soul begins to enquire and look out and think with itself, How came I into this world? and how came there to be such a world, when neither I nor it could be without a Maker, nor that Maker without a ruling power over all; why then, "where is God my maker?" he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, that they might feel and find him out; and when this end in designing, and making, and sustaining such a world, and such an order of creatures in it, is so far advanced and comported with, Now, saith God, my creature begins to rouse and look after me; then, he reckons, is the first appearance of a friendly mind towards him, when souls grow impatient

and say, I can live without God no longer. I pray you consider this : with such as never had to do with God, and never intend to have, all this will signify nothing ; but with those that have such a design, and would fain have a friendship established betwixt God and them, these things will signify much, they will have their weight ; they can weigh nothing with those whom they do not concern. But whosoever can apprehend these as my concernments, they are things that concern me, my soul, my life, my welfare, my eternal hope ; with such, what I say will be considerable. And wheresoever there hath never yet been any friendly concern between God and the soul, it is high time to look after it ; and if ever you will on your part, it must begin to express and shew itself in such a thing as this, to wish that a solicitude be awakened in you, How shall I do to find out God, that he should have given me breath and being, that I should continually have lived, and moved, and had my being in him ; and yet all this while not be seeking after him, to feel and find him out ? this is the greatest enmity imaginable. And ergo, to have a contrary frame and disposition of spirit beginning to express itself, must be somewhat of friendship.

2. There is a certain friendliness towards God in this matter, in the acknowledgment and entertainment of that revelation that he hath made of himself in his word as true and divine, upon those characters and concomitant evidences of the divinity thereof appearing and manifestly offering themselves to view. To a soul that hath been stirred up to enquire and bethink itself, How shall I come to some knowledge of him that made me and made all this world, and in whom alone that satisfying goodness is to be found that will be an adequate and suitable portion and rest for my soul ! When any are awakened thus to enquire and look about, and, looking about them, to see in the midst of all that darkness that doth spread itself over all this world, a collection of divine light, shining forth as in this revelation and discovery of God in his word—Oh, how grateful is the first appearance thereof!—when the glimmerings and glimpses do shine in this discovery, this revelation of God, how grateful is it, wheresoever there is a friendly mind towards God. And if now hereupon the soul doth receive the testimony that is contained in this word, in this scripture-revelation, this God esteems friendly. The generality of men do not receive it ; this is their condemnation, that “ light is come into the world, [that light



which shines in the gospel discovery] but men love darkness" more. If any do love the light more than that darkness, though it be from God, it is nevertheless kindly accepted, and taken by him as an indication of friendliness towards him. And we are to consider to this purpose, that however there be justice in this towards God, there is nothing the less of friendliness; for that wheresoever there is justice towards men, the acts and exercises thereof signify nothing if they do not proceed from love; for love comprehends all that duty that men owe towards one another, and it is "the fulfilling of the law." If I do a just act towards a man, and do it not from a spirit of love, there is but a mere carcase of that which is really and truly a duty, the life and soul thereof are wanting. It is love that fulfils the law in the whole extent of it: love to God fulfils all the precepts that enjoin my duty towards him; and love to man, all the duties I owe to man. And ergo, do not think that is no friendship towards God to receive the discovery he hath made of himself in his word as from him, because it is right, or because it is but justice towards God; for it must be a spirit of love that must animate all the duty I do, whether towards God or towards men; else it is all worth nothing. As there is malignity and malice in infidelity, so there is love and kindness in faith; in the assenting act of faith I mean; for the unitive act (you have been told) I am to speak to afterwards; and what I am now speaking to I put in under a distinct head of things presupposed unto that. But let it be considered that the main thing that doth keep off souls from God in infidelity, (comprised even in the nature of infidelity) is the enmity that it carries in it. How observable is the expression in John v. verses 42 and 43, compared together; "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." What is the reason of this partial disinclination to receive that testimony of God, when there is no such aversion appearing to receive and rely upon the human testimony of such, at least, as are not known to have forfeited the credit of their word? What is the reason? Why that the love of God hath no place in such hearts. They do not bear a friendly mind towards God; ergo, they can believe one another, but will not believe him: they have so much kindness for one another, that they will take one another's word; but they have so little kindness for God, that they will not take his word. A most horrid case; but yet

a plain one. So it most manifestly is—"Ye will not believe my word, because the love of God is not in you." Ergo, it is a sure indication of a friendly mind towards God, when there is any aptitude to entertain that revelation he hath made of himself and his word, and to acknowledge the characters of divinity that do appear upon it, rejoicing to behold any beams of heavenly light shot down into the midst of that horrid darkness which hath spread itself over this world. But again,

3. There is yet a further and more particular appearance of such friendliness towards God, when his reconcileableness to man declared in this revelation of his, is received as a true discovery of him. When the souls of men come to entertain such notices concerning him, that though he is offended (and most justly) against a sinful world, he is yet willing to be reconciled to sinners, bears a placable mind towards them. This is that which the most will not believe. There is such ill will towards God, as seals up the hearts of men in obduration, and ergo, this discovery will not enter. It is one thing to have a notion of it in the mind, and another thing that it have its seat and place with effect and power in the heart; for (as there will be occasion more fully to discourse hereafter) there's the principal seat of that faith upon which God accounts men righteous, and doth finally save them. There its principal seat is to be sought and found. Therefore, when we tell men from the word of God, and out of the gospel of Christ, that God is willing to be reconciled to sinners, they can give us the hearing, and give a faint assent; this notion is received into the mind (as a great many others are that belong both to the natural and prenatal parts of religion) without distilling any influence upon the heart and will. But if this discovery of God, that he is reconcileable unto sinners, once come to touch the heart, the reception and entertainment that is given it there, speaks the greatest friendliness towards God. It is with the heart that this must be believed, and the believing heart is in this point a friendly heart towards God. It is because this belief doth not obtain and take place there, that God hath so many irreconcilable enemies. They will not believe him reconcileable, and ergo, they will not be reconciled themselves. There is a consciousness, a guiltiness, which is seated in the natural conscience, that poisons the soul with enmity against God. Such a thing as was found in the spirit of Cain: "My sin is greater than can be forgiven." And

what was the product of that flat aversion from God?—self-banishment. Let me get to the utmost distance from him that I can, and keep at the utmost distance;—I have offended him, there is a nemesis, a doom, a judgment that hangs over my guilty head, and he will not be reconciled. Thou saidst, there is no hope. Jer. ii. 27. What then? I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. Because men do despair of God's being reconciled to them, ergo, are they living a perpetual warfare and wilful wandering. I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. There is no hope in God that he will ever be reconciled to such a wretch as I. But if reconcileableness towards sinners be entertained, then that soul can be persuaded of it, that his word doth in this respect represent him truly. This is from the friendliness of his heart, that hopeth all things, believeth all things, and thinketh no evil.

As it is with love towards men, it doth not allow us to entertain suspicions and surmises concerning them that love us. It will not allow us to think them false, perfidious, treacherous, hypocritical. So much less will this love to God allow us to think so of him, that when he publishes his reconcileableness to sinners unto the sons of men, so expressly in a gospel sent into the world for that very purpose, if there be a friendly mind towards God, it will never allow a man to think he will but deceive in all this: all these are but false colours, they are but deceptive disguises that he hath put upon himself to make himself look speciously, and be well thought of in that world, that he hath even now forsaken and left. A friendly mind towards God banisheth all such thoughts as blasphemies of the divine goodness, and can allow them to have no place. And ergo, whereas his gospel proclaims "glory to him in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men;" a friendly disposition towards him shews itself in the joyful reception of this revelation of him, as most certainly and infallibly true.

4. And this friendliness towards God further appears in the soul's deserting and coming off from this world, upon that discovery that God hath made of himself. As there is nothing can draw off a soul from a suitable good unto the sensitive nature that now prevails in the state of apostasy, and is growing in degenerate natures, nothing can draw it off from an adherence and addictedness to such a world, the sensible objects whereof are grateful and suitable to

a soul lost in sense and buried in carnality, but the revelation of something greater, and better, and more suitable. And wheresoever there is faith in God, beginning to obtain and take place, by what degrees it doth take place in the soul the world loses its place; these two being directly opposite to one another, standing as rivals and competitors, God and this world. Therefore, by what degrees soever the soul approacheth God, it draws off from the world. And whereas the friendship of this world is enmity to God, by how much the more the soul inclineth to a state of friendship with God, so much the more it is enmity with this world, as God's rival and competitor for the heart and soul. Under that notion it cannot endure it, but abhors from it. This friendship with God, which faith doth so directly tend to, and consist in, in so great part, must infer a continued and habitual enmity against this world, not abstractly considered in itself; (for every thing that God made is good) but as it is now become an idol of jealousy set up in opposition to God, that doth, as it were, appear as a substituted deity put in God's room. The world and that carnality appear together, which entertains it and embraces it. They do share deity between them, which belongs only to God. Men fall into a league with this world for themselves, to gratify themselves, and their own carnal inclination out of it. But so the world and self, complicated and being in a combination, they engross the deity to themselves, which is due to the Most High. And under this notion, that when the soul begins to fall in with God, it falls out with the world; and ergo, it is expressly said in that forementioned place, that the friendship of the world is enmity against God. And so friendship with God must consequently be, under that notion, enmity against the world. But this is great friendliness too, towards God, when the soul retires and recedes from all that was dear and delightful to it before on this account. Now it finds him placable, reconcileable, willing to be at peace; I may come back to my God again, he invites me, he recalls me. What have I any more to do with idols? What is that base corruptible world now to me? It abandons all that it loved, all that it took pleasure in, upon his account, and for his sake. "We have forsaken all, and followed thee," (said Peter in the name of the other disciples, Matth. xix. 27,) "what shall we have therefore?" It is not to be thought he could suppose that the forsaking their little all could deserve any thing, if it were a thousand

times more than it was. But yet from the divine goodness apprehended, it raiseth expectation. Surely there is something to be got, though we have little to lose. And if we had all the world in our power, and were to abandon and throw it away, it were a contemptible, despicable nothing, in comparison of what we expect to find in him. But yet there is an expectation raised from the immense goodness and benignity of God, that he will never permit any to abandon former enjoyments to their loss. It is a thing that in itself deserves nothing; but that doth, as it were, carry in itself a promise of much of all that can be expected and thought of, inasmuch as it hath in it a friendly mind towards God, which having to do with a being of infinite goodness, can never be without acceptance, or without its reward. Nay, by how much the more we do despise our all of this world upon this account; (and ergo, must apprehend our doing so, to have so much the less of merit in it, because the things we leave and forsake we judge at the same time to be worth nothing) yet so much the more is there of a friendly mind in it towards God; for he is so much the higher in our estimation and affection, by how much the more any thing that is opposite is lowered and depressed there. But then

5. The reception of that particular testimony that God hath given us in his gospel concerning his Son, that hath peculiarly much of a friendly mind towards God. That we entertain the discovery which he makes to us of his Christ, the immediate object of that unitive act of faith which comes next to be spoken to. But this must be previous and supposed to it; i. e. that we receive the discovery that God hath made of Christ. This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased, I recommend to you, hear him as one sent forth from me. The voice came from the excellent glory giving this testimony concerning the Son of God. Now as the rest of the world who have this revelation, but believe it not, do by their unbelief make God a liar, they that do believe this testimony set to their seal that God is true: this he takes as an expression of friendliness towards him. The rest of the world they are in a conspiracy, a confederacy to make him thought a liar, that he treats them with deceit. This notion of him men do so propagate as that it insinuates into their hearts, though in their minds they have no formal notion of it; they carry it towards him, as if they took him to be a deceiver, an impostor, one that intended to delude them by that representation, and by that scheme and model of things

which he lays before them in the gospel of his Son. But they that receive this testimony, do now give an open proof before all the world of the regard and reverence which they have to that recommendation that God hath given of his Son to the children of men. Look to those expressions, John iii. 33, "He that hath received this testimony hath set to his seal that God is true;" (where he is speaking of the testimony given in the gospel concerning Christ.) And that other, 1 John v. 10, "He that believeth not the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, (as the next verses tell us) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." So that he stands forth as a visible example and witness for God against the infidelity of a wicked world, that will not entertain this discovery which carries such bright lustre and glory with it, made unto men concerning his Son, and his design of saving sinners by him. This is friendly towards him, to give him the glory of his truth; and it will be matter of triumph and glorying at the great day, (as in 2 Thess. i. 10,) "When our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear with his holy angels, he shall be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe, because our testimony was received in that day." Upon this account will he appear glorified in the eyes of men, when he hath such a remnant to produce and shew before the world. Here are these that would believe me when the generality of men would not. These are they with whom my truth was a sacred and adorable thing, when it was turned into a lie by the wicked, infidel world. Here is a peculiar friendliness towards God in this remnant, when the minds of men are generally so disaffected towards him by that infidelity which carries dislike and enmity in the very nature of it.

And this leads to the unitive act of faith itself, wherein we shall shew there is much of friendliness towards God and his Christ essentially included.

## SERMON XXXIV.\*

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

WE have shewed what this faith doth suppose. Now we come, in the second place, to shew what it doth import. And this we shall let you see by shewing you, 1. What this faith doth more essentially include and denote; and then also, 2. What things it doth connate, that do go along with it, and which must come into consideration, as ordinarily this faith is to be expressed God-ward; and so will greatly heighten this friendship towards God, and represent it so much the more a generous and a glorious thing.

I. Consider as to the import of this faith, what it more essentially includes and carries in it. As,

1. Such an assent to the gospel as draws the heart along with it. That faith upon which God doth justify and save, is not a dead, inanimate thing. "It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Rom. x. 10. Such a faith as doth not carry the heart along with it signifies nothing, doth nothing any more (as the apostle speaks in the close of this chapter) "than a carcase would do without the soul." And this matter, if it were well considered, would easily reconcile these two great apostles, which do both of them discourse so distinctly and designedly about Abraham's faith as the precedent to the whole community of believers, in reference to the matter of justification. It was far from the thoughts of this apostle, (as is most evident) to think that faith, be it never so lively, so active and operative, could signify any thing to procure acceptance, or cause God to look upon a believer with so much the more favourable and propitious an eye. If it be never so much a living thing, it signifies nothing, as to obtaining divine acceptance. Nor did it ever come into the mind of the other apostle, to suppose that an unactive, dead faith, would serve the turn to bespeak a man accepted with God. It is very plain this one thing agrees with them both. And it is the apostle Paul's expression, mentioned to you before, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Not that when he believes unto righteousness, his faith procures that righteousness to be reckoned

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to him, or that is any cause of it. But God will never clothe any such one with righteousness, whom he doth not also inspire with a spirit of faith, with a vital faith, with a faith full of vital power, that accompanies it and goes along with it. Both being from the same fountain of grace, in two distinct streams, the collation of righteousness, and the communication of faith. And these do not cause one another; but the grace of God in Christ causeth both. As when two streams go from one fountain, one stream doth not cause the other stream, but the fountain causeth both.

And it is very observable to this purpose, how joint a testimony these apostles bear to one and the same thing, in that (Acts xv. 9,) "God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles, purifying their hearts by faith." He accepts a Jew as well as a Gentile, and a Gentile as well as a Jew, without difference; makes no difference, purifying their hearts by faith. If they have such an operative faith as shall be accompanied and followed with heart purity, there shall be no difference that one was a Jew and the other was a Gentile. And it is to be considered to the present purpose, that both these apostles were in this synod at the same time; and there was nothing but the fullest consent among the holy members; all inspired by the Holy Spirit of that assembly at that time. These, indeed, were Peter's words; but you find James speaking afterwards. And Paul was sent from Antioch thither. But what was agreed there, seemed meet to the Holy Ghost and to them, as the matter is concluded and shut up. No difference was put between one and another, a Jew and a Gentile, faith purifying their hearts. If they did agree in that, they could differ in nothing considerable besides. And God will make no difference, purifying their hearts by faith; that must make and argue this faith to be a moving, active thing in them. Stagnant waters are dead; springing waters are wont to be called living—*aquæ salientes*. It is such a faith as carries an agitation with it in a man's soul. So that whereas it is a fountain agitated by that faith, it will be a self-purifying fountain. Fountains purify themselves—standing waters do not so. This fountain it hath a self-purifying power put into it; not as if it hath this of itself, but as the Divine Spirit, moving the fountain by a vital principle put into it, purifies it; and this was the agreed concurrent sense of these godly inspired men, met at Jerusalem at this time. A mighty testimony it was against that dead, spiritless faith, in which a great many place all their



confidence for eternity and another world. I am a believer, and, ergo, I am safe, I am well. What a believer are you? What doth your faith do? Doth it move your heart? Doth it carry your soul with it? Is there a spirit or power of faith working in your faith? Doth it operate? Doth it transform? It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. But when any must say, My faith lets my heart lay as a dead thing still, as dead as a stone; an impure thing still,—as impure as a heap of mud;—is this indeed, the faith upon which you will venture for eternity? A faith that effects nothing, a mere negative faith; to wit, a faith which only stands in not believing the contrary, or not disbelieving such and such things. You do not disbelieve such and such things. No more doth a brute disbelieve them. If that be all your faith, a brute may have as good a faith as you; that is, that you do not believe the contrary, or you do not believe such and such things.

But then you are to consider what it is that faith, which avails to justification and salvation, doth believe; or what it is the belief of, as well as what sort of believing it is. That is, that representation which God makes of himself in Christ, as willing to become our God. See how he did represent himself to Abraham, when it was said, that Abraham believed God, upon which he was counted righteous. Why he tells Abraham he would make him a blessed man, make him a blessing, make all the nations of the earth blessed in him. He tells him of a seed, by which seed eminently and most principally the apostle tells us, Gal. iii. 16, was meant Christ. "Not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ." Christ, as comprehending the whole community of living believers in himself. It was such a faith, ergo, as Abraham had, as by which he apprehended God in Christ, and was thereupon drawn into covenant with him. "I will establish my covenant with thee." And that covenant the apostle to the Galatians also tells us, was the covenant of God in Christ, which was but then confirmed with Abraham. Not first made; it was but confirmed when it was made with Abraham; so as that the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after it, could not disannul it. It was a covenant not to be disannulled, being a covenant of God in Christ, and, ergo, must be understood to be made from the beginning, from the first apostasy. But with Abraham it was confirmed. It was the representation of God in Christ that was the object of this faith. And this faith was

a thing full of life and spirit and power, in reference to this object, God in Christ. Our Saviour himself testifies that Abraham saw his day, at that great distance of time, and rejoiced in the sight. "He saw it, and was glad." It is such a faith of this discovery of God in Christ, as doth affect the whole soul, and mightily operate to the centre of the heart itself. It is such a faith upon which God justifies and saves. But such a faith cannot but carry great friendliness in it, when it carries a man's heart towards God; and that you know is the seat of friendship. How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart is not with me? When the heart is attracted and drawn to God in Christ, here is friendship. It is carried in the very essence of this faith. It is faith that raiseth desire in the heart. Oh, that I might have this God for my God in Christ, and come into most inward union with him. It is a faith that raiseth hope in the soul; such an assent to the truth of the representation, upon which the soul doth not only desire, "Oh, may I have this God for my God;" but hope too that it shall, that it may. As no doubt there were such affections raised in Abraham's heart upon that discovery which God made of himself to him. I am God, all sufficient, walk before me, and be thou perfect; and I will establish my covenant with thee. Such a treaty, such a transaction as this, when God did thus represent himself, and the representation was believed, could not but raise such affections in such a soul. Now here is the very heart and soul of friendship in all this. All this speaks a friendly mind, a propense mind toward God in Christ. And,

2. Upon such a vivid, lively, operative assent, there ensues (as what is most essential to this faith too) an appropriation of God in Christ for ours. This is the *complexus fidei* by which it doth embrace its object. "And herein this faith works by love." Gal. v. 6. And love, you know, is the very form and essence of friendship, the vital form of friendship. It is a faith that works by love, wherewith the soul takes hold of God in Christ. We must suppose, in order of nature, desire and hope to be raised before. But now here is the entire consent of the will animated by love, and closing with the amiable object, God in Christ. What a representation is here! saith the transported soul. And nothing now remains but to take hold; for I find here is a free offer made, and if I will have this God to be mine, I may; and if I will have this Christ to be mine, I may.

What remains but to accept them? Nothing is more essential in this faith, than this appropriative and acceptive act, by which we take God for our God, and receive Christ for our Lord and our Jesus. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord (this is the imitation of the Christian course) so walk ye in him." Col. ii. 6. And again,

3. There is the soul's self-resignation carried also, as most essential in this faith. And that is the most friendly thing too that can be conceived. As there is the greatest friendliness in accepting, sure there must be equal friendliness in giving, when it is oneself delivering up oneself. When the soul accepts, appropriates this God, this Christ, falls before him, saith My Lord and my God, it hereby comes into that vital unitive closure with him that speaks, as much as any thing can, the very heart and soul of friendly love, as hath been said. But then also, when at the same time it doth receive and give, takes God in Christ, and gives itself, delivers up itself; What? Can this be the act or part, or heart of an enemy? Will I give away myself to an enemy? or to whom I bear an enemy-mind? a disaffected mind? This can never be, I received God in Christ from the apprehension I have of the great and glorious excellencies and suitableness of the object. To as many as believe, he is precious. (1 Pet. ii. 7.) So saith the soul concerning Christ, who is the immediate object of this faith. And it hath the like apprehensions concerning God, who is the final, terminative object of it. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Ps. lxxiii. 25. These do both of them equally influence this accepting and this giving. I take God in Christ for mine, because I have those high and great and honourable thoughts of God in Christ. I give myself to God through Christ, for the same reason, upon the same account, as having the highest and most honourable thoughts of them both. And in this resignation, or surrender, we are to consider that as friendliness hath the plainest part that can be, so trust and faith have an essential ingrediency hereinto. Or (which is all one) that resignation hath an essential ingrediency into such faith. For when I give up myself, with what temper of mind is it? I do not give up myself to destruction, but I give up myself in order to salvation. This resignation is in trusting or committing of ourselves: "I know whom I have believed, and that he will keep what I have committed to him to that

day." That committing of ourselves speaks a most friendly mind. Would any one commit himself to an enemy, or to one towards whom he bears the heart of an enemy? And,

4. This faith doth most essentially include an heart-quieting recumbency, so far as this faith prevails. It is not in degree perfect; but we speak of the nature of it, of the kind of it. It carries with it an heart-quieting recumbency, so that the soul doth abet its own act in what it doth herein, as the mentioned expression imports. "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed." Not ashamed, why, what room or place can there be for shame in such a case? Yes, if a man hath mistaken; if he thinks he doth the part of a fool, he hath reason to be ashamed. But saith he, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed: therefore he abets his own act in this matter. It was the wisest course that ever I took in all this world, to dispose of myself so, so to commit myself: it is a thing wherein I can justify myself to the highest, that I have made this venture. It hath not been a rash, inconsiderate act. It is not a thing I am ashamed of, I shall never repent of it. Repentance carries shame with it. Whatever act I repent of, I am ashamed of it, as having done a foolish thing, betrayed weakness and impotency of mind in what I have done. But I shall never be ashamed of this. For I know whom I have believed, that he will keep, and is able to keep too, with an engaged ability, that I have committed to him (my pledge, my depositum) against that day. Still there is in this the greatest friendliness; that I can repose myself in the faithfulness and truth of him to whom I have committed myself, and upon whom I have placed my reliance in reference to the greatest concerns that can lie upon my heart.

II. Consider as to the import of this faith. Not only what it more expressly denotes, but (as the case is) it must connote. And it doth indeed connote many great and concurrent difficulties which render the friendliness that is in it so much the more generous and glorious a thing. As,

1. This trust is placed upon one whom we never saw. I trust to one altogether out of sight. Look to the final object, God himself; the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. And for the intermediate object, Christ, as to the most parts and most ages of the world, hitherto unseen. Even in that time wherein he might have been seen on earth, yet to a great many Christians he

had not been seen. As Peter writes to the scattered Jews, though he lived and died in their country. But they were scattered, and in a dispersion, yet he saith, "Whom having not seen, ye love," &c. A glorious thing, and speaks a friendly mind. So far to trust one I never saw, and never can see. If you were persuaded to put your trust in such and such an one that you hear of, you would say I never saw his face. Trust him! Why should I trust one I never saw? That is no argument against this trust. I will trust him, (saith the believing soul) though I never saw him, nor can see him. I have such an account of him, and know so much of him in a way wherein I cannot be mistaken, cannot be deceived, though I never saw him, nor ever expect to see him, (to wit, the invisible God with eyes of flesh) yet will I trust in him without a suspicious, misgiving heart. Here is glorious friendliness. And,

2. Here is this in the case too—it is trusting in him when one hath offended. This makes the difficulty the greater, and so the friendliness that appears in it is the more considerable and glorious. Any body that considers will easily apprehend how hard a matter it is to trust a person you know you have offended. I know I have displeased such an one, and yet to trust him, yet to place your trust in him. This is arduous, and so speaks this friendliness of mind so much the greater a thing.

3. It is trusting him with your very souls. This is yet higher, when my own convinced conscience tells me I have offended him, I have given him the highest and greatest cause of offence imaginable, and yet I will trust him, and trust him even with my very soul—the greatest and most considerable thing I have. This is high friendliness. The trust one placeth in any one is so much the more considerable and great, as the things are greater he trusts him with. As I say I trust such an one with such a sum of money, or I trust such an one with the management of such a part of my estate, or I trust such and such commodities that I value in his hands: This argues a kind and friendly propension that you will trust him so far. When you say I dare put my life into such a man's hand, this is a great trust and great friendliness. But when it comes to this, the intrusting your very souls, this is the highest friendship that can be thought. And you have nothing else to do with your souls, you must intrust them. Men's hearts must be won to Christ thus far, that they may

intrust their very souls with him. "Into thy hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Ps. xxxi. 5. And,

4. There is this further in the case, that you are to put your trust there only. That he is to be the only object of your trust. So that if this trust fail, you are lost. For you must not have another object of your trust. This is still the so much more glorious. Trust in him will consist with no other dependencies. It is the highest act of worship that can be performed, and it is a glory that God will not give to another. He will have no rival in his honour. It is the prerogative of Deity to be the object of trust even of the whole soul. Therefore, so much the greater thing is this trust.

5. You are to consider great humiliation, and self-abasement, accompanying this trust, which makes it so much the more generous a thing; for when you are to trust him alone, you are to distrust yourself. When you are to place a confidence in him, there must be a most absolute diffidence in yourself. I am nothing, I am vile, my own righteousness is but filthy rags. Whatsoever I might pretend to under that notion, it is all loss, and dross, and dung, in comparison of what I expect, of what I seek, and what I am to rely upon," as the apostle's expressions are, Phil. iii. 5, 6. There is the greatest submission in this trust. Observe that in Rom. x. the apostle gives the true reason why the proud Jews were so much hardened in infidelity that they would not submit to the righteousness of God: They knew not how to submit. There was so much of submission in it to comply with God's way and method of justifying and saving sinners, that they would no way in the world comport with. Their proud hearts could not endure it. If I place my trust, my soul trust, so and so, I must nullify myself; I must diminish myself to nothing; I must throw away all hopes in myself; I must allow myself to be a lost creature, a perishing creature, one deserving and worthy to perish, and to be thrown away for ever. Why one would not do so but towards one to whom we have a friendly mind! one may endure so to humble himself, to nullify himself towards a friend; but one would be loth to do so towards an insulting enemy, or to give him that occasion of insulting over us. And again,

6. This trust is placed upon one who will surely vindicate all inclinations to place trust any where else. He is one that I have offended, and if I falter in my trust, if I grow

suspicious of him, and think of placing my trust elsewhere, he will be offended a thousand times more. He thunders out curses if I decline, if my heart prevaricate, if I lean towards any other trust. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the living God." This is a great adventure, and that which only a friendly mind would carry one to, where there is so much hazard in the case. I trust when I have offended, I trust when if I be not right and steady to my trust, I offend a thousand times more; and yet I will venture, for my heart is towards him. Nothing shall discourage me, nothing shall keep me off from him.

7. It is trust to be placed without any favourable appearances to flesh and sense; for he promiseth me nothing that will be grateful in these respects: promiseth me nothing to which my flesh and sense have an aptitude and propension, or are like to receive any gratification by. If I do unite myself with him, intrust myself unto him, list myself one of his disciples, a devotee, one given up to God in Christ, what shall I get by it? He doth not promise houses and lands, or great things in this world; no such matter. But yet the believing soul will trust and unite with him, and give up itself unto him: this is great, and argues a strong propension of a friendly mind. And,

8. It is not only without such favourable appearances, but is against most formidable appearances. If I intrust myself here, and so dispose of myself, (as the disposal begins in the union of heart with God and Christ) I expose myself, at the same time, to all that a wicked world can do against me. When I make this venture, I must venture with him upon a raging and tempestuous ocean. I have all the troubles in view that this world, and the God of this world, the usurping God of this world, can give me. I am to expect nothing but storms and tempests and death on every hand. Yet the soul will believe not only without hope, (as such was Abraham's faith) but against hope, Rom. iv. 18, which makes it so much the more a glorious thing. And again,

9. This trust is thus placed, notwithstanding, not only against what is feared, but against what is felt by the believing person himself, in reference to himself, and generally to the whole community of believers. He meets himself, it may be, with a great deal of affliction; yet he will trust. Rough severities of providence many times, and the appearances of an enemy, are put on. God marshals up his own terrors as the world marshals up its terrors in battle-array

against him. But, saith a believing soul, "though he kill me, yet will I trust in him." Job xiii. 15. I will die at his feet; I will never leave him. Though "we are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter," nothing shall part us. Ps. xlv. 11. quoted Rom. viii. 36—39. Though we be trodden down into the place of dragons, and covered with the dust of death, no matter for that; we will never leave thee. We appeal to him, whether he yet see an inclination in us to deal falsely with him in his covenant. No, we will run through a thousand deaths for his sake, with confidence "that neither tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, neither death, nor life, nor any other creature," shall ever work a separation. And this is high friendliness; sure the persons must needs be understood to be of a friendly mind towards God. And though not only this be their own experience, but they see it to be the common experience of the whole community of believers. Look upon former times and ages. There are whole armies of glorious sufferers and martyrs, whose records they can see and read over. What have these people endured and suffered for his sake! And yet they would trust him, yet they would cleave to him, and nothing would make them turn aside from following him. When you look back upon such an age and such an age, you find there have been multitudes could shew their scars, their wounds, their blood: This we have endured for the sake of God and Christ. And yet they would trust him still. "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," and are gone before into glory. Here is "the faith and patience of the saints." Where are they that have kept the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, the faith of Jesus, "that have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony, and loved not their lives unto the death?" as we have it in Rev. xii. 11. There is great friendliness in such a trust as this. Especially when, as

10. We shall consider that they expect no recompense for all this. See their fidelity, all their love, all their sufferings in this world; they never look to be recompensed here. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." It is not in this life that they have hope of recompence; their great hope of recompence is hereafter. When Abraham in the power, and in fruit of such a faith, quitted his all in this world, Abraham, saith God, "get thee up from thy kindred, from thy country, and from thy father's house." It is by faith, it is said, he obeyed, and



went, he knew not whither. Into what unknown country must I go? (he might say.)—It is no matter for that, whether you know or not; but follow God's call: and he abandons all, and follows. He trusts, makes a venture in the dark. This is the very nature of faith. Some pagans have understood so much about it. So our noted Voagan among the Platonists speaks of a faith above knowledge, that unites the soul most intimately with the supreme good; and which when a man doth act and exercise, they that have this faith, and are in the exercise of it, they do express it (as his expression is) shutting their eyes. They shut their eyes and trust, wink and trust. So doth Abraham in this:—go your ways into a country you know not—he goes by faith, he obeyed, and went, he knew not whither. I can (as if he had said) give no man an account whither I go; I am only obeying and following the divine call. It is in an unknown country that we all, who are believers indeed, are to expect our recompense. Where was it that he expected this? was it any interest in a terrestrial Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey? No: he deemed himself when there but in a strange country, to which he had such a right, as we nor any man in the world had before to any spot of earth, by an immediate divine grant, a grant from Heaven: the great possessor of heaven and earth assigns this spot for him and his posterity, and yet he behaves himself there as in a strange country; he, and Isaac and Jacob, that were heirs with him of the same promise, they declared themselves to be pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. The believer will say, Set me down any where upon earth and it is none of my country, whatsoever right I may have, as they had in that land. No; their faith was to cast anchor for them. But where? within the veil; within such an intexture as kept every thing from their view; an interjected veil; a veil cast between, and woven between them and the great object of their hope. But yet for all that, they trust and they venture; they cast their anchor upon that “which is within the veil, whither Jesus the forerunner is for us entered.” This argues a strong propension of a friendly mind towards God, and towards his Christ, and towards this state of things, which they make the discovery and offer of. And in the last place,—

11. It is to be considered too, as that which signifies so much the more the friendliness of this faith; that it is a venture for eternity; such a sort of venture, that if I mistake, there is no correcting the mistake. If I misplace my

trust, the matter admits of no alteration, no remedy: it is a trusting of my soul, and a trusting it for somewhat that lies out of my sight, and whence there is no return, no coming back for me to make any terms with this world to any advantage, if I have misplaced my trust. No, here is an adventure made, never to be altered. And the soul doth it with this apprehension, with this prospect. Here I must venture my all, and for eternity, for an everlasting state.

It is fit we should understand what such a faith as the faith of a sincere Christian is, that we may not delude ourselves with names and shows and false appearances. There must be the nature of this faith in all those that believe as Abraham did; and his faith was spoken of as a precedentia! faith; and as he was the father of believers, the great example. He was not to be justified and saved by one sort of faith and we by another, but he and we by the same faith. So much it carries with it of a friendly mind towards its blessed object. But let us now observe in the close of this present discourse, before we enter on the third head, what this faith inferreth. I have hitherto observed only what it imports, either as directly noted, or as connoted. I pray let us bethink ourselves. Are not we strangers to these exercises of mind and spirit?—is not this a region and sphere of things that we are unacquainted with, and wherein we are little wont to converse?—do we know what belongs to such applications of mind and spirit inwardly towards the blessed God, and towards the Lord Jesus Christ? If we altogether are so, our religion, our christianity is a name, a show, a figment. If we are strangers to such applications of mind and spirit to God in Christ, and we have nothing that belongs to this friendly intercourse, I pray why is it? We would be loth to call ourselves God's enemies and Christ's enemies for all that. But yet he hath told us, he that is not with him is against him; and if we be indeed such friends to God and his Christ, such is to be seen in inward converse of heart and spirit with them; and nothing can excuse my not conversing with a friend, a great friend, a sincere friend, a wise friend, and a most obliging friend, but such things as these, for instance—Why, he is at a great distance, I cannot come at him. That is none of the case. He is not far from any one of us: "In him we live, and move, and have our being." What can excuse our not conversing with him who is so constantly nigh? That request which you have heard so much of, "The Lord Jesus be with thy

spirit," shews he continually may, and can be so. It is as possible as it is desirable, to have him with our spirits. What can excuse our slighting of a friend that we may be with every hour of the day, or every moment of the hour, if we will. What can excuse strangeness there, shyness there?

It cannot be said he is inaccessible: that would excuse: but there is no such thing. There is a throne of grace appointed on purpose, whereto we may freely approach: "there is a new and living way consecrated by the blood of Christ," leading into the Divine Presence. You cannot say you have no business with him: that would excuse you that you do not converse with such and such a friend—I have other great business in the world, but with him I have none. You cannot say so as to God; you have constant business with him, and he hath constant business with you. It is he with whom you have continually to do; "all things are open to him with whom you have to do." It is spoken in the present time, to shew that we have to do with him always; Heb. iv. 13. You cannot say your friend is so busy that he is at no leisure to mind you, if you come to him: no such thing; for you are directed "wherein soever you are called therein to abide with God," 1 Cor. vii. 24. Ergo, if you should find leisure, he would be always at leisure; he can mind every one, and will do so to those who apply themselves to him; "his eyes are ever towards the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." What can it signify but a disinclination and unfriendliness, that we have so little to do with God and Christ from day to day? It must signify, that other things so engage and take us up, that our concernments with God can have no room, no place in our hearts. They are things of another sphere, which we are most taken up about, and which appear to us more considerable—either the public affairs and concerns of a present world, or our own private ones. With a great many, we have too much cause to apprehend, the session of this present parliament is a far more considerable thing than that glorious consessus with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. Those vast and glorious multitudes which are to make up that consessus. Oh, what friends are any society of men in comparison of the glorious society above! The affairs of this present time, let them be but considered in reference to the tract of time, what a little inch in the series of time is the present time of ours, about which many are so intensely engaged and taken up. When this junc-

ture of time is over with us, look upon the affairs but two or three months after, and what do they all appear and signify then? and yet the matters that be within our inch of time are, with the most, more considerable than a vast and endless eternity, and have more of their serious thoughts. The great question is, What will become of me in the great day when all the children of God are to be associated together, to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, there? Here is the great question, and it will be determined upon this single point—Have I that faith that belongs to that society as their characteristical note, as their distinction, as that by which they that belong to God are to be known from them who do not belong unto him, an heavenly from an earthly race and offspring?—Let me look into myself, and discern my own state and character, and see if I have any such faith in me as includes and draws the whole frame and current of my soul and all its powers towards God, and Christ, and Heaven, and an eternal state of things.

## SERMON XXXV\*.

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

The third thing which remains to be spoken to is,

III. To shew you what such a faith doth certainly infer. This also hath much of friendliness towards God in it; and it infers divers things that are so: as—

I. What is indeed very general, an entire living to God. If any soul do believe unto righteousness and salvation, so as now to be justified, and finally saved, that very faith of his will certainly infer the most entire living unto God; the most friendly thing towards God that can be thought. It is impossible that I can bear more of friendliness in my mind and soul towards any one, than when I consecrate my life to him—devote my life to him—devote myself to him. This is certainly inferred by that faith which avails to justification and salvation. I pray observe, that where you have that phrase of “living to God,” Gal. ii. 19, that the whole

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context speaks of this very subject; justifying faith which is mentioned in this so expressly. Look at Gal. ii. from verse 16, to the end; "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Here is a most positive and delucid assertion of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone, exclusive of works. But the apostle objects to himself, or obviates the objections of others in verse 17. "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." This looks like a doctrine that serves the purposes of sin, and as if Christ came into the world to minister unto sin, to promise indulgences for it; not that men might cease to sin, but that they may sin with less danger and more safety. "God forbid," saith he—abhorred be any such thought, "if I build again the things which I destroyed, [and to admit this will be building what I had been aiming all this while to destroy] I make myself a transgressor," I fight with myself. All my doctrine causes nothing in it but inconsistency and self repugnance: "For, (saith he) I through the law am dead to the law." But, with what design? upon what account?—that I might live unto God: "I through the law am dead to the law." The law hath killed all the hopes and expectations I had of life, or justification by it, and hath as a severe, but as a faithful, dextrous schoolmaster, driven me to Christ, (as it is afterwards spoken in the same chapter) and constrained me to have recourse to him, to seek righteousness and life there. And what then? Is it that afterwards I might live as I list? No; far be it; it is only that I might live unto God; a life more entirely holy than it was possible for me ever to have lived upon other terms. And this living thus to God is manifestly spoken of as an inferred, consequential thing unto justifica-

tion, as a thing that naturally and necessarily ensues. But it is the most friendly thing towards God that can be imagined and thought of, that I should dedicate my whole life to him; and this doth not belong to friendship as friendship, but it belongs peculiarly to friendship with God. If any other friend should lay claim to the whole of my life, that my life should be spent entirely for him, and I should do nothing but for him; it is the highest insolence for him to expect or require it; but in this case it is the highest insolence to deny it unto this friend, for do not I owe my whole life to Him, if he hath justified me, if he hath imparted a righteousness to me? For what was I before, but a condemned lost creature. My life was forfeited. When he hath given me righteousness, he hath given me my life. The case cannot be thus among other friends. There is usually some sort of parity; but here is the greatest imparity and disparity. Another friend may have obliged me, perhaps I have at some time or other obliged one as much. But here the obligation lies all on one side; and it is the deepest obligation that can be thought. So that what was an hyperbole in the apostle to Philemon, "thou owest thy very self to me," (and he expresseth it with a diminution, not to say it,) it is no hyperbole here. Every justified person owes himself to his justifier, his whole life. For do not we know it was forfeited, entirely forfeited? If it be a state of justification, how did we come into it? It was a state of condemnation out of which we did pass. This is nothing to the ordinary friendship that is between man and man. But if an offended prince do take a condemned wretch out of his cage and chains, and from the dungeon and gibbet, into his arms, and embraces him; gives him life and his favour; and all the dignities and honours he can load him with; here is one owes his very self, in a subordinate way, as much as it is possible a creature can to a creature. Though the prince claims that life which he cannot preserve; for when he hath given it in one moment, a disease may take it away in the next. But here it is the most reasonable thing in all the world, that I should give my life to him who hath justified me.

And whereas all were under condemnation before; when a person is justified, he is made to "reign in life," as that most emphatical expression is, Rom. v. 17. Death had passed over all by one. By one man's offence, death reigned. But now they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, do reign in life by one Jesus Christ, or they shall do so, as some copies read it,

“They shall reign in life.” The life of a king is reckoned a sacred thing, inviolable—not to be touched. He hath made us kings and priests unto God, having “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Rev. i. 5. Then such lives are not to be touched. “Touch not mine anointed.” They are all anointed ones, who have this life imparted to them.

I beseech you consider this case according to the mighty weight of it, and consider it as your own case, or that which is your case, or may be. For we are all of us here before the Lord, either in a state of condemnation, or in a state of justification this hour, at this time. If we have any of us cause to suspect that fearful state to be ours, a state of condemnation, I hope you do not intend to continue there; you think not, sure, of abiding so, in such a state as abiding in death, a condemned person in death, under death. Take we the state of our case as it is. Let every one view himself about this matter. Oh, my soul, what dost think of thy state? Either thou art a justified or a condemned man. What dost thou think of thy state? If thou thinkest thou art condemned, what is to be done in this case? It is dreadful to think of taking up and abiding here. But we are told what is to be done. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John iii. 16, 17. Believe in the Son of God, and this brings you under his righteousness, under his shadow, and the protection of it. It shelters you, covers you. “He that believeth in the Son of God, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.” The sentence is past, though yet a reversible sentence—a sentence that may be reversed. Here our case is plain, to wit, that our main business must be to consider, do we believe in the Son of God? With such a faith as the gospel meaneth, with a lively, gospel faith. For if the gospel do mean one thing by faith, and I do understand quite another, it is not my mistaken notion that will save me. Do I think to be saved by a false notion? By a faith that is not only but notional, but my very notion also is false. That will not do. I am to consider, ergo, what this faith of mine infers. It signifies, or infers, my living to God, or it signifies nothing. How earnestly and emphatically is it inculcated in this Chapter, where the text

lies, that a dead faith cannot justify, and cannot save. A faith that hath no life in it, no spirit, no energy, no operativeness. It is not the works that proceed from faith that do justify, but it is a workingness in faith which is requisite to justification:—a faith that will work, not a dead faith. And we are, ergo, to know, that in the same instant when a man's faith is available for the obtaining of righteousness for him, it is available for the obtaining of life too, of a vital principle. God doth never give these separately, he always gives them together. This faith unites the soul with Christ. He is righteousness and life to it at once. His righteousness (as hath been told you,) never continues one moment the clothing of a carcase, of a dead soul. It is never designed to be the habit and apparel of such a soul. It is too rich a thing, too glorious a thing, to be so. There is no righteousness without having of Christ. "But he that hath the Son, hath life," at the same time when the soul is caught into union with him. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is made unto us holy life upon our being in him, as he is thereupon made righteousness to us. I Cor. i. 30. This is plain, intelligible truth to any that will use their understanding, and apply their minds to consider it. But to speak a little more distinctly of this matter of living to God, as it is a thing inferred from, and consequential upon, the faith that justifies, I shall note unto you a few particular distinct heads, under this first more general one, as,

(1.) That whenever the soul is brought to believe unto righteousness, (Rom. x. 10) it is an heart principle, an heart exercise, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And whenever he doth so, he then receives a new spiritual life, a divine life. He was alienated from the life of God before, but now he comes to participate in a certain sort of divine life. This is so plain, that nothing can be more. "He that findeth me, findeth life." There is a blessing pronounced upon waiting on this account. "Blessed is he (saith Christ, the Son of God, the eternal Logos, or wisdom, Prov. viii. 34,) that waiteth, that is continually waiting at the posts of my house, for he that findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." Findeth life; what doth that signify? It signifies that life in this world is a great rarity. A man may be long in quest of it, and not find it. It is a world lost in



death. "Death hath passed upon all by one, inasmuch as all have sinned." Rom. v. 12. If a poor soul that dwells in the shadow of death, casts about its wondering eyes and thoughts this way and that way, and saith, Where shall I find life? Why, (saith our Lord), he that findeth me, findeth life. All thy enquiries are in vain, and lost, and to no purpose, till thou meet with me. And you shall find me if you seek. "He that seeks me early, shall find me." ver. 17. "But if he finds me, he finds life." The very first meeting proves vital to him. For do but consider what is said in that same context, Rom. v. 12, 16, 17. Death had passed over all, reigned over all, unto condemnation. "All were dead," as the matter is also expressed, 2 Cor. v. 14. "If Christ died for all, then were all dead." Death passed over all. But how? Not only in law, but in fact. Pray observe it, all were dead, not only in law, but in fact too. Dead in trespasses and sins. Death did prevail, spread itself and its dismal horrid shadow over the very souls of men universally. And that by one—that one who first sinned, and so let in sin and death into the world. But then observe what is said in the 14th verse, That "that one was the figure of him who was to come." Which might signify, that as the former Adam did let in sin, and by it death upon all, so as to bring all not only under condemnation, but under an actual death, in the moral and more horrid sense, as death stands in opposition both to sanctity and to felicity. So as that in these respects it should reach the very souls of men, which, though they are naturally immortal, are morally (it is too plain) mortal; and not only mortal, but dead in the moral sense; to wit, as death stands in opposition to holy life, and as it stands in opposition to blessed life. So all were actually dead, as well as in law. Now if that first Adam was the figure of Him that was to come, pray consider in consequence what the second Adam was to be, and what he was to do. We are told that, "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was a quickening spirit." 1 Cor. xv. 45. So that now if you touch him, you touch life. If you meet with him, if you are joined with him, you are delivered by it. You have life not only in right, but in fact. As under the other Adam there was death, not only deserved, but as actually incumbent, death had passed over all. That is, here were the beginnings of eternal death, the beginnings of hell. Christ is the Lord from Heaven. If once you unite with him by that faith, that true faith of the gospel, you have

not only now a right to life, but you have the beginning of it, the inchoation of it in fact, as there was the beginning of death and hell in souls by the former Adam, the figure of this latter. And you are to reign in life by Jesus Christ. Life exults in you, springeth in your hearts, and is gradually springing up more and more towards eternal life. At least where that is not so perceptible, there are springings which import life, strugglings, and impatience of deadness. Whereas one that is entirely dead, is impatient of nothing—feels nothing. But if there be aimings and strugglings for life! Oh, this dead heart of mine; that I could find it to live more. This speaks life, a new life, which is working in you, and struggling in you, towards its perfection. And then you must not only gather here, that this living to God implies being made alive spiritually, a participant of an holy, divine life; but that it doth, in the next place,

(2.) Directly terminate on God. Here is life, living; and it is living unto God, which is the certain result and consequent of that faith that justifies and saves. It is, I say, a life that points at God; tends and works directly towards him. “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. vi. 11. I pray note the appositiveness and the emphasis of these words: “Dead to sin,” having no mind to live a sinning life any longer. “But alive to God:” here is a new life now given—a spiritual, divine life. But what is it? a loose and a vagrant thing, that works at random, no one can tell how or which way? No, far be it from thinking so. It is a life directly pointing upon God; carries the soul in all its powers and thoughts, and affections and inclinations, in one current towards God. “Alive to God through Jesus Christ.” There was nothing but deadness towards God before; life enough to every thing else, but only no inclination towards God;—no inclination, no concern with God. But now here is being made “alive to God through Jesus Christ.” And this is the effect and consequent of union to Christ by faith; when we are planted together with him into the likeness of his death, and into the likeness of his resurrection, and by a certain kind of conjunction, or being married to him, we come to bring forth fruit unto God. As it is in the foregoing verses of Rom. vi. And,

(3.) This is further to be noted concerning this living to God, as inferred by and consequential upon that faith that

justifies and saves; that the workings and stream and current of this life, and of all the powers of the soul so enlivened, are directed towards God, and by a friendly affection. I pray note that further: they all work towards God; this life, and every thing that belongs to it, tends and works, and beats and contends Godwards. And what is that which makes it do so? A friendliness of inclination towards Him, and a suitableness of spirit unto him. They are, therefore, whenever they come to believe unto righteousness, to be called "the friends of God"; for now the whole life, from the power of friendly inclination, comes to be directed Godward. And so living to him is not from necessity and terror and dread, but from choice and kind propension. And,

(4.) It is hereupon necessarily consequent, that the soul is obliged to be very much in the exercises of religion: because in all the acts of religion there is a direct and immediate application unto God. If it be brought by the power and tendency of that faith which justifies into a course of living unto God, my life must be a thing, in the whole of it, sacred unto God; then it cannot be but it must be taken up in the exercises of religion, because therein it hath to do with God directly and immediately, but more remotely and collaterally when one is otherwise employed. The exercises of religion must thereby be delectable to such an one, for he liveth unto God; that the faith that justifies him hath inferred: from that very inclination of mind (saith he) I must be with God. And hence it will be the most remote thing in all the world from such an one to count the exercises of religion wearisome. But he will surely have that habitual estimate; though the flesh may be many times weak and wayward, the spirit will be willing so far as it is influenced and animated by such a life. And, therefore, among the other exercises of religion which such a life, and that faith which hath justified a soul, must imply, those exercises of religion which I have been so lately pressing upon you will be looked upon as no cumbersome imposition. The exercises of family religion, as well as those of the closet and those of the church, they will all carry a pleasantness, a felicity in them, proportionable to the measure of life received.

And I would have you now to consider the providence of God. It is observable to you and me that I was called off from this subject by a general agreement of my brethren to speak to you of that about family religion before I had

finished this. So that that discourse did even fall into this before I had concluded it. Observe the providence of God in it. For by this means it comes to pass that I am cast upon it to give you the shortest and fullest directory how to manage that business of family religion, as well as other exercises of religion, faithfully, pleasantly, and to purpose. Thus in general, whenever you are to do acts of religion, I pray consider your state. What is my state, wherein I am now to appear before God in this or that religious performance or exercise? Shall I appear before him as a justified person, or as a condemned person? Oh what shall I do if I am to appear ordinarily under the latter notion, as a condemned person? I come with my family (whatever they be) myself a condemned wretch. It is true it is a case that needs prayer: but it is a very uncomfortable case, for all that, when a person must do so from day to day. And, therefore, look well to your state. This is a state (as was told you before) that is not to be rested in, upon any terms. Though you are not to throw off the exercises of religion because you suspect your state to be bad, but in continuing of them to hope and expect it will mend and be better. But I would have you consider what it is. If you must come always in approaching unto God as a condemned person, or being a condemned person (whether you apprehend it or no) you will always approach to him either with the heart of a slave, or the heart of a stone. Either with a misgiving, affrighted, amazed heart, the heart of a slave or a stupid senseless heart, dead and cold as a stone. And therefore, especially see that such exercises of religion, as well as all other, do proceed from the conjunct principles of faith and love, or faith and godliness, towards God, the very things that the text hath in it, as you see, believing and being the friend of God. See that such principles animate all your religion, your family religion, and all other; otherwise, it goes all for lost.

[1.] The principle of faith. Without that it is impossible for you to please God in any thing you do, Heb. xi. 6. By it you come to offer an acceptable sacrifice. By faith, Abel offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; a more acceptable one. The word is a fuller one, a sacrifice which had a fulness in it compared with Cain's. Without it all your sacrifices, all your duties, will be dead formalities and nothing else; neither pleasing to God, nor pleasing to you; there can be no pleasure in them on the one hand, nor on the other. It is true you must go on in a course

of such duties, for the law of nature (as was told you) obligeth you thereto, and stands unrepealed: for (as hath been said) to suppose a repeal of the law of nature, is to suppose that God would divest himself of his deity, and you should be divested of humanity, both at once. As long as God is God, and man is man, this part of the law of nature, which concerns this state of things between him and man, must be unalterable, and can never be repealed. It is that which his law requires of you most indispensably. You must go on yet, still aim at bettering your state, and getting into that faith by which you shall be exempt from that condemnation. Into it, (I say) into the power and spirit of it. Indeed here lies the snare and danger, that when people first find themselves urged, and possibly are brought to apprehend the reasonableness and necessity of going on in such a course of duty, they expect to be justified in that way. No, never till you reach that faith which unites you to Christ. But this may be your way towards that faith. If you should think that your dead spiritless duties are to supply the room of Christ, vital faith, and a living religion proceeding from thence, this is all a mistake, and the most dangerous one that can be thought. To be justified by our own works, and such pitiful dead works, it speaks, as the Apostle's determination of the matter is, Gal. v. 4, 5, that "Christ is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." There is an eternal law binding you to such duty, and which is invariable and unalterable. But what then? Must you think of being justified by it? No; then Christ will be of none effect, and ye are fallen from grace. But we through the Spirit do wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. The great hopes of righteousness we wait for by faith, and by that alone, through the Spirit, the Holy Ghost, prompting and teaching us so to do. But this is the stupid, senseless, absurdity which hath seized the minds of multitudes, that when their works are least worth, then they expect most from them. When they are all worth nothing, they account of being justified by them; when they are all dead works. When a man's soul comes to be made alive, by how much the more he lives so much the more he sees that the best works he is capable of in this state and region of mortality can have nothing in them (though they have never so much of spiritual and divine life) unto the purpose of justification; for they never were designed to jostle Christ out of his office. Nor are the offices of Christ and the Holy Ghost to mingle or be

confounded, and made to interfere with one another, upon any terms. Such living works (when living) serve for other necessary and most excellent purposes, but not to justify us. They serve to qualify us for communion with God, and to enable us to serve and glorify him in the world, and to carry on a preparedness for us more and more for an inheritance among them that are sanctified, or with the spirits in light. See to that, that in all the exercises of religion (though while it is not so, they are not to be forborn and laid aside in families, closets, or otherwise yet) you aim to get that principle of faith which may mend your state, and make that good, and make you capable now (having your consciences sprinkled by Jesus Christ from dead works) of serving the living God, of living service suitable to the living God. And,

[2.] That other conjunct principle, love. Friendly affection, see that animates all your worship too, that your souls be carried towards God by friendly inclination: as was said, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." If you have that faith by which you believe unto righteousness, it will work by love; it carries your souls unto God by a mighty power of love. This is living to God, the certain consequence of that belief unto righteousness; or unto which God doth impute righteousness. And how applicable is this to the purpose aforementioned, i. e. that all the exercises of religion, and especially of family religion, be animated by that principle of love to God, or friendliness towards God, faith. Do but take notice, whereas the text speaks of Abraham, (he was the instance) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Pray see what the inclination was that carried him to take that care of his family that he did, (Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19.) "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I intend to do?" He is my friend, I cannot hide things from my friend; and why should he be looked upon as such a friend? "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, to serve me." Abraham will take this care of his family, because he is my friend.

See, therefore, that this principle goes into it, otherwise all goes for lost. Why are you so careful? Why it is kindness to my friend, my greatest and best friend. I see his interest low in the world, he is little called upon or sought after. There are few among men that will own him. But I do

it, because he is my friend, and because he hath captivated my very heart, and made that in some measure friendly unto him. That I may preserve, and that I may revive to my very uttermost his languishing interest in a lost world. He hath but a few friends, but I and my house will serve him; we will shew our friendliness towards him, whosoever do or will not do.

It comes in my way to give you this short, but full, directory in reference to the great subject we were so lately on. See that it be managed by that faith which will always justify. And see that it be influenced by a principle of love and friendly inclination towards God, and because you cannot endure his interest should be lost by your neglect, at least so far as you can signify any thing to the promoting and preserving it.

But here it may be said, that all the performances of an unjustified and unregenerate person are sin. But what? Are men obliged to sin? And should we urge them to sin? This admits of a very plain and easy answer. For,

1. There can be no declining of such performances when the injunction is in the law before us; but it must be upon a resolution not to do them. A resolution must be taken: I will not do them. There will be sin in doing, but there will be far greater in resolving not to do. The sin that is in doing, is only in the wrong manner, that I do not such a thing aright. But resolving not to do, is sin even in the very substance of that resolution.

How vast is the difference between that which is in the very substance sinful, and that which is only sinful in the circumstance. And,

2. This is to be said too, that not only the praying, the hearing, and the other acts of natural worship done by an unjustified, unregenerate person, are sin, but all their other actions too. The very ploughing of the wicked is sin. And what, therefore, must the whole unregenerate world do nothing? Are they all to sit still? If they eat they sin; if they drink they sin. Must they, therefore, starve, and neither eat nor drink? So absurd is such a pretence against doing such a duty, though it have no tendency at all to recommend us to God. And, indeed, were the duties of regenerate persons themselves never so entirely vital and holy, they would signify nothing for the purpose of recommending us to God. They do proceed from the Holy Ghost, but we must not confound the offices of Christ and the Holy Ghost. It is the work of the Holy Ghost to sanctify us, and qualify us for communion

with God. It is the work of Christ to justify us by his blood, and by his righteousness applied to us. It was Christ that was crucified for us. And, indeed, in reference to the matter of justification, even the most holy lives of the best of saints, they do more by positive influence for the justifying of Christ, than for the justifying of us. He is the eternal wisdom of God. And wisdom is justified of her children. We justify him; we shew that he did not undertake a vague thing, or come upon a vain errand into this world, when he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." When his end and design is so far answered, wisdom is justified. This appears to have been the work and design of wisdom, that it was not a foolish undertaking; for it hath succeeded, it doth prosper, and shall more and more do so. By positive influence, it more justifies him than it does us. Our justification comes quite another way, being justified freely by his blood. All the holiness in the world could never make him amends for my having been once a sinner, and thereby incurred the divine wrath. It is true we have communion with God, walking in the light as he is in the light. But it is "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, that cleanseth us from all sin," so as that we may come guiltless into that communion. 1 John i. 7. The truth is, that the doctrine of faith, and righteousness, and justification, have been talked of, and tossed into mere airy and insipid notions. Though so excellent, so glorious doctrines, Christians have learned to dispute them into nothing: even as rich and generous wine, thrown from vessel to vessel till it becomes vapid and spiritless, and even without savour. It is the greater pity and shame it should be so, when the truth in these matters is so very plain and so very easy, that he that runs may read it. But many have had a greater mind to dispute and contend about these things, than to draw spirit and life and nutriment to their souls out of them.

In the exercises of religion, there is that in the faith by which they are justified and saved, that will prompt unto them, if that faith have place in them. And we are concerned to see to it that it have, that is to look to our state. And if we cannot conclude it to be for the present good, not to sit down there; for to sit down destitute of such a faith, is to sit down in the midst of death and under condemnation. That is a fourth thing which, living to God as a consequent of that faith which justifies and will finally save, doth carry in it of friendship towards God. Living to God, inferred by



such a faith, doth include in it a continual disposition to the exercises of religion, as the result of that faith, and as proceeding from an amiable and friendly affection towards God. But,

(5.) This living to God, as it is consequential of faith which justifies and will save, continually obligeth to do nothing against him to our uttermost or with self-allowance. Herein the reason of the thing speaks itself: if my whole life be a dedicated, devoted life, and all the powers and properties and actions belonging thereunto be so devoted, then there is nothing to be done against him who is the end and terminus of this life. I can allow myself to do nothing, I am surprized if ever I do any thing; it is an unintended, indeliberate thing, if any thing be done to the prejudice of his interest, that any thing diminisheth or soils his glory, or obscures and darkens it. It will be a grief to the soul, if it be a believing soul, (if it believe, by that faith which he justifies and saves,) that he is offended. For there is hereupon that entireness of self-dedication to him, that there is nothing of us left, excepted from obligation, or that can be directed against him or his interest in any kind. I can do nothing (saith the apostle) against the truth, but for it. I can do nothing; it is a certain sort of powerful impotency, an impotency that speaks power. I can do nothing against the truth; there is a positive principle obliges and prompts me otherwise. So the apostle, Gal. v. 17, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would:" indeed in neither kind. But it is plain the latter by the scope of that context must be meant, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" that is the thing there to be proved, that walking in the Spirit is a certain remedy against fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. How is that proved? Why, saith he, though it be true that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, yet the Spirit doth so strive and lust against the flesh, that ye cannot do what, according to your carnal, corrupt inclinations, you otherwise would. You cannot, you are inhibited; for you look upon yourselves as devoted ones; your life is consecrated, and all the powers relating thereto. And therefore, they cannot be used to counterwork the great design you have undertaken and engaged to serve. If I live unto God pursuantly unto faith in that gospel, then I cannot deliberately do any thing which hath a direct tendency to depress his interest or darken his glory.

(6.) This faith, as it infers our living to God, allows us

not to have any separate interest from him. The maxim of that great Pagan, "All things of friends are common," obtains strongly in this case. There is a friendship between God and me. I must not have a separate interest. His interest is mine, and my interest is his. So that if my life be a sacred, devoted life, when I buy, when I sell, when this and that way I am employed in secular and civil negotiations, it will be looked upon as a most unlawful and wicked presumption to make myself mine own end in all this. No, God is my end; I live unto God. And that faith by which I am justified, obliges and prompts me hereunto; that is, so and so I do, that I may glorify God. Not finally that I may please myself, and indulge my own inclinations, and satisfy any appetite of mine; whether it be an appetite to live in pleasure, or whether it be an appetite to grow rich and great in the world. No, by no means; my life is a sacred thing, a devoted thing. "To me to live is Christ;" and so all the actions of human and civil life must terminate in God, as the end, if indeed I live to God. For if that be my end, it is my last end; and the last end is that into which all others do run. And whatsoever doth not serve the last end, doth really and finally serve none at all. And so all those actions are lost actions; i. e. they cannot come properly under the notion of human actions. If they do not refer to the last end, they are beside any end. It is the last end that infers whatever there is of order in this world; all runs into confusion that is not referred to the last end.

We are concerned to look carefully to our hearts about this, that we suffer not any secret dispositions and workings of spirit contrary hereunto. To go from day to day, and I cannot answer it to my conscience, that it is God that I have been serving; serving him in my calling, and not myself; Oh, in what peace can such an one lie down at night, when he hath been playing the idolater all day, and usurping upon Majesty—the Majesty of heaven? For it is God's prerogative to be all things, the last as well as the first, "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." For a creature born but the other day, lately sprung up into being, to rival the universal Lord of heaven and earth, and to take upon him as if he were God—I will be my own end, pursue an interest of my own, separately and apart from God—this is to pluck himself from under the rule of the Universal Ruler, and to say, I will have no Lord over me; I am my own, and not his. But a man's having devoted his life, so

as that he can be said to live to God, is necessarily exclusive of all this. And thereupon again,

(7.) This living to God, consequent upon justifying and saving faith, will oblige and prompt us to take in God with us in all our affairs; to go about nothing without him; for we are to act dependently in every thing; to commit our way unto the Lord. Committing is believing; committing is trusting. And we are to cast all our burden upon him, and all our care upon him, expecting he will care for us. This living to God includes. Every man, as he is called therein, let him abide with God. 1. Cor. vii. 24. Implying, you have nothing to do in all this world, which you cannot better do with God than without him. You have no business to do in all this world, wherein you need to sever and part yourselves from God. No, take him in with you, as your first and last. And if we design him as our end, so as that he be our last, it will necessarily infer the other too. If I am to act for him in every thing, I must act from him; otherwise I act unproportionably. God cannot be served but with his own. What is to be done for his glory, is to be done by his power. This is that trust in God which allows us not to lean to our own understanding, but to commence with him in all things, and have our eye keep quick turns with Him; ever and anon to look up and apply ourselves to him, and appeal to him; Lord, thou seest that I am aiming at thee, as I do depend on thee for conduct and support all along in my way. And,

(8.) This living to God, as it is consequent of such a faith, implies, and must bring about, our enjoying of all things in him and with him, and in order to him. As well what we enjoy, as what we do, is all in him, if our life be once a devoted life. For we are to consider life, not only as an active principle, but also as a fruition. And a life devoted to God, doth as well enjoy all things in God, whatsoever he doth enjoy, as all for him. So that this will be the sense of a believing soul (which is prompted by that faith to a course of living unto God), "I have no enjoyment under the sun, that carries any taste or relish in it without God." Many will say, "Who will shew us any good?" But Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and this shall be more to me than the increase of corn and wine and oil. When men can please themselves with the creature (excluding God, setting God aside), solace themselves with this and that creature-comfort - apart

from God, neglecting and disregarding God; this is quite beside the genius of a life sacred to God,—most contrary to the notion of living to Him. For life is the principle by which we enjoy what is enjoyable, as well as the principle by which we do or practise what is practicable. And that is one thing which that faith which is justifying and will save, doth infer, which carries very great appearance and expressions of friendliness in it, living to God. The most friendly thing we are capable of doing. And it appears so, if we consider the several mentioned things that do concur in it. But,

2. It infers too, in the next place, liberty towards God, as well as living to him. The next thing to life, is liberty. A life dedicated to God, is inferred by a vital faith; and liberty is as certainly and necessarily inferred. That is a liberty and freedom towards him,—and what is more friendly? By that you estimate friendship; to wit, by liberty and freedom towards one another, which is the certain effect and consequent of vital trust. There is no such thing as real living faith, but from a spirit of faith, of which we read, 2 Cor. iv. 13. “We having the same spirit of faith,” the same that David had (he is quoting David there in that place;) “I believed, therefore have I spoken,” saith the apostle Paul, as David had said so many hundred years before. We also believe, and, therefore, speak, having the same spirit of faith. So that there never was faith in the world, among them that did really and truly believe in God, but it was from one and the same spirit of faith, working uniformly in the several ages and successions of time. The same spirit of faith which David had in his time, the apostle had in his time. And he doth not speak of himself separately, but including other Christians, “We having the same spirit of faith.” Lay this scripture to that other in the foregoing chapter, 2 Cor. iii. 17, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Where that Spirit is not, the soul is in bonds. They that are not under grace, but under a condemning law (which they must be, by standing under a covenant of works), they are slaves; that covenant “genders to bondage,” (Gal. iv. 24.) the covenant of grace unto liberty. And so all that are of the spiritual seed, born of the Spirit (as all true believers are) they are the children of “that Jerusalem which is free, and is the mother of us all.” Hence, from that faith which instates a man in the grace of the covenant, he hath a freedom in his spirit towards God. And do but mark here-

upon the connexion between these two things, in that of the Psalmist, (Psalm lxii. 8.) "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him." He that hath no vital trust in God, is shut up towards God, his spirit is pent in, he hath no liberty towards God. When he goes to pray, or applies himself to any other work, he is like a man that cannot find his hands. He is manacled and bound, hand and foot. The spirit that rules in him, is a spirit of bondage: but the spirit of adoption, the spirit of sons, is a spirit of liberty and freedom. He can be free with God, as a man can be free with his friend. And it is friendly when he can be so; when he can pour out his soul to him, make his complaint, spread his desires, and represent his grievances. You can do so towards such an one, towards whom you bear a friendly mind, but not to a stranger. And,

3. Such a faith as justifies, and will save, infers a communication of secrets. This it infers, that you do not affect to cover or keep any thing secret from God. You cannot only use a liberty in expressing your desires, and making your complaints and moans to him, but you have nothing at all that you would reserve and hide from him, or make a secret to him. This, faith prompts unto. You very well know, that when we communicate a secret, that which we would have be a secret, we seek to commit and entrust it to a friend. I trust such a man with my secrets, that is friendship. Such a friendly mind accompanies faith towards God. I do not desire that any thing should be a secret with me from him. A guilty soul, that hath none of this faith, cries, Oh, give me a corner, give me a cloud, give me darkness, in which I may be wrapt up. When it is said "there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves:" it is the thing they seek,—that is the thing they covet. But the believing soul saith, I would have no secret between me and this great friend, nothing that I would reserve as a secret from him. So he is pleased to express friendliness to us, by communicating his secrets, by unfolding to us that gospel which was a secret from ages, and from generations by-past. So our Lord Christ argues his own friendliness to his disciples: "I have called you friends; for all things that have been made known unto me of my Father, I have made known unto you." John xv. 15. As you have largely heard. The same way are we to express friendliness to him. And faith will infer it, that we can freely open to him all our secrets, and

never be upon our reserves towards him. And not only because we cannot help it, but because we choose it. It is not a thing unavoidably imposed upon us; but it is a thing that a friendly mind prompts us to, to tell him all our hearts. We would have no design which should not be under his eye, and about which we would not communicate with him. This the faith that justifies will infer. I should have insisted a little in the next place upon this,

4. That it obliges to the strictest watchfulness against the insinuations of this world into our hearts; because the friendship of this world is enmity against God. I pray bear it away with you. I must in faithfulness warn you of it. If you consider it not, all friendly concern with God is at an end. To have the world follow you into your closets, and into family duties, and into the public solemnities of worship, and you still carry the world with you, a worldly heart, a worldly mind, and worldly desires—this is very dangerous; for, know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity against God? When it is said, “Let your conversation be without covetousness,” it is added, “for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Heb. xiii. 5. There are five negatives, never, never, never, never, never. What doth that imply? It implies thus much,—that if yet I will allow, and indulge and cherish in my soul a predominant worldly inclination, I care not for the divine presence in comparison of this world. It signifies, that the world is more to me than God and the divine presence, and the glory of it; and that I had rather he should forsake me, than I should forsake this world. A worldly inclination is for this a less tolerable and more unallowable thing, because it contributes nothing to a man’s enjoying more of this world, for there is nothing to be done in the pursuit of any honest design in the world, but I may better do it in subordination to God, than in opposition. I may use my understanding as well, and take in God with me, and keep myself in the divine presence, and continue united and cleaving to him in heart and spirit. And, therefore, if a worldly mind do draw a soul off from God, this is to be worldly for worldliness sake; it profiteth a man nothing, it plucks him away from God to no purpose. Any thing that were lawful and honest and just, might as well have been done, designed, and enjoyed, notwithstanding my intercourse with God. Faith is

our victory over the world; that faith, therefore, which doth justify a man, and set all things right between God and him, it must needs fortify against worldly inclinations, and make this world despicably little, and render God always gloriously great in mine eyes.

## SERMON XXXVI.\*

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

THUS I have evinced the truth of the doctrine of this text, by shewing you at large what there is of friendliness in this matter on God's part, and what there is on their part whom he brings to believe. It is the use of all which remains to be insisted upon and recommended to you. Wherein I shall not be diffuse, having had occasion to insist very largely, by way of use, upon a subject which you know was very congenerous to this, and of great affinity to it. But very instructive inferences it very obviously affords us. As,

1. We may collect hence, That bad as this world is, God hath yet some portion in it, to wit, a people peculiar to himself. Here he hath some that do believe in him, that he counts righteous, that he calls and treats as his "friends." And these are great peculiarities. You may see it is not his design (though this world have been all in a dreadful apostasy from God) to quit his interest in it, or quite to abandon it, and lay aside all kind thoughts towards it. This, you may see, is remote from him. It is not his intention, that though all have been in transgression against him, yet that all shall be involved in one condemnation, and in one ruin. But he hath his portion, that he doth and will exempt out of the common ruin, that shall not lie under an everlasting doom and condemnation with the rest of the perishing world. Those that "shall not be condemned with the world," as the Scripture expression is, 1 Cor. xi. 32. He hath in this world some friends that he will treat and deal with as such, and these must not lie under everlasting condemnation. His friends are such as do believe him, and as

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believing in him are not condemned, as, John v. 24. And they "shall never come into condemnation," for they are "passed from death unto life." He justifies, he imputes righteousness to them, as is expressed here. And "Who is he that condemneth" when God justifies? Rom. viii. And see what triumphs are erected in that chapter to the grace of God. "Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?" No tribulation, no affliction, no principality; nothing that is present, nothing that is to come, shall ever separate them.

Methinks it is a comfortable, pleasant thought, that, taking a prospect of this world, beholding it so generally with a dark, dismal, and gloomy shadow of death; beholding it lying in wickedness, and under the power of him who is called the god of this world, that yet God should have a select and peculiar people in it. What a glorious design was this, the forming of a society out of such a world as this, as should be called the friends of God. It is pleasant, and it ought to seem a great thing to our thoughts, that it should be so. And sure it must put us upon reflection: Oh am I of that happy society, of that select society? Such a society God hath in this world, that is out of doubt; a society of men that he calls his friends, that bear his character. That (I say) is out of all doubt. Whether we be of that number or no?—it is pity that should be a doubt. And methinks it should not be very easy to our minds while it is so. While this is with us a doubtful case, and we cannot speak clearly to this question, Am I of that society justly called the friends of God? But,

2. We may further collect hence, that as God has such a peculiar people in this world, who do specially belong to him, so this people are distinguished from the rest of the world by some very peculiar excellencies. Here is not a distinction without a difference. But there is a mighty difference, not which he finds, but which he makes between man and man, that people that are peculiar to him, and the rest of the world. There are two differing excellencies by which they are distinguished in the text: Believing in God, and friendship towards him. For the matter is plain enough in itself, and you have heard it largely evinced, that this friendship cannot but be mutual; that they are not merely passive in this friendship, or the objects of it, but the subjects too. Here is this great distinguishing excellency to be found in these sort of men, that they are such as do believe in God. Abraham believed God; this is not



spoken of him as a single person, but as the father of the faithful, as we may have occasion to take notice, the Scripture speaks expressly, again and again. And this is one of the characters of this people, the society of God's friends: they are a society of believers. A very great excellency, in such a world as this.

*Object.* But some may say in their own minds, What is there in it that doth notify and signalize such a people, as if they were upon that account more excellent than their neighbours? Methinks this believing it is but a light and trivial matter, that that should be the dignification of such a peculiar people which shall be called God's own, select and severed from all the rest of the world. What a small matter does this believing seem to be.

*Ans.* Indeed it cannot but seem so, according to the notion that too generally prevails, concerning believing. With many it is but a notion, an airy thing, that hovers in their minds, but makes no impression, no more alters them than a puff of wind would do a stone wall. With many others it is not so much as a notion. What multitudes are there that will be called Christians, but have no notion at all in their minds, correspondent to that name! No notion of the things they profess to believe. Their minds are wrapt up in a total ignorance of all the things that are to be the peculiar and most special matters of their faith. I do not wonder (when we consider what is made of faith in so great a part of the Christian world) that that of Solifidian should go for so ignominious and reproachful a name. Men have made so very light and small a matter of faith, that it may very well go for a very diminishing character to be a Solifidian, to be only a believer. Indeed men have reduced the business of faith to so little a trifle, that I know no reason, as to them, why Solifidian and Nolifidian should not signify alone to be only a believer, and no believer at all. Men have diminished even to nothing, a thing which with the most hath no object, and with the rest too generally no power, no efficacy, no spirit, no life; and it had as good be nothing, as do nothing, make no change upon their hearts.

But if it were considered what faith (the faith of the Gospel, which God calls faith, and upon which God calls believers his friends)—If (I say) it be considered what it hath in it, and what goes along with it, what it carries in it, and what it carries with it, it will appear a mighty thing, a glorious thing, and such as that one would not wonder

that such a select peculiar people of God should be distinguished by it; that it should be the differencing thing, one of the main differences from the rest of the world. For it is such a thing as plucks a man quite off from all this world. Men are all engulfed naturally in the spirit of this world. This faith severs them, raises them quite into another sphere, into an invisible world; and it is to them (wherever it is) the substance of the things that they hope for, and the evidence of the things which they see not. It plucks men quite off from themselves. It is a self-emptying thing. Divides and severs a man from himself. It is that by which he ceaseth to trust in himself, to depend upon himself, to have any confidence in himself, and so come to think the most debasingly of himself, yea the most terribly. So that he not only despises, but he dreads himself, and flies from himself, and out of himself. And then it unites him with God and with Christ, by whom only he can take hold of God. Through Christ we believe in God. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Faith passeth through Christ unto God, as the Spirit speaks, 1 Pet. i. 21. and John xiv. 1. It is that, therefore, whereby the soul seizes and possesses (according to its capacity) the all-comprehending good communicable, and communicated in and by Christ. That is, Christ dwells in the heart by this faith. And thereupon souls being rooted and grounded in love, are filled with all the fulness of God. If you think but of what is carried with it (the many things that were formerly instanced in) they make this faith appear to be a most glorious thing in the soul wherever it hath place. It is that by which a person commits himself, intrusts himself, wholly and entirely into the hands of another. That by which it trusts one that it never saw, even with the very soul, and all its concernments. It is a venture for eternity upon this apprehension and knowledge, that if there be error or mistake in the case, it is never to be corrected, a matter never to be altered. It is a trusting with one's soul one whom we know we have offended; one of the most difficult and arduous things in the world, when we know we have displeased him, yet to trust him and cast all our care upon him; yea, upon one that doth afflict us, doth things very ungrateful to us, and who we know will at last bring us down into the very dust of death. And yet the soul saith, Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him. It is such a thing as governs the whole life of them that have it; for the just do live by it. As others live by their senses, those

live by their faith upon an invisible God, an invisible Christ, and an invisible world. We know not what belongs to believing, if we understand nothing of all this; and then this faith is a riddle. It is not to be wondered at that this should be one of the peculiar and characteristical excellencies of that people whom God doth sever and make peculiar to himself from the rest of men. And their friendliness to God is another of those excellencies. And by how much the fewer his friends are, so much the nobler and more glorious a thing is it to be one of them. To bear a friendly mind towards God in a world where he is invisible, almost forgotten, and where so few regard him, look after, or concern themselves with him, this is a very peculiar excellency. That when the generality of men have their minds and hearts, their thoughts and affections, wholly engaged and taken up about things of sense, there appears so much the more of a nobler temper and spirit in these men: No, I must have somewhat else for the object of my friendly love, the love of my delight, (which is friendly love) I must have somewhat else to delight in, and wherein to solace and finally to satisfy myself. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and whom do I desire on earth besides thee?" Ps. lxxiii. 25. That people that do peculiarly belong to God are distinguished from the rest of the world by very peculiar excellencies.

3. We may further learn hence, that a justified state, and a state of friendship with God, are commensurate, or do measure one another. They are of equal extent; God hath no friends but whom he justifies. And he justifies none but who are his friends. That is, he doth actually account, or actually render them righteous by imputing righteousness to them who are brought into actual friendship with him. To wit, he is then statedly in friendship with them, when there is a friendship in-wrought, even in the same instant, in their hearts towards him. It is very true, indeed, we have such an expression as that of justifying "the ungodly," Rom. v. 6. So you have abundance of expressions in Scripture which must be understood just as that must. That the blind do see, the deaf do hear, and the lame do walk, and the like. That is, they who immediately before were such, are now made capable of all these acts which do bespeak another state. An ungodly man is justified; we are told in the same context that he is justified by faith: faith is not the act of an ungodly man continuing so; but as the blind are said to see, that is, sight being given to

them when they were immediately before blind. And the lame to walk, to wit, who were immediately before lame, but now are made to walk. So an ungodly person is justified; one that was immediately before ungodly. But in the same instant when God imputes righteousness to him, he gives light, a new spirit, a new nature to him; for he justifies him as a believer. The word rendered “ungodly” there signifies an unworking man: but faith is the highest act of worship that the human soul is capable of. For therein I actually acknowledge and adore the truth, and wisdom, and power, and goodness of that God unto whom I intrust myself. There is no higher worship than that which is carried in faith. And therefore, that such an one should be at the same time a believer and an unworshipping person, is to say and unsay the same thing with and the same breath, and even in the same words. Therefore understand the matter so, that a justified state is a state of friendship with God: which includes a friendly disposition introduced in the same instant, in-wrought into our souls, towards God. That faith being in-wrought which would take in love, which virtually comprehends love in it, so that it doth not do its first and most essential act without the ingrediency of it; to wit, unite the soul with God in Christ. When the soul comes into that union with God in Christ, that is its conversion and union at the same time. Doth it unite with him, and retain an aversion at the same time? That is impossible. But that aversion is turned into propension, and that propension is only faith working by love. “The grace of God was exceeding abundant towards me (saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. i. 14.) with faith,” &c. He being the fountain of all grace, and the object too of these graces. If any dream, therefore, of being in a justified state, while as yet they retain an habitual fixed aversion from God, and bear no friendly mind towards him, this is a very idle dream, a very delusive dream, a dream which, if a man awake not out of it betimes, will prove a delusion unto his ruin and destruction. It is a misrepresenting of the Christian religion throughout, to suppose that it should be only a provision made to change the states of men, without changing their hearts; to bring men into a justified estate, and yet to leave them in a state of enmity to God, and disaffection towards him, that they care not to come at him to know him, to converse with him.

This is the notion that hath so vastly spread through the Christian world. Men think that they are justified by

Christ's dying, and that they need not care, nor concern themselves, whether there be any change made in them, yea or no. But as I told you formerly upon this subject, Christ's righteousness is never the clothing of a carcase continuing so. But when he doth clothe and invest any with his righteousness, he doth put a spirit of life into them at the same time, and that spirit of life breathes in a friendly love. Men are generally justified under the Gospel upon the same terms and in the same way wherein the great father of believers was, to wit, upon their believing God. He hereupon immediately counts them righteous, but at the same time inspiring them with that friendly love towards him which as a new vital principle habituates them and facilitates them unto all the duties and actions of that holy devoted life, that life of friendliness towards God wherein they are to spend the residue of their days.

In his first treatment with Abraham, he propounds himself to him as God all-sufficient, and at the same time draws his heart to close with him, and puts into him such a disposition with it to walk with him, and be perfect. I am God, all-sufficient, "walk before me, and be thou perfect," or upright, Gen. xvii. 1. He doth not vary his method: this is his way of treatment with all others. As he dealt with the father of believers, so he hath with all believers besides. If once they are willing to abandon and quit all things else to which their sense had addicted and inclined their hearts, so as they now resolve on and close with the great objects of faith, they pass into that sphere that is composed and made up of invisible objects, such as faith hath to do with, and principally himself as he is in Christ: hereupon he imputes righteousness to them, that faith carrying in it that propension and inclination of heart to him, whereby they are made his friends, and inclined to all friendly deportment towards him afterwards. Therefore, take we heed lest any impose upon themselves with an imagination that they shall be justified, saved from condemnation, and entitled to eternal life, by only an external righteousness imputed to them without the concomitancy of a friendly disposition of heart in-wrought in them towards God through Christ. And again,—

4. We may further collect hence, that by this measure a great many have very great cause to doubt and to dread their state; to have not only doubtful, but very dreadful thoughts concerning their state: for how plain a thing is it,

that as God hath some friends in this world, so plain a thing is it, that he hath but few friends in this world. And then if friendship towards God and a justified state do measure one another, and are commensurate, there is too much cause for multitudes, not only to have doubtful, but very dreadful thoughts about the state of their case. They are to make their estimate by two such things as are most eminent and obvious to any one's thoughts in friendship; that is, converse with my friend, and service to my friend: if these two things are to be the measure by which we are to make an estimate, how few friends has the blessed God in this world.

(1.) How few that care for his converse. Is not this the common account given of the temper and genius of the sons of men, and of their state together, Eph. ii. 12. "without God in the world." Let every one consult his own heart, lay his hand upon his heart, and consider;—Is not this still my case, to be without God in the world from day to day? Do not I transact my affairs without God? Do not I begin my days and end them one after another as they pass, without God? or, if I have any thing to do with him, is it as a friend? If I have any thoughts of him, are they friendly thoughts, pleasant, complacential, and reverential ones? for I can only have such if I have those that are due towards such a friend; adoring thoughts, that are thereupon grateful and pleasant as they are full of duty towards him. Do I love his presence, delight in approaching to him? Can I please myself to shut myself up in a corner, in a closet with him, to pour out my soul to him, and to receive his communications to me? How little of this is there among us! And then,—

(2.) If we consider the other thing mentioned, most eminent and obvious in friendship, service to one's friend. All that I can do is too little for my friend; his interest is my interest. He with whom I am entire in friendship, I cannot have a separate interest from. I cannot serve an interest of mine own with the neglect, much less with the disservice, of the interest of my friend. What expression is there among us of a friendly mind towards God in this kind! as the apostle speaks concerning Christ (and we cannot consider him but we must consider God in him)—"For me to live is Christ," Philip. i. 21. I have no business to live in this world but for God; I have devoted myself to him, from a principle of friendly love. This world is nothing to me, but for him; I would not covet to live in it, but upon his account, that I may know him more and serve him better,

and be more conformed to him, and fitted to dwell with him for ever. Therefore serving of his interest is your business, your life is a living to God. The whole stream of all the designs and of all the actions of your life running directly towards God, that you may live to God; which doth comprehend the whole business of life; Gal. ii. 19. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." All my life is to run into him, to terminate in him; so it cannot but be, where there is a friendly mind towards him. These are trying things, and they lie in a very little compass, so that we do not need to go far if we make our judgment or estimate by the measure that hath been mentioned, what things they are that do distinguish the peculiar people of God from other men; certainly this will bring the matter to a very narrow and short issue. We say, none are in a justified state but God's friends; that friendship to God cannot be an empty name; it must signify nothing if it doth not signify these two great things, to wit, a desire of his converse, and an inclination of mind to do him all the service that we are capable of doing him, from the dictate and instinct of friendly love. I cannot be kept from him, because he is my friend. I must do for him all I can, because he is my friend. Upon all this you may also gather, what in the close and conclusion of so copious a discourse I am by way of exhortation to recommend to you, to wit, these two great things contained in the text, Faith in God, and Friendship with him.

## SERMON XXXVII\*.

JAMES II. 23.

*And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*

I TOLD you the last time, that I intended to put a period to the long discourse on this subject at this time. And herein, by way of summary, I have these two great things contained in the text, seriously to recommend unto you,—faith in God, and friendship with him. I cannot suppose that, foreknowing the subject, so many should come together

\* Preached Feb. 25, 1693-4.

without a design, that if any thing should be said applicable to so great and high purposes, they will lay it up in order to future use and benefit. It would be a hard supposition, and have too much of uncharitableness in it, for me to give any place in my thoughts that you should be generally come together without any such design; I hope there are none come with so vain and wanton a mind, as only to throw away an hour here that they know not what else to do with; or to gaze at one another, or to criticise, or spend their judgment upon what they hear, without any more ado, and to go as they came.

If any two things should be pitched upon in any of our thoughts, of greater importance than other, what can you think of greater than these two which you find comprehended together in this text—faith in God, and friendship with him. It cannot be, if we have any design for eternity and another world, that we can look upon these things with neglect. Nothing can be of greater concernment; even to the judgment of your own consciences, they must appear so as they really and truly are: and, methinks, we should be all within ourselves about it. Do we think it can go well hereafter with unbelievers, or with God's enemies? In reference to each of these, somewhat in the conclusion of this discourse is to be said, by way of direction and exhortation.—

1. As to the former, faith in God. You are not to understand this (though it be believing in God that the text speaks of) exclusive of Christ, but as including him; that is, implying and supposing him to be the mediate object of your faith, while God is pointed at as the final and ultimate object: according to the apostle, 1 Pet. i. 21, "Who through him (meaning Christ) do believe in God." Those that are believers in a gospel sense, who through Christ do believe in God, their faith being carried through Christ as the mediator and the mediate object, unto God as the terminative and ultimate object. It was this believing in God through Christ the promised seed, that Abraham the great father of believers is characterized by in this text, and in divers other places of scripture. And such a faith as his was you are to endeavour that you may find alive and in exercise in each of your souls. For it is not a dead faith that will pass for faith in the divine estimate, as this chapter more expressly and largely discourses. With what contempt doth it speak of a dead faith, making it but a carcase. "As the body without the spirit is dead," so is that faith that is not work-



ing, that is not energetical, that hath no energy, no life with it. So, you know, the chapter closes.

With some, I told you, it is but a notion. I fear with many besides (it may be many more) it may be less than that. Men call themselves believers when they have not such a notion in their minds of the things that they pretend to believe. With some a notional faith serves their turn; with others what is less, a mere nominal faith. It will do us no good to have that in us which we call faith, unless God calls it so too. And know, therefore, that those who have not that faith which in the evangelical sense, and by that test, will go for such, they must go among the unbelievers, let them call themselves, or let other men call them, what they will. And then for excitation in this matter, let me but offer these two awakening things to be considered.

1. That considering a man to be found an unbeliever under the gospel, which claims and challenges his faith, that is, which claims to be believed by a correspondent faith unto what it contains and carries in it; he hath the guilt of all his other sins still continuing, and bound down close upon him. An unbelieving person is an unjustified person. So such must understand the state of the case. I have all the weight of that guilt upon me, which I have been contracting all my days. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." Righteousness is not imputed upon other terms. Will any man think to make for himself a new gospel, to confront that gospel which our Lord hath sent among us? An unbeliever, and unjustified. So represent the case to yourselves. And what doth that signify? It signifies, that the holy jealous God holds me guilty of all that I have been doing against him all my days. I have lived long as "without God in the world," and he holds me guilty. I have lived to myself, and not to him, and he holds me guilty. Neglected him, disobeyed him, and lived in affront to him, and he holds me guilty. Every thing that I have used and enjoyed in this world, it hath been by usurpation; it hath been without right, as to him, without allowance. I ought to have eaten and drank, and looked up, acknowledging and adoring him whose fulness filleth all in all; but God was not in all my thoughts: and for all this he holds me guilty. I have lived a prayerless life, an ungodly life, alienated from the life of God; this hath been my way and course, and he holds me guilty. What an amazing thing is this! As long as an unbeliever, still under guilt. You have no righteousness to shelter you,

to protect you, to keep off wrath and vengeance from you. But,

2. That is not all, you have a superadded (and that the greatest) load of guilt imaginable, by not believing. "He that believeth not, is condemned already," &c. That is, he to whom there is a sufficient proposal made; the object is not concealed, nor wrapt up in darkness, but set in clear and open light before your eyes, and yet you believe not. Upon how fearful terms doth such an one perish. When his case comes to be stated at the last, in the judgment of the great day, Why is such an one cast? Why is he held guilty? Why is he abandoned to perish? Why is it said to him, "Depart, accursed?" It is because he would not believe in God. He had many other sins upon him, but they would all have been forgiven him if he would have believed, if he would have taken God and his Son; then would have been a perfect peace between God and him. If his sins had been never so great, they had been all done away. But this man perisheth, because he would not believe him against sensual imaginations—against carnal inclinations. God told him it was best for him to abandon his sins, and put himself under his government, and live by his rules and holy laws; but he would not believe this, but thought it better to obey the lusts of his own heart, and walk according to his own imagination. He perisheth, because he would not believe God; because he made him a liar in that plain testimony and record he had given, concerning the way of salvation unto sinners by his Son. Against whom did "he swear in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, but them that believed not? So we see they could not enter in, because of unbelief." This was the great provoking wickedness of that people all along. How long will ye provoke me? How long will ye not believe me, notwithstanding the mighty noble works that have been done in the midst of you. God was manifesting himself in several and many great and remarkable instances; but yet they would not believe. They despised the pleasant land;—they believed not his word. All their wickedness was rooted in infidelity—they could not take the word of God. How fearful a case is this? When a reasonable creature, one that hath an intelligent mind and spirit about him, part of the offspring of the great Father of spirits, he would not be governed by the divine dictates, but opposed the inclination and imagination of his flesh, unto the express word of the Father of spirits. He tells me, I must

live so and so, that I may do well—that I may die happy, and live eternally. But I will not believe it. I will believe the lusts of my own heart; rather run the hazard—venture it—try what will come of it. Oh! to perish on these terms is dreadful perishing, because I give the lie to Him that gave me breath.

But then I must say somewhat too, by way of direction in this important matter. Is it so fearful a thing not to believe? Will not any thing that may carry with it the shadow of believing, serve the turn? But it must be faith indeed, and such as will answer the intendment of the gospel; that I must have, or I perish as an unbeliever, whatsoever character I have gone under, or have thought myself to have. Why, how shall I do or know? Pray direct me in this, what kind of faith I must aim at, and not satisfy myself short of, or to be without? Why it must be,

1. Such (and pray, therefore, aim at such) a faith as shall admit the gospel revelation into your hearts. This is not so obscure a thing as many, upon the first hearing, may account it. Do not you know the difference between receiving a report by your ears only, and taking it into the heart? Suppose it were of some very great good news which you hear of in any uncertain way, so as that you apprehend no reason to believe it true? It enters your ears, but goes no farther. But if it be a great thing, and it comes with certainty, so as that no room of rational doubt remains concerning the truth of the matter; then it goes into your heart, and fills that with joy and pleasure and complacency. You sensibly find it exciting and raising an affection in you suitable to the import of the thing, if the gospel be received, so that reception makes its own distinction visibly in it. “I tell you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” When the gospel comes among you, and tells you that the great Majesty of heaven, whom you have offended, is willing to be reconciled to you, and hath sent his Son into the world on purpose to be the reconciler, and he died upon the cross a reconciling sacrifice; it is discernible (if you will inspect and look into yourselves,) whether that which you call faith in you, of the gospel and the gospel revelation, make any such impressions upon your heart as is correspondent of so great a thing. It is “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” That is the great business of enquiry. What kind of faith will serve me unto righteousness, that I may be justified—that I may be counted righteous there-

upon? Why it is “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Rom. x. 10. And saith the apostle, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Tim. i. 15.

Have you received the gospel revelation so, as “a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation?” Is it acceptable, do you judge it worthy of your acceptation, of all acceptation? Then your heart and soul embraceth it, and closeth with it. Thus the apostle speaks in that great summary of the gospel, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (even the chief of them;) of whom I am chief.”

2. Labour for such a faith as may inwardly unite your souls to Christ, revealed in this gospel, and with God in him. Your faith is to take hold of him, and of God in him, so as thereby to come into an united state, a state of union with him, that you may thereupon be in him. It must be such a faith as whereby Christ may dwell in your hearts. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” Eph. iii. 17. That is not spoken exclusively of God, for it is presently subjoined, “that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.” All which fulness is in him. Do not satisfy yourselves without such a faith as that by which you may say you have now the Son of God. God in him, in you, and with you. He hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true. That understanding, to know him that is true, is faith, as it resides in the mind. But though it hath its first seat there, it doth not terminate there, for this immediately ensues, and we are in him. In whom? In Jesus Christ the Son, who is the true God, and eternal life. We pass into union by this intuition, even into union with the true God, who carries eternal life in his very name. Such a faith as leaves you still at a distance from God and from Christ, do you think that can avail you? All that is in Christ is yours, as you come to be in him. “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. i. 30. In Him once, and all is yours; whatsoever you need, whatsoever is suitable to the exigency of your state. Are you foolish creatures, He is wisdom to you. Are you guilty creatures, he is righteousness to you. Are you impure creatures, He is sanctification to you. Are you enslaved lost creatures, He is redemption to you, if you be in him; but nothing at all if you be not in him.

3. Labour for such a faith as may be transforming to

your whole souls. Consider that the whole economy of the gospel aims at this, the bringing of all; upon whom it shall have its effect, into the unity of the faith, so that all come to unite in one faith. Eph. iv. 13. And what is to be consequent thereupon, the apostle tells you in what follows there, supposing this once to be done, and that you are brought with the rest of sincere believers into the oneness of faith, the unity of the faith which is common to serious and sincere Christians. As such then, I testify to you, that you are not to walk like other Gentiles, as if this faith, in which all sincere Christians were to unite and be one, should leave you, but just like other men in your habitual frame. "I say it, and I testify to you in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." Eph. iv. 17. You had an heart alienated from that life. Will you keep that heart still, and call yourself a believer, and pretend to be come to unity of the faith? Still to live with an habitual disinclination in your heart towards God? This can never be. But if you have learned "the truth as it is in Jesus," I tell you (saith the Apostle) what that must be: it must come to this, the "putting off of the old man, which is corrupt by deceivable lusts," and "being renewed in the spirit of your mind." Ephes. iv. 22, 23. You are never come into the unity of that faith which belongs to all that shall be saved, till there be thereupon a divestiture and total investiture. A divestiture and "putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceivable lusts;" you must cease to be the man that you were before, and (as that which is intervening and central in the case) there must be a renovation even in the spirit of your minds, a new heart and a right spirit being created and renewed in you, being renewed in the spirit of your minds, the inward seat of vital governing principles. If the spirit of the mind be renewed, that spreads influence through the man, then there is a new man put on. Not some slight, superficial change in this or that particular respect, but an entire new man. As he that is in Christ is said to be a new creature. There is a new creation introduced, the man is new. This must be, if your faith be to any purpose. The apostle blesses God for the Thessalonians, in that he could look upon them, as those that were chosen to salvation by the remarkable and observable effects. The way that God had taken with them was, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; such a believing of the truth as had been accompanied with the sanctification of the Spirit. Agreeably

to that of our Lord himself, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John xvii. 17.

4. See that it be such a faith as doth and shall govern your lives, so that you live by it, and thereupon cannot only say, I did believe seven or ten or twenty years ago, but I continually live by my believing. A man is not said to live by that which rarely happens to him, or once or twice in a lifetime. We are to live by breathing, but we cannot do so if it be not continual. So we are to live by believing; "the just shall live by his faith." That he is continually to live by all his days. Can it be thought that such an one shall be said to live now, because he drew breath twenty years ago? But that belief which is true, real, vital, will be continually repeating its acts and exercises. "The life that I live in the flesh (says the Apostle,) I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. That is, if your faith be a right vital principle, and such as the gospel means and signifies by the name of faith, it is such a thing as carries up the soul into a continual course, into an invisible scene of things. There you have an invisible God, and an invisible Christ, and an invisible glory, still in view. There are some that talk of such a thing as a double sight, or a second sight, so as that they who have it have a visible world and an invisible world in view at once. I know no second sight like that of faith. That, indeed, will present an invisible world, and keep it in view before you, so that by it you will be more conversant in the world of spirits, with the Father of spirits, and with spiritual and invisible things; more conversant in your hearts, more with delight, more with savour and relish, than in this shadowy scene of things which you have within the view and under the notice of your sense. You will look upon this world "as that the fashion thereof passeth away;" but by your faith (which is to you "the substance of things hoped for," &c.) you will live above, you will live with God, you will live with Christ, you will live as on the brink and borders of eternity, ready to enter in, only waiting for a dismissal hence—a call and translation thither. This is living by faith.

For, the apostle having told us, Heb. x. 38, that "the just shall live by faith," (repeating the ancient maxim out of the Old Testament, to signify to us that that is not the way of living for the saints at one time or age of the church of God only; but it is from age to age, through all the successions of time, this must be the way of believing.)

then he tells us in the beginning of the next chapter, what that faith is by which such a man must live; to wit, "The substance of things hoped for," and "the evidence of things not seen." Such a faith as represents God and Christ, and heaven, and the invisible things, all as great and most substantial realities; clothed with a clear light, and so set and continued in view before your eyes. This is, that we are to live, not to have such representations now and then, but to have them steadily before us, and so to live and direct our course accordingly. But,

2. I am also to recommend to you this other great thing, friendship with God. And in reference to that, I would also say somewhat both by way of excitation and direction. I can speak but briefly to many things. For excitation consider,

1. Is it not your great privilege to live here in this world in a state of friendship with God? for what more exalted privilege is there to poor creatures living in mortal flesh? Here I live in flesh, dwell in flesh; but it is in friendship with God. In low circumstances, amidst a great many troubles and difficulties, but in friendship with God. Who would not choose this way of living, when it is represented to our option, when it is propounded to us as matter of choice?

2. Consider there is no middle state (for you to whom this overture is made) between these two, a state of friendship with God, and a state of enmity to him; you must be either his friends or his enemies. There can be no neutrality in this case; and will it not make a man's heart sink within him to think of this? I must either live God's friend or God's enemy. Dare I venture when the matter is laid before me as a matter of deliberation, to say, I will live the latter, I will live his enemy? You that were alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works; you see how the case is stated: you must still be enemies in your minds, through wicked works, till you are reconciled and become friends. There is no neutral state, you must go from day to day, up and down in this world, either as God's friends, or his enemies.

3. Consider that this friendship with God which we recommend to you, and into which the gospel continually calls you, is no impossible, no impracticable thing, for it is prescribed to us as matter of duty: "Every man as he is called, let him therein abide with God." 1 Cor. vii. 24. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" John iv. 20.

which speaks this living in the love of God to be therefore more difficult, because we see him not. But the strength of the argument goes upon that supposition, that it is a thing which cannot be dispensed with, notwithstanding the difficulty : and be it as difficult as it will, it must therefore be supposed not to be impossible to live in the love of God, and in a state of friendship with him, though he be invisible. "How shall he love God?" implying that it is a thing, the thought whereof is to be abhorred, that a man should think of living in this world, and not to live in actual commerce and intercourse, to be kept up, and continued, with God in love. How shall he do it? It implies, that he must do it, and therefore the thing is by no means to be looked upon as impossible. And to pretend that it is impossible, is to pretend that we have gone below our own kind, that we have lost human nature, which, if it remain with us still, though we have flesh about us, yet our nobler part is spirit. And, what is it an impossible thing for a mind, a spirit, to converse with the great Father of spirits? Is flesh more akin to us than spirit, that supreme Spirit, that universal Spirit, that Spirit that diffuses influences every where throughout the world? Are we more akin to flesh, and fleshly things, than we are to this Spirit, whose offspring we are, and who is our Father? Therefore, it is not to be thought or looked on as an impossible or impracticable thing to come into and continue in this state of friendship with God. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for his mercy in Christ Jesus, unto life eternal." Jude 21. What is matter of express precept, is not to be looked upon simply and absolutely impossible by a natural impossibility. It is only so by a moral impotency, against which the aids of grace are to be expected and sought. And,

4. Consider that this friendship with God, as it is not an impossible or impracticable thing, so it is to be maintained in the easiest and most unexceptionable way. Consider, that to enter into this state is but to obey the divine call, the very meaning and import of the whole gospel of reconciliation. We have the greatest assurances in all the world, that God is not difficult or hard of acquaintance; for he invites. Will he refuse whom he invites? The gospel is sent to us to beseech us, in Christ's name and stead, to be reconciled unto God. Will he refuse that which he seeks? decline that friendship into which he calls us? He is "in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, that sin might not be imputed," or (which is the same thing) that righteousness



might be imputed." 2 Cor. v. 19. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." We are commissioned, and sent, and do in Christ's stead beseech you to be reconciled unto God. You may conclude, with the greatest assurance imaginable, that God is willing, and not difficult, as to entering into this state of friendship with us. And then there is as little supposable difficulty of continuing in it; for do but consider to that purpose these two things, 1. That he is never far off: and 2. That he is easy to forgive.

1. That he is never far off, you will say; how shall I keep friendship with God? He is in heaven, I am upon earth. In heaven, yes, as to his more glorious manifestation of himself. But he is not far from any of us, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." And this is told us, that we may seek and find him out, insomuch as he is far from none of us. So that now you may be with him as soon as you can think a thought. How easy is the way to keep up this friendship: only to be now and then at the expense of a thought. Where is God my Maker? that will not cost you dear. You have no cause to say, What shall I do for my friend? Who shall go up to heaven to fetch him me down from thence, or who shall go to the uttermost ends of the earth to fetch him me up from thence. No, he is with you; turn you but to him, and you will find him with you. Do but direct your mind, turn your thoughts inward, and you will find him with you. Indeed he often passes by, and we perceive him not. "Thou dost compass me behind and before, (saith the Psalmist) and art acquainted with all my ways." O how unaccountable is it to keep off ourselves, unacquainted with him and his ways! And,

2. He is easy to forgive. Ay, but breaches may happen. I forget and neglect him too often, and am ashamed and confounded in my own sense; I am afraid to look towards him any more. That must not by any means be. You must return, though it be with weeping and humiliation. And if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, if it be not done triflingly, if it be not done without sense, if it be not done with an inclination and resolution to persist and go on in sin still. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Ps. xxxii. 5. The

injustice of it. And then it is added, "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." Ps. xxxii. 6. Who would decline such a friendship with him who is so easy to be reconciled at first, and still willing to forgive where there is not a wilful perseverance in obstinate rebellion against his rightful authority, and his abundant love and goodness? And consider,

5. It is the way to bring your minds to ease in reference to all your more private concerns. You have difficulties in the world, you have troubles and straits, and know not which way to turn yourselves. Oh what a great thing is it to have such a friend, who invites you to cast your care upon him, for he will care for you. And then the peace of God shall hereupon keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

6. It will keep you quiet in reference to public concerns. This is a very pitiable case, that when they see things run counter to their expectations, their aims, their designs and inclinations, they are full of anxiety, full of concern, full of dread and fear. They know not what will become of things. Oh what an heart-quieting thought is it, that all is in the hands of your friend, your great and wise friend, who doeth as pleaseth him in heaven above, and in the earth beneath. And he will never manage things so as that his true friends shall at last have any cause to complain. And then consider,

7. That all will be well for ever when you are caught up in the clouds to meet your Redeemer in the air, and to be for ever with the Lord. That being his declared pleasure, that he will have all his friends together eternally with him in one society, in one assembly, made up of an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. That they that have lived by the faith of Abraham, and been friends of God, as he was, may sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in his kingdom, and there reside for ever. In this scripture we are told that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

But some may say, What is that to me, who live in the world so many ages after? Why the Scriptures, as if it were on purpose to obviate any such thoughts, tell us (particularly the Apostle, Rom. iv. latter end) where he had been speaking of the same thing, Abraham believing God, and its being imputed to him for righteousness, it was not for

his sake that this was written, not for his sake alone, but for all that should believe with the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, i. e. as believing under the common notion of believers. Not as if our faith were to be produced, or to be maintained, by any influences from him. But he is called the father of believers upon the same account upon which any one great and eminent in a profession is said to be the father of such, to wit, a great example, as Jabal is said to be the father of them that dwell in tents, and Jubal the father of them that handle the harp and organ. What was said concerning Abraham and his faith, and his friendship with God, thereupon, was not written for him alone, but for us too, that we are to live in the same faith and the same friendship with God as he did.

I shall shut up all, by way of direction as to this, with only two words in general. You think it a very desirable thing (I doubt not but you do) to be in this state of friendship with God. Surely every one among us must say, if it be a desirable thing to live in a state of friendship with God, who would not live at this rate every day in a state of friendship with the great and glorious God of heaven and earth! I shall only say these two things by way of direction in reference hereto.

1. Give yourselves up entirely unto this friendship with God; and do it with solemnity: so great a thing as this, entering into friendship with God, the great and glorious Lord of heaven and earth, the matter speaks itself that it ought to be done with solemnity. Make a solemn business of it: apply yourselves purposely to him, and tell him, Lord I have heard thy mind, thy pleasure, thou wouldst have souls that have wandered from thee, and been alienated, come into thine acquaintance and friendship. The gospel under which I live hath told me so; I believe thy word; I come now to offer myself up unto thee, to be thy reconciled one, thy devoted one, thy servant, thy friend. "Thy servant, thy servant; O Lord, thou hast broken my bonds." Ps. cxvi. 16. But our Saviour would have us know, that the notion of a servant is not to exclude that of a friend, as that of a friend is not to exclude the notion of a servant, but only to prevail and predominate in the state. The notion of friendship is in the Christian state to be predominate, and to be the principal thing. Tender yourself to God accordingly. We hear many discourses to this purpose: but with too many the matter comes all to nothing, because we never make a solemn business of it. The entrance into such

a state, so sacred a state, if it were done with solemnity, there would stand a remark upon it, I have engaged myself in a state of friendship with God, I must live pursuantly hereunto. I hope you will think of this : such as come to learn how you might live in a state of friendship with God. Such as have any such design, I hope will think of this another time ; i. e. that when this state of friendship with God is once entered into, we must give ourselves up to it. And then,

2. Mind, it is a continued course : otherwise, you trifled at first ; never meant sincerely, never meant as you did pretend. Mind, I say, it is a continued course ; and through your whole course. These are but generals ; I have mentioned many particulars, at former times, to this purpose ; that, if you recollect yourselves, would be of stated use to you. But all will come under this general ; mind this often, that there is a friendship settled between God and me ; I must in all things hereupon demean myself towards him as a friend : that is, I must consult him in all, resign all things to him, cross him in nothing ; for friendship between him and us carries a peculiarity in it. If there were an equality between him and me, then it were something as between human friends, it may be. They may be equally wise, they may be equally great or equally mean ; equally able to do for one another. But this is not the case here ; this is not like common friends, as I formerly shewed at large ; and, therefore, there must be a constant reference to him in all things. We are in all things to yield to him, to cross him in nothing. And so, when in all things we are to consult him, we are to take his counsel in all, and to stand in his counsel. Not to be self-willed, not to say, we will walk in the way of our own hearts, whatsoever becomes of our friendship with him. You must always be true to him ; you must always believe him true to you. You must never be strange to him ; always be free, unreserved, open-hearted. You must willingly agree to it, that he be privy to all your affairs. He will be so, whether you will or no, but it is that to which your hearts should consent, and in which your hearts should rejoice, so as to be able to say, Lord ! I know I can hide nothing from thee, and I would not if I could ; I desire all things may lay open between me and thee, that there may be nothing hid, no veil drawn between thee and my soul. Search me, try me, look into me. It is the pleasure and advantage of this friendship, to know that he can behold sincerity, and accept it, and reward it, and delight in it. And, therefore, you must re-

solve never to break off this friendship, but look upon him as your inseparable friend, and from whom you are never to depart. And say to yourself, this God shall be your God ; i. e. your friend, your friendly ruler, for ever and ever, and shall be your guide even unto death. So that you can never any moment of your life suffer an elongation from him, that he should be far off, or keep long from you, but presently your hearts will miss him. And you will say, Oh ! where is my friend ? I will seek him, pursue after him, as the spouse in the Canticles is represented to pursue after him whom her soul loved. This is my friend, where is he ? where is he ? You will be presently upon enquiries, if he have hid himself, and seem to have withdrawn and retired from you ; for this hath been the state of things between him and you in contracting this state of friendship, that this God shall be your God for ever and ever, and your guide even unto death.

## SERMON XXXVIII. \*

I JOHN V. 1.

*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.*

THE subject that I last finished, you find did connect faith and friendship with God. This connects faith and sonship to God. And the one and the other must be understood (by them that will consider) to be of the greatest importance to us imaginable ; so great, that it is to be hoped the former is not forgotten, and this latter will not slightly and negligently be attended to.

The words in themselves are an express doctrinal assertion, which I shall not need therefore to vary into other terms ; “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” It needs only to be explained and applied : for the explication of it, that you cannot upon the first hearing of such an assertion as this, but think very necessary. For it may seem strange to unaccustomed ears, at least, that such a thing as this should be affirmed so generally, concerning believing Jesus to be the Christ, that every such

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