

being Romans.' Certainly it is a very hard thing to bring men out of an old religion to a new one; yet, when the trumpet of the gospel sounded, down went all the altars, images, and superstitions of the gentiles, and the religion of Jesus took place.

[7.] I have but one consideration more, and that is, when Satan had raised up heretics in the church, to rend the body and divide it, as worms that breed in the body and devour it, that so by the church he might destroy the church, yet Christ confounded them, and a little time did break each sect in pieces, so that those which were the great scourge and vexation of one age were scarce known to the next but by their names and some obscure report. The church of Ephesus had Nicolaitans among them; but they hated their doctrine, and within a little while it came to nothing: Rev. ii. 6, 'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.' And the church of Pergamus had those which held the doctrine of Balaam, yet there were 'those that held fast Christ's name, and did not deny the faith,' ver. 1; and so this heresy vanished and departed. So for others, where the light of the gospel did quickly disperse those fogs as soon as they arose. When any mists arose which did darken the kingdom of light, they were presently scattered and confounded. Well, then, here is encouragement for our zeal and fidelity to Christ, to support us in difficult cases whatever obstructions are made. Let us trust Christ's means, wait upon him with faith and patience, and in due time he will do his work.

Use 2. Let none of us build Jericho again. Joshua imposed a solemn curse on those that built the wall of Jericho, because thereby they would obliterate the memory of divine power and justice: Joshua vi. 26, 'And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates thereof.' Which curse we find fulfilled: 1 Kings xvi. 34, 'In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' Cursed are they that revive old superstitions.

SERMON LXV.

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.—HEB. xi. 31.

In this verse observe—

1. The person spoken of—Rahab, an harlot and a stranger, bred up among idolators.
2. The effect of her faith—*She received the spies with peace.*

3. The benefit—*She perished not with them that believed not.* Let us open these things.

1. The quality of the person, Rahab the harlot; she was a gentile before, and in that gentile estate an hostess (for the word signifies both an harlot and an hostess), and most probably an harlot, for so she is spoken of in scripture, and so defiled both in body and mind with idolatry and adultery.

2. Here is the effect of her faith—‘She received the spies with peace;’ that is, with good-will, and entertained them safely. Harboursing God’s persecuted servants is reckoned an effect of faith in scripture. The story is in the 2d chapter of Joshua, where take notice—

[1.] Of the coming of the spies to her house, which might be done on their part ignorantly, not knowing it to be a brothel-house; or by divine providence guiding them thither where he had a soul to convert; or they might choose it to avoid suspicion, and that they might have the greater liberty to espy all things, she living near the walls; but God makes use of it to another purpose, to be an occasion of saving her and her family.

[2.] The discovery of the spies by that watchful and jealous people; for it was told the king of Jericho that some of the children of Israel were come to spy out the land, chap. ii. 2, and he sends to her to bring them forth, so that she not only entertains them kindly, but conceals them, hazarding her life for their safety; as we are also ‘to lay down our lives for the brethren,’ 1 John iii. 16. She was willing to expose her life to danger to save her guests, rather than gain the favour of the king of the country by betraying them. Here we learn that the weakest faith is tried, and does expose us to some self-denial. For this young and raw convert is put upon this: the spies came to her house, and she in good-will conceals them, when the king sends to know what was become of them.

[3.] The course she took to hide them; partly by an honest means, covering them with stalks of flax in the upper part of the house; and partly by an officious lie, as if they were gone in the dark before the shutting in of the gate. Her lie was an infirmity, pardoned by God, and not to be exaggerated by men; as here the apostle mentions her faith, but not a word of her lie. There was some weakness in the action, but for the main of it, it was a duty expressing great confidence in God; and the Holy Ghost puts the finger upon the star, and, contrary to the guise of the malignant world, who overlook the good and reflect only upon the evil of an action, he takes notice of the good, but passeth by the evil.

[4.] Before the spies were gone from her, she makes a confession of her faith to them: Joshua ii. 9–11, ‘I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you: for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God he is God in heaven above,

and in earth beneath.' Here is her profession of faith, which is very notable in this new convert. In it observe—

(1.) The ground of it, the rumours of the great things which God had done for his people. It is said, Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' This woman had heard of God, and the mighty wonders he had done for Israel, and this was the ground of her faith.

(2.) The efficient cause. God thereby touched her heart, and gave her some saving knowledge of himself. The Canaanites had heard, as well as she, of those mighty works of God, yet they believed not, but grew obstinate, and perished in their resolution to resist the Israelites, and therefore were exterminated. They heard to some degree of fear, 'for their hearts melted within them;' but they heard not to any degree of faith, for they submitted not, but prepared to resist the purpose of God, and his design of giving his people the land. Thus it was by the secret power of God's Spirit.

(3.) The fulness of her profession. It is well observed by Origen, *Illa, quæ aliquando erat meretrix, cum Spiritu Sancto repleta est, et de præteritis confitetur, de præsentibus vero credit, prophetat et prænuñtiat de futuris*—The woman that was sometimes a harlot, when she was wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, she believeth what is past, she acknowledgeth what is present, she foretelleth what is to come. So that here is a full confession. For what is past, she acknowledgeth the truth of the miracles which God had wrought, to show his love and care over his people. For what is present, she believes God to be the true God. For what is to come, she believes confidently that God would give the land into their hand; though the people of the city think themselves safe within their city and walls, and think to carry it by mere strength, and fear not, and are not sensible either of their sins or dangers, yet she was confident of the future success of God's people, and destruction of her country. The consideration of God's mighty wonders, blessed by the Spirit of God, bringing such a confession from her.

(4.) She is careful to save the house she came of, and therefore takes an oath of the spies to save her and her father's house: Joshua ii. 12, 'Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token.' And accordingly the bargain is made, if she did not betray them, that she was to hand out the line by which they were let down upon the wall. This shows that all believers have their assurance from a covenant, and that this covenant is confirmed by certain signs, which faith makes use of as the means of preservation. For she was to hang out the scarlet line by which she and all her house might be kept in safety. So much for the effect of her faith; she received the spies with peace.

3. Let us come to the benefit—'She perished not with them that believed not;' that is, when the incredulous and idolatrous people were destroyed, she and all her family were preserved; as God can, and often doth, save his people in the midst of general calamities. You shall see, when the city was taken, Joshua keeps faith with her: Joshua vi. 22, 23, 'Joshua said unto the two men that had spied out

the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as you swear unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father and mother, and her brethren, and all that she had ; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel ;' and when they had fired the city, ver. 25, ' Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had ; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day ; because she hid the messengers which Joshua had sent to spy out Jericho.' Thus I have opened the words. The notes from this instance the apostle gives are three—

[1.] From the quality of the person, observe that God shows wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him.

[2.] From her faith, observe that true faith, wherever it is, will show itself by some eminent and notable effects.

[3.] From the benefit, observe that the rewards of true faith are excellent and glorious.

Doct. 1. That God is ready to show wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to him, and believe in him, how great soever their sins have been before. Rahab the harlot is an instance. She had been a gentile, and lived an unclean life, yet when she owned the true God she is pardoned, and placed in the catalogue of God's worthies who are eminent for faith. There are many such instances given us in scripture ; not to lessen the nature of their sins, but to amplify God's grace. In John iv. we have an instance of the woman of Samaria ; she was a vile woman ; for (ver. 18) Christ tells her, ' Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband ;' yet afterwards she was a notable means of promoting the faith of Christ. Former sins will not hinder their acceptance with God who seriously come to seek grace. The same also may be observed in another woman ' which washed Christ's feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head,' Luke vii. 38. The woman was a heathen, and one that had lived in a sinful course, but she then relented, and lets fall drops of tears plentifully upon Christ's feet, which tears were the effects of sorrow and love ; and because she wept much and loved much, it argued a great expression of gratitude from her, because of the great mercy showed to her in the pardon of her sins : ver. 47, ' Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' The throne of grace is open for all sinners ; it admits of no exception of persons. ' Turn and live,' is the great tenor of the gospel : Ezek. xviii. 33, ' I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God ; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye ;' Ezek. xxxiii. 11, ' As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' And publicans and harlots, though infamous amongst men, yet they are not excluded, but accepted with God if they turn from their evil course. Nay, many times they enter into the kingdom of God before self-justiciaries : Mat. xxi. 31, ' The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.' For there is nothing that lies so cross to the spirit of the gospel as

self-righteousness. Now, when people pride and please themselves in an external righteousness, there is more hope of a publican than of them. Christ invites and calls such, and we must not keep them off: Mat. ix. 13, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' But we must remember two cautions—

1. That they must break off the course of their sins. For our commission is this (and we cannot speak comfortably to you upon any other terms), 'Turn and live.' We call them not to confidence while they live in their sins, but to repentance, that they may break off the course of their sins. To tell them of trusting in God's mercy while they remain in their wickedness is a vile flattery, and the worst sort of flattery; but to invite them to repentance is charity. See Isa. lv. 7, '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;' and Dan. iv. 27, 'Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' He speaks this to a cruel oppressing king, Nebuchadnezzar, who had troubled all the world by his ambition, that he would let go his captives, and behave himself more righteously, restore the prey unjustly taken for the enlarging his empire and territory. And so I may say to all sinners; if their faith be unfeigned, if their repentance be serious and sincere, there are hopes of mercy for them, not otherwise.

2. There is another caution, and that is, to be as eminent in their repentance as they have been in their sins; so was Rahab, so was that gentile woman that came to wash Christ's feet, so was the woman of Samaria. The apostle requires it as an equitable proposal to all converts: Rom. vi. 19, 'I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh;' that is, which men will judge to be equal; that which, if you have but reason and conscience within you, you cannot but judge reasonable. I know how bad you are, and you cannot yield God such entire obedience as he doth require and as he doth deserve, and I have regard to the infirmity of your flesh; but 'as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;' be as eminent in your sanctification as formerly you have been in serving your base lusts and vile affections; serve God as well as you have served the devil; and as you have been guilty of such foul sins as render you infamous among men, so serve God now exemplarily. It is equitable you should be as eminent in holiness as you have been in sins and wickedness.

The grounds of this, why the Lord shows wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, whatever their sins have been before, are—

[1.] The infiniteness of God's mercy, that can pardon all, even our greatest sins. We sin as men, but he pardons as a God: Hosea xi. 9, 'I am God, and not man; therefore Ephraim is not destroyed.' It was well Ephraim had to do not with revengeful men, but with a pardoning God. God acts like himself in the exercise of his mercy. Sure an emperor's revenue can pay a beggar's debt. Surely so great and infinite mercy can pardon and absolve our obligation to punishment. Alas for us men! it is tedious to think of forgiving seven times a day,

to forgive when still a man is perverse and multiplying his offences; but to forgive seventy times seven, it breaks the back of all our patience; but God will pardon like himself, after many and many offences.

[2.] The infiniteness of Christ's merit. Surely his blood can wash and cleanse out all these stains. An ocean can cleanse one nasty sink, be it ever so foul. 'The blood of Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John i. 7.

[3.] The covenant of grace exempts no sin but the sin against the Holy Ghost: Mat. xii. 31, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' There is no sin but this one which hath not been forgiven, or may not be forgiven, in one person or another; therefore, though they have fallen very foully, yet we should not despair of them.

[4.] The power of the Holy Ghost can change and sanctify the vilest heart, and can turn a dunghill into a bed of spices; for nothing is too hard for the hand and power of God. He that made all things out of nothing, he can make a graceless heart to become gracious; for what is too hard for the Almighty? When the Lord speaks, all things are possible to God. He can make sometimes 'the last to be first,' Mat. xix. 39. He can make those that set out last for heaven to do more than an early professor; indeed, they must be more earnestly diligent. When Celsus objected against Origen that christianity was a sanctuary for flagitious persons, because of the large terms of the gospel, he made this answer—'The gospel,' saith he, 'is not merely a sanctuary to receive them, but it is an hospital to cure them.' There is a mighty Spirit that can turn them from those sins, and change their hearts; they come to it as to an hospital to cure them of their foul diseases, which no other physician can do but Christ.

Use. To check despair for ourselves or others.

First, For ourselves. There is a twofold despair—a raging and a sottish despair. Raging despair is when we are filled with terror, and are afraid of the wrath of God, that we think we shall never be forgiven, having daily offended him. Sottish despair is when we think of sin, and go on to please our lusts.

1. This point serves to cure the raging despair. This is spoken of in Cain: Gen. iv. 13, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' and Judas, who said, Mat. xxvii. 4, 5, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood; and he cast down the thirty pieces in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.' To cure this raging despair, consider, if you have but a mind to return from your great and infamous sins, the Lord is more ready to receive and pardon you than you can be to return. While the prodigal was yet a great way off, 'the father ran to meet him,' Luke xv. 20. And when David had fallen foully, and his conscience was full of trouble, Ps. xxxii. 5, 'I said I will confess mine iniquities unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' When he did but conceive the purpose, the Lord renewed the pardon. Oh! do not stand aloof from a pardoning God; you have a sure and sufficient remedy before you in Christ Jesus, and in the covenant of grace. The Lord saves none as innocent, but

he excepts none as penitent: Therefore to say, My sin is greater than can be forgiven, is to please the devil and cross God's design in the work of redemption. Is your disease so great that the physician of souls cannot cure it?

2. There is a sottish despair, when men are not much troubled for their sins, but think they shall never be converted, and be brought to love this strict, holy, and heavenly life, and so resolve to go on and make the best they can of a carnal course, and drive off all remorse of conscience. This is spoken of, Jer. xviii. 12, 'And they said, There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart;' and Jer. ii. 25, 'Thou sayest, There is no hope: No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.' They think there is no possibility of their ever being reduced or reclaimed to a holy and heavenly life, and so past cure, past care; and are resolved to live as they list: The case is desperate, say they, and I am at a point; and thus they are resolved to continue, and go on in their evil course. These are obstinate in their infidelity and impenitency, and therefore they are worse than the former. Despairing fears are not so bad as these desperate resolutions, because they do not only doubt of God's mercy, but question his sovereignty, and refuse subjection to him, and despair of sanctification rather than pardon, and draw wilful rebellious conclusions from it. Oh! do not cherish such a thought, nor yield to such despondency. God can turn and pardon you; and though with men it is impossible, yet not with God.

Secondly, This is of use to check our despair for others; for when you find some of your relations, after many warnings, to relapse into gross sins, certainly we are bound to do all we can to reclaim them from them. Give not over praying and warning; you ought still to represent to them the danger of such courses, but cut them not off from all hopes, for God can reclaim the most odious sinners; and show them that there may yet be hope of mercy for them, and that no past sins can hinder our conversion to God if the Lord pleases; and that they ought to put themselves into a posture to seek his grace; though still you are always to represent the danger of those desperate courses wherein they are engaged.

Doct. 2. From her act—'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not,' &c. Observe, that true faith, where it is weakest, will show itself by some eminent and notable effect. We, in the latter age, to excuse ourselves from duty, have involved all things into controversy; therefore it is good to look to the ancient faith. How did the holy ones of God live heretofore? Here is an instance of an ancient faith, and the lowest of the kind; it is a firm belief of such things as God hath revealed to us, so as to make us fruitful and faithful in obedience to him. And I would have you observe, that in all this catalogue and chronicle of the faithful and eminent believers, no instance is propounded to us of an idle and barren faith, and always the apostle shows what was done by faith; for surely the working faith is only the true faith: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith which worketh by love.' Rahab's faith was no dead faith, but manifested by works; therefore the apostle James saith, chap. ii. 21, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered

Isaac his son upon the altar?' and ver. 25, 'Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?' In this raw and young convert faith was not without its effect.

To make this more evident, let us consider the temper of her faith, since it is so good to live by the ancient faith.

1. The ground of her faith was the fame and the report of God's wondrous works which he had done for his people. She had heard of the true God, as much as was necessary to acknowledge his power against his enemies and his grace towards his people, and this was sufficient as a means to beget saving faith in her soul. And if so, then we have greater grounds of faith than she had; for we have heard of the stupendous wonders of our redemption by Christ. Now, where more is given, the more we must account for: Luke xii. 48, 'For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whomsoever much, of him they will ask the more.' The more light God bestows, the greater improvement he expects. We have not only general rumours to build upon, as she had, but the sure word, where these things are more certainly and clearly discovered to us; and therefore God expects a better tempered faith from us.

2. She makes a confession of that faith which was wrought in her heart; for to the spies she acknowledges God to be the only true God, both in heaven above and the earth beneath; and she acknowledges the Israelites to be his peculiar people, whom he had owned and loved, and that she could not be saved but as gathered to that people under the head, Messiah; and in heart and affection she was already become one of God's servants, and this she professed to the spies. And the same is required of us: Rom. ix. 10, 'If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' Let us own the true God in Jesus Christ, and love him, and own and love his people. When once we are brought to this, to run hazard and take our lot with them, then we are in the right posture.

3. This faith and confession was evinced by some effect; for she entertained the spies, which was all she was capable of doing at present, and she entertains them as some of the people of God, as members of the true church, or as of the number of them who worshipped that God whom she believed to be the true God. And truly much faith is shown in harbouring the saints and being kind to God's people. Many shall be tried at the last day by this: Mat. xxv. 35, 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in,' &c. Everything is accepted with God according to the principle from whence it flows. Now, what might it have been, for anything in the nature of the act, but her trade, an entertaining and being kind to her guest, for she kept a house of public entertainment? or what might it have been but a bare act of civility? Yet, because of her faith in God, and love to his people, it is counted an act of love and obedience, not civility, but religion. So our Lord hath told us, Mat. x. 41, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of

a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward: and whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' It is accepted of God if it be in Christ's name; and if we give because we believe they are Christ's disciples, who is our Lord and Saviour, it is respected as done to himself, and shall be accounted as a fruit of faith. But now those that love a gospel without charges, and whose faith shows itself by talk and high-flown and curious notions of religion, rather than by any solid fruit, their faith is but an imaginary delusion, a shadow of faith, not any true grace. Faith that is true is a plain thing—to believe in one God, and that this God hath a people with whom I must travel to heaven; they are to be my everlasting companions. If I am true to this God, and kind to his people, the thing is put to a plain issue.

4. This effect was accompanied with much self-denial, which was seen in two things—(1.) In preferring the will of God before the safety of her country, and cherishing those guests who were strangers before the gratifying and pleasing her own citizens. We are bound to love, and we are bound also to seek the welfare of our country; but we are bound to love God more than our country. Therefore we owe fidelity to him first, and then to the place we live in, and we are to promote their welfare so far as is consistent with our fidelity to our supreme Lord. (2.) The other instance of her self-denial was her venturing her life rather than betraying those messengers of Joshua, that were the worshippers of the true God. It was an action that might have been of dangerous consequence to her; but, to manifest her fidelity to God, she overlooks the threatenings and cruelty of her citizens, the promiscuous events of war, and the burning of the city in which she and her parents lived; and so in the effect, by her faith, she renounced all to serve the true God. It is not every act will manifest true faith, but acts of self-denying obedience, in which we do deny ourselves for God, check our natural love, and thwart our lusts and hazard any interests. When God calls us to it, can we part with our conveniences of life, all that is near and dear to us in the world, upon the proper and sole encouragement of faith? This is a mighty evidence of faith.

5. I observe there was a mixture of infirmity in this act, an officious lie, which cannot be excused, though God in mercy pardoned it. This is not for our imitation, yet it is for our instruction; and it shows us this, that faith in the beginning hath many weaknesses. Those that have faith do not altogether act out of faith, but there is somewhat of the flesh mingled with that of the spirit. But this is passed by out of God's indulgence; he accepteth us notwithstanding our sins before faith, and notwithstanding our weaknesses in believing. Before faith she was a harlot; in believing she makes a lie. God doth reward the good of our actions and pardon the evil of them, not to encourage us in sinning, but to raise our love to him who forgives us so great a debt, and receives us graciously, and pardons our manifold weaknesses.

But why is this the true believing? The reasons are—

[1.] From the nature of faith, which is such an apprehension of the love of God, and of the blessedness that he offers to us, as makes us

willing to do whatever we can for him, and that in some eminent way of self-denial. Faith works both by love and hope, as it looks backward and forward. As it looks backward, the love of Christ is so great and condescending that it moves us to gratitude; as it looks forward, the blessedness hoped for is so glorious that it draws off our hearts from all other things, and lessens our esteem of them, that this gratitude may more self-denyingly be expressed by parting with them, yea, by the loss of all that is near and dear to us, to show our fidelity to Christ. They are nothing in comparison of our love to Christ: Phil. iii. 8, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.' Here are the two considerations which faith works upon—what Christ hath done for us, and what he will yet do for us. And if we consider these two things, faith may well afford self-denying obedience, and forsake all easily for Christ's sake. This great love of Christ overcomes all our natural self-love to our interest and worldly comforts, that we may own Christ, and be faithful to him.

[2.] The gospel requires such a kind of faith, and therefore we must exercise it. All that will enter into life should hate father and mother, &c., so far as they may stand in competition with Christ: Luke xiv. 25, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;' and ver. 33, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' He that had found the pearl of great price sold all to buy it, Mat. xiii. 45, 46. He did not only cheapen it, but he did go through with the bargain. Let all go that is inconsistent with your trust and love.

[3.] This is that faith which honours God and Christ in the world, and assures us of salvation: 2 The. i. 11, 12, 'We pray that God would fulfil the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Would you honour Christ, and have Christ glorified in you, then you must mind the work of faith. He speaks not of the illicit, but imperative acts of faith. Self-denying obedience is the imperative act of faith: then the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified in you, then you are glorified in him, and then you have the assurance of salvation. A faith that rests in the heart only, and is discovered by no self-denying act, brings Christ no glory in the world, and will bring us little comfort and peace; but faith which shows itself in acts of love to God and his people, and that with self-denial, is more evident, and doth much honour God in the eyes of the world. When we are willing to do and suffer so much for him, this brings us comfort, and doth show this faith is real, that we are true to God, whom we own and acknowledge.

Use. The use is to press you to see whether you live by this ancient faith.

1. It is not a bare assent to the report of God's love in Christ. Many may think it true that Christ died and rose again, that yet feel no force of it upon their souls. Surely a dead opinion is not that lively faith that enableth the people of God to do such great things for him. The devil knows there is a God and Christ,—will you put your salvation

upon this? No; 'Faith without works is dead,' James ii. 20. If you do not feel the force of it upon your hearts, to make you deny yourselves, and give up all your interest for God, and run all hazards for him and his people, you do not truly believe.

2. It is not a bare confession, nor a loose owning the name of Christ. Rahab made a confession, but rests not there. So, many own him as the God of the country, and cry up his name, but neglect his office; as the Jews made much ado with the names of Abraham and Moses, but they were of a quite different spirit; they did neither do the works of Abraham: John viii. 39, 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;' nor hearken to the words of Moses: John v. 46, 'Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' So you believe there is a Christ, and own him; but if you be christians, you would do works becoming christians.

3. It is not a confidence in God's mercy; that is not enough, if we will do nothing for him. For faith is such a trusting in God, through Christ, for eternal life, that we are willing to forsake all rather than be unfaithful to him; and we care not what we lose, and what hazard we run, so that we may have a portion among God's people, and obtain the heavenly inheritance. When the apostle distinguisheth the true believers from the false, what saith he? Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' There are some that believe, yet will save the flesh; but others that will save the soul, though their interests in the flesh be hazarded. Now, the apostle shows there that there are some will purchase the saving of their soul with the loss of other things. God tries us in some necessary part of confession, which may expose us to loss, shame, and hazard in the world; now, if we will not spare the flesh, but save the soul, this is to cleave to him.

4. Nothing then remains to justify our faith but such an acknowledging of the true God as causes us to confess his name and to prefer his interest before our own, and so to be willing to endure anything for his sake, and be ready upon this faith to show all self-denying acts of obedience; to part with what we have for the relief of others and the advancement of religion, when we cannot keep it without betraying religion. Alas! that religion which costs nothing is worth nothing; it is idle, empty, and foolish; that, when you come to die, will bring terror, and never yield solid peace.

Doct. 3. There is one thing more in the text, and that is the benefit which affords us this point, that the rewards of faith are excellent and glorious. Rahab is an instance of this also, for when she by faith entertained the spies in peace, 'she perished not with them that believed not;' that is, she was not destroyed with the Canaanites. Let us a little see her privileges.

1. From a child of the devil, she is made a daughter of God, and adopted into God's family. And so, if you be sincere in the faith of the gospel, you shall be also; the Lord will take you for his children, that were the children of wrath before: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'

2. From a citizen of Jericho she is reckoned among the people of

Israel, and incorporated into the body of God's church: Joshua vi. 25, 'She dwelleth in Israel even unto this day.' So, if we have the sincere faith, we are not only of the visible church of professing christians, but are reckoned among the elect, and have our names written in heaven; that is a matter of great joy: Luke x. 20, 'Rejoice in that your names are written in heaven;' for this is a 'better name than of sons and daughters,' Isa. lvi. 5,—a name that shall continue to all eternity.

3. We find, when there was a destruction of all the rest, she was not destroyed with the Canaanites, but God by his servant Joshua took great care for her preservation. So believers are saved from everlasting destruction: John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' They are not involved in the wrath and destruction which shall light upon the unbelieving and impenitent world. This is the portion of all those that fly to the true God, and to the communion of the true church. If it be sure that the unbelieving world shall perish (as sure it is, as sure as God is true), then it is a great mercy we shall not perish with them. Certain it is that all that come not out of the apostasy shall perish forever. But we that are willing to return to our duty to God, to trust God, and trust his promises, and take his way, blessedness will be our portion.

4. Another privilege which Rahab had was, that she was honourably married to a prince in Israel, and one of the ancestors of Christ, namely, to Salmon, father of Boaz: Mat. i. 5, 'And Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab.' Laying all ends together, we certainly find it is the same Rahab, that Salmon married her, who was one of the spies, a head and prince of Israel. Thus God can heap honour upon those that trust in him: her name is mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now they that sincerely believe have a better marriage, they are married to Christ himself: Rom. vii. 4, 'Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' They are taken into a nearer relation to him, our covenanting with him being a kind of marriage. If we believe as Rahab did, we shall have the reward Rahab had. But how can we reconcile the two apostles? Paul ascribes it here to her faith, but James to her works: James ii. 25, 'Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way?' Here is no contradiction; the apostles fairly agree together, for they speak not of the same faith. Paul speaks of the lively, James of the dead faith; Paul speaks of the faith working by love, and so she was justified by faith, but James speaks of an empty naked profession of faith without works; so that a man is not justified by an empty faith without works. A dead faith little profits us, but a living faith makes us obedient to God, and ready to every good work; that justifies us, and qualifies us for this blessed and glorious reward.

But let us see the general case. What are the privileges and the rewards of faith? (for hitherto we have only considered them with respect to Rahab). It justifies, sanctifies, glorifies.

[1.] It justifies : Rom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' O sinners ! do you know what it is to be condemned by the law of God ? for sinners impleaded, and that justly, in the court of God's justice, and to be condemned to everlasting wrath ? If you did, then you would see that it is a mighty privilege to be justified, to be accepted with God, and freed from the deserved condemnation, or that dreadful punishment which sin hath made our due. Now, this generally in scripture is ascribed to faith.

[2.] It sanctifies, or is the Spirit's great instrument in sanctification. For, Acts xv. 9, it is said, ' Purifying their hearts by faith.' It is faith that promotes purity and sanctity. It is the first stone in the spiritual building : 2 Peter i. 5, ' Add to your faith virtue,' &c. Faith is made the bottom of all, as that which gives life and strength to all the rest ; without which virtue would be nothing but a little dead and cold morality, however it is cried up in our age, if not enlivened by the love of God in Christ, and hopes of eternal glory, as it is when it proceeds from faith. Christ prays, John xvii. 17, ' Sanctify them through thy truth.' We are sanctified by the truth of the gospel. But now what makes the gospel operative but faith ? 1 Thes. ii. 13, ' Ye received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.'

[3.] It glorifies ; because they that believe eternal life so as to seek after it, and that whatever it cost them, they shall have it. You may always observe, in all God's dispensations of grace and favour, he would do nothing for men till they believe ; he could not, or rather would not, do it for them. We find it true of God's dispensation to the old church, and in the life of Christ upon earth—Can you believe ? Mark ix. 23, ' If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' So it is true of eternal life. But then this belief is supposed to be operative, and that we are resolved to take the way God hath appointed. As soon as we believe, we have a right and title : John v. 24, ' He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' And when we verify our faith by taking God's way, though others neglect it, then our right is confirmed : Mat. xix. 28, ' Ye that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Take regeneration either for a new state of the church (as some few do), when all things are new in the church, and old things are passed away, you shall be elders in the church (so some expound it) ; but I think properly and principally it is taken for the regeneration at the last day, when we shall have new bodies and new souls ; then we shall have all that our hearts can wish. When our service is over, we shall receive the end of our faith : 1 Peter i. 9, ' Receiving the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.'

Use. Let this commend faith to us, which is the great grace ; we must still exercise it in this world. Where we know God by hearing, faith is of use to us ; when we know him by vision and sight, the use of it ceases, but the fruit remaineth, for sight is the fruit of faith : John xx. 31, ' These things are written, that ye might believe that

Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' You shall have life in his name if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All that I shall press you to is a faith like Rahab's. Rahab heard the rumours of God's gracious works for Israel, and of his judgments upon their enemies, and upon this she owns the true God, and runs hazards for his people.

1. You have heard that God hath sent his Son into the world to save sinners; believe it, and believe it strongly; here is the grand truth you must live by.

2. This God hath given a law of grace, that we may be partakers of these benefits. Possibly the spies might inform Rahab of God's giving a law upon Mount Sinai; for it is not likely she would join herself so suddenly to Israel, if she knew not what laws they should live by. If that be uncertain, we are sure the Lord hath given a law of grace from Mount Zion, or the new covenant, wherein God hath showed us how we shall attain eternal life. Now heartily consent to stand to this covenant.

3. Upon this faith be sure to demonstrate by some real effects that it hath prevailed in your heart. For if you believe God's great promises, what do you venture upon them? Surely we do not believe great things if we do nothing to obtain them. I ever look upon this as a truth, that there is much more of unbelief in neglect than there is in humbling trouble or despairing fears. For the troubled person believes indeed the covenant of God, but he cannot make out his title, therefore he lies under despairing fears. The neglecter showeth that he accounts these things a fable, else he would more look after them, and exercise himself self-denyingly in godliness: 2 Peter i. 5, 10, 16, compared together; ver. 5, 'Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue,' &c.; ver. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure;' ver. 16, 'For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, &c. They that do not give diligence to grow in grace, they that do not give diligence by all self-denying acts to make their calling and election sure, they count the gospel a fable, and neglecting their duty, they show themselves to be unbelievers.

4. That which you do, let it be some self-denying act for God and his people. I join both together, because if a man love the one he will love the other, and the Lord's interest is only upheld by his people here in the world; his interest liveth and dieth with his people. And therefore, when we are willing to deny ourselves that we may own God's people, and join with them in all their sincere endeavours to advance the kingdom of Christ, then we shall know we believe in God, and that we have this true faith God requireth of us.