

SERMONS UPON 2 THESSALONIANS I.¹

SERMON I.

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.—2 THESS. i. 4.

WE still stick in the preface and introduction into this epistle, wherein the apostle signifieth his singular love to the Thessalonians, manifested in two effects—first, that he had given thanks to God for them, ver. 3; secondly, gloried of them among other christians, in the text. So that in the words observe—(1.) The form and manner of the commendation; (2.) The matter of it:

First, In the manner—

1. The person commending, 'We ourselves.' In the former epistle he speaketh of their faith as praised by others: 1 Thes. i. 8, 'In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.' Now he justifieth the common fame by his own testimony; he himself approved their constancy. (1.) *Laudavi a laudato.* It is easy to deceive the credulous multitude, but to deserve esteem of those who are best able to judge is a comfort to us. (2.) The fame of their receiving the faith was spread by others, but when they were in a confirmed estate of grace, Paul himself ventureth to give them his word and testimony, 'We ourselves,' &c. Where grace is eminent and notorious, it may be praised without suspicion of flattery. (3.) To keep up the value of our testimony, that it may add weight and credit to those that receive it. There was much in this, 'We ourselves.'

2. The act of praising, 'We glory in you,' *καυχώμεν.* Glorifying imports—(1.) Exultation or rejoicing of mind; (2.) The outward expression of it, by word of mouth or speech. The one cometh from the apprehension of some excellency, good, or benefit; the other from a desire that others may know how we are affected with it. But did this glorying become apostolical gravity? Yes; for—(1.) It was for the honour of God; for before he speaketh of the praising of them, he speaketh of his giving thanks to God, from whom they received

¹ The doctor began this chapter at the third verse, on which he preached five sermons, that are printed in volume [xvii. of this edition], containing the growth and increase of faith, from the nature, properties, examples, and instances of it in scripture.

these gifts and graces. He doth not challenge the glory as due to himself and his labours, but ascribeth all to God. (2.) For the encouragement of the Thessalonians. We ought to give a testimony to others that deserve it, not to curry favour with them, but to encourage them to perseverance in the way of God. (3.) For the example of others and the edification of the church; for he propounded them as a pattern of imitation. (4.) For his own comfort; he gloried in them as the seal and fruit of his ministry: 1 Thes. ii. 20, 'For our joy and glory are ye in the Lord.' For these reasons, when the work did first speak for itself, did Paul add his testimony.

3. The persons before whom, 'In the churches of God.' Not in profane assemblies or common meetings, but where the people of God were met together to worship God and receive spiritual benefit. They are called 'churches of God'—(1.) Because God instituted and founded them: Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' (2.) There God is worshipped and acknowledged: Ps. xxii. 3, 'He inhabiteth the praises of Israel.' (3.) There he manifests his power and presence: Eph. ii. 22, 'Built up to be an habitation of God through the Spirit.'

Secondly, The matter of his praise: their eminent graces—(1.) Mentioned and specified; (2.) Heightened by their grievous temptations.

1. The graces wherein they excelled, faith and patience. Before it was faith and love, now it is faith and patience. These two are often joined; as Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.' So Phil. i. 29, 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.' Faith goeth before suffering, for the sufferer must first be a believer; but when God calleth to it, both must go together. So Heb. x. 35, 36, 'Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience.' As if confidence and patience were but one and the same thing, at least very much of kin.

2. The grievousness of the temptations wherewith these graces were exercised: 'In all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.' (1.) In the term 'all' there is a multiplicity implied. (2.) And in the words, 'persecutions and tribulations,' the grievousness of their temptations. They were not only persecuted or brought into trouble, but the persecution took effect. 'Persecution' noteth the attempt of their adversaries, and 'tribulation' the success; their trouble was not only endeavoured but effected. Therefore it is said, Rom. viii. 35, 'Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?' (3.) In the word 'endured' is intimated that with great patience they bore these troubles, and yet continued firm and constant in the faith.

This latter branch I shall insist upon; and observe—

[1.] That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's dearest and choicest servants.

[2.] That a constant unconquered patience under persecutions and tribulations is a sign and fruit of a strong faith; and so it suiteth with what I lately handled concerning God's goodness and growth of faith.

Doct. 1. That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's

dearest and choicest servants : 2 Tim. iii. 12, ' All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ; ' Acts xiv. 22, he ' exhorted them to continue in the faith, saying, That through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. ' We must enter into the kingdom, and ordinarily it is through many tribulations.

1. That we may be conformed to our Lord, and pledge him in his bitter cup. Christ was a man of sorrows, and there would be a strange disproportion between him and us if we should altogether live in delicacy, ease, and pleasures : Col. i. 24, *ὑστερήματα Χριστοῦ*, ' That I may fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh. ' There are Christ's personal and Christ's mystical sufferings. The sufferings of Christ personal are complete and meritorious ; they need not to be filled up ; but Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12, the sufferings of Christ mystical are not complete until every member of his mystical body have their own allotted portion and share. Some drops of the storm light upon us ; the whole tempest did beat upon him. The apostle, to animate christians to suffer constantly and patiently, telleth us that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, Heb. ii. 10. Those that will partake with Christ in his kingdom must partake with him in his sorrows, at least resolve to do so, and fare as he fared. If you have a high esteem of Christ and low esteem of yourselves, you will easily consent to submit to the will of God herein, even to carry the cross after Christ. Paul counted all things but dung and dross that he might know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings, Phil. iii. 10. There is a great deal of sweetness and spiritual comfort in suffering after, for, and with Christ ; and we should count all things dung and dross to gain this experience. It is comfort enough to a gracious heart that he is made thereby more like his lord and master.

2. It is for our trial. Faith is most tried in afflictions. We have not ordinarily so clear a proof of the strength and growth of grace in us as then : 1 Peter i. 7, ' That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. ' We have spiritual advantage by our trials. Faith is discovered to be sound and saving : this is, and should be, of more worth to a gracious heart than the best gold on earth. A man may be deceived at other times, and think that faith strong which a trial discovereth to be weak ; as Peter : Mat. xxvi. 35, ' Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee. ' We can hardly believe ourselves to be so weak as we afterward find ourselves to be. A man may doubt, and think his faith weak, which a trial discovereth to be strong, Heb. x. 32 ; and Heb. xi. 34, ' Out of weakness were made strong ; ' pusillanimous at first, sinking under their fears, yet wonderfully strengthened by God. To those that have faith, to know they have it, and to be assured of it by a sensible trial, it is a greater benefit than much worldly treasure.

3. That the excellency of our spiritual estate may appear, which can afford us joy under the saddest temporal condition : John xvi. 33, ' In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace. ' A little will keep us comfortable and quiet. When all things succeed

well with us in the world, we live partly on the creature, partly on God; as it is easy to go down the stream when we have wind and tide, but to row against the stream, to bear up when we have waves and winds against us, that requireth much strength: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.' This will sweeten the bitter waters, like the wood in Marah, or the meal in the pot of Coloquintida. Without these sufferings we should not know so much. A drop of this honey will sweeten the bitterest cup we can drink of. In Christ we find all matter of joy, peace, and comfort.

4. We need these sufferings: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Ye are in heaviness for a season, if need be.' We need these things to mortify our pride, to reduce us to more close walking, Ps. cxix. 57, to tame our flesh, which is apt to wax wanton. Even those sufferings which are principally for Christ tend to the weakening of sin also, and are as vinegar and sour sauce to that luscious estate which we are apt to surfeit of. The honour, worldly wealth, and power of God's children do so strangely corrupt them, that when they get uppermost they make lamentable work in the world, and disgrace themselves and their profession. So that these persecutions and tribulations become a necessary part of God's discipline. Great and long prosperity doth pervert the best; castigations are therefore probatory.

Use 1. Information.

1. With what thoughts we should take up the stricter profession of christianity, namely, with expectations of the cross. Many think they may be good christians, yet all their days live a life of ease and peace, without any trouble or molestation. This is all one as if one should list himself a soldier and never expect battle, or as if a mariner should go to sea and always expect a calm; so unreasonable it is for a christian to expect no occasions of self-denial. No; all that will go to heaven had need be prepared and resolved. We must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, or else we shall be soon foundered and halt, Eph. vi. 15. You must allow for sufferings, and resolve upon the voyage whatever storms we meet with.

2. What fools they are that take up religion upon a carnal design of honour, ease, and plenty in the world. You may do so for a time, but the trials will come. There are inconveniences attend a true uniform zeal in the most peaceable times; but now and then Christ cometh with his fan thoroughly to purge his floor; therefore unless we can follow a naked Christ upon unseen encouragements, either we call that religion which is not religion, or else make way for a shameful retreat and change. The summer friends of the gospel, or those painted butterflies that flutter about it in the sunshine of prosperity, must expect a winter will come. Christ doth not invite his followers with promises of honour and riches, but rather telleth us of the cross, and persecution, and tribulation, of the worst at first, to discourage hypocrites, who cheapen and taste, but will not buy; to forearm his people that they may not be offended, that they may be willing to suffer these things when the Lord sees fit. Now whether they come or no, we must be prepared. God never intended Isaac should be sacrificed, yet he will have Abraham lay the knife to his throat, and make all ready.

3. How much they mistake that cannot endure to have their ears scratched with the remembrance of the cross, as if it were a lesson out of season, now when the profession of christianity is generally received in the christian world.

[1.] The warnings are frequent in scripture. And do we think the whole burden was laid upon the primitive christians, that we might profess christianity at ease? John xvi. 1, 'These things have I told you, that you might not be offended.' As Augustine, *Ep. ad Victorianum*—We pretend to believe the scriptures when we read them, and yet complain when they are fulfilled.

[2.] Though it be a pure calm for the present, and you see little need or use of this doctrine; they that have no sore care not for the salve: but there are strange revolutions in the world. The Shunamite, that stood in no need of the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, was fain to be beholden to the prophet's man, 2 Kings viii. 5. Such vicissitudes there are in human affairs.

[3.] It was never so well with the world but somewhat of Christ is made matter of dispute; and disputes beget interests, and those interests create animosities and hatreds, and hatreds troubles. Many, where they could not bring the world to the gospel, would bring the gospel to the world; and when they had contrived this discreet and middle course (as they thought), that should serve the turn for heaven and earth too, this begot the greatest contests in the christian world, and hath been the occasion of massacres, blood, and mischiefs in popery, which is christianity disguised into a worldly thing.

[4.] Forearming and preparing for troubles helpeth the other parts of christianity; for it is the means to cause us sit loose from the creature, and to introduce that weanedness and mortification which is so serviceable to the practice and power of godliness. We can hardly discharge duties unless we prepare for troubles. Unless we get a habit of patience, we are not *όλοκληροι*, James i. 4; and that which is lame is soon turned out of the way, Heb. xi. Christ can hardly be master of our persons unless he be master of our interests. We have them from his bounty, and therefore for his service do forego them when he calleth us thereunto. Martyrs are required in the time of the church's peace, as well as persecutions, to mortify our pride and worldliness, to tame our flesh; that if the occasion be wanting, the will to suffer anything for Christ may not be wanting. Our salvation and heaven cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, Acts x. 39. You can be no losers by Christ, Heb. xi. 35.

4. It informeth us that if this be not our lot and portion, we ought the more to bless God, and to be the more careful in the duties which belong to the season, and in years of plenty lay up (as Joseph did) for a time of famine and scarcity.

[1.] Be the more strict and holy: Acts ix. 31, 'When the churches had rest, they were edified, walking in the fear of God.' When we are not called to passive obedience, our active obedience should be more cheerfully performed. But is it indeed so? Our fathers suffered more cheerfully for Christ than we speak of him, and went more readily to the stake than we go to a sermon or the throne of grace. But yet it must be so, for our peace and comfort will cost us more in getting;

therefore unless we abound in the love and work of the Lord, we are like to be in the dark as to our eternal interests.

[2.] We must be more mortified to the world; for he that liveth a flesh-pleasing, a sense-pleasing life, is but ripening himself for apostasy, James iv. 4. He that will be a friend to the world will be an enemy to Christ. How can they that prize worldly prosperity and sensual satisfaction so much ever induce their hearts to part with these things? None are corrupted with prosperity but they are as much dejected with adversity: 2 Peter i. 6, 'To temperance patience.' These befriend one another. A man that shutteth up himself much with God can the better bear a prison; and he that is contented with a little can trust God in the loss of all.

[3.] He that aboundeth in charity, and is willing to communicate this world's goods to him that needeth, will the sooner venture all in Christ's hands: Gal. vi. 10, 'Do good while you have opportunity.' He that neglecteth or slighteth a command will murmur against providence when that is taken from him by force which he would not willingly give.

[4.] Diligence in holiness; for the martyr must have all the preceding graces, poor in spirit, meek, merciful, hungering after righteousness, pure in heart, &c., Mat. v. 1-12. You begrudge a little pains for God, how will you expose the body to all kind of sufferings? *Melior est impatientia boni*—Tertul.

[5.] If you cannot digest lighter afflictions, how will you bear greater? If you cannot bear with a scoff, a frown, or scorn, or resist the counsel of carnal friends, how will you bear the loss of life itself? There are private persecutions as well as public; therefore father and mother are put into the catalogue, and brother and sister, Luke xiv. 26. If you cannot endure a disgrace, a loss of preferment, how will you endure rapine, torture, and the fiery trial, &c.? 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses?' Jer. xii. 5.

Doct. 2. That a constant and unconquered patience under many persecutions and tribulations is a sign of a strong faith; for this is the evidence that the apostle produceth, that their faith grew exceedingly.

1. I shall show what is patience.

2. What of faith is manifested by it.

3. The reasons why this is the fruit and evidence.

I. What is patience? A contented endurance of painful evils. It is either moral or spiritual. The moral virtue is when, by such arguments as human prudence furnisheth us with, we harden ourselves to bear the evils that befall us in that honest course wherein we are engaged. The spiritual grace is the fruit of the Spirit, and we bear these evils from divine principles to divine ends. It concerneth a christian to see whether it be nature or grace that beareth him up under his troubles. The grace of patience, as it is wrought in us by God, who is therefore called 'the God of patience,' Rom. xv. 5, so it fetcheth its strength from the word of God: Rom. xv. 4, 'That we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' Now scriptural arguments are fetched either from the will of God, who appointeth us to this conflict, 1 Thes. iii. 3, or from the glory of God, which is promoted there-

by, Phil. i. 20, or else our final happiness, James i. 12, or from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ‘suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,’ 1 Peter ii. 21. Now these arguments will hold us more closely to our duty, and beget another kind of patience than mere nature can attain unto.

This patience, which is the grace, may be considered—(1.) Barely as tried; (2.) As tried with many and long afflictions.

1. Barely as tried. Some give up at the first assault. Impatience of adversity is the character of the stony ground; and it is said, Mat. xiii. 21, ‘When tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word, by and by he is offended.’ They do not stand long when God cometh to try their sincerity; this argueth no faith. Others hold up against the first brunt, but begin to be tired and wax weary in their minds, Heb. xii. 3. This argueth weak faith, which must be strengthened; it hath not *ἔργον τέλειον*, James i. 4. We must tarry till the perfection of patience be more thoroughly discovered.

2. As tried with many and long afflictions. Many: Heb. x. 32, *πολλὴν ἄβλησιν*; and divers trials, James i. 2; this is great patience. Long evils: Col. i. 4, ‘Strengthened with all might, unto all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness.’ Long-suffering is patience extended. The perfection of grace is not discovered till put on many and great trials. Many cannot bear any evil; they have no faith. Some hold out in slighter temptations for a while; they have weak faith. But the constant and unconquered patience is the fruit of strong faith. Thus I have shown what patience is.

II. What of faith is manifested by it? All kinds of faith—(1.) Assent; (2.) Consent; or (3.) Confidence.

1. Assent; for we must believe the truth with a divine faith before we can suffer for it; a probable human faith will not be sufficient. How can we endure all those afflictions and trials for supernatural things, which merely depend upon divine revelation, unless we be firmly persuaded of the truth of them? The cause for which we suffer is the gospel; the comfort and support which we have in suffering is the hope of eternal life. Now both adherence to the cause and the hope of the reward are built upon assent, and receive their strength from the strength of assent: Acts xiv. 22, ‘He exhorteth them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.’

2. Consent, or fidelity to Christ in our covenanted duty, Mat. xvi. 24. In great afflictions we are tried whether we love anything above Christ: Mat. x. 37, ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.’ The resolution of this consent is the thing tried, whether prepared to endure anything for Christ’s sake, Acts xxi. 13. It is easier to discourse of patience than to exercise it in time of trial; as it is easier to build a castle in time of peace than to defend it in time of war. Unless we overcome the devil, world, and flesh, as well as renounce them, we cannot be faithful to Christ; unless we more and more get this deadness to the world, weaken this softness, delicacy, and impatience of the flesh, &c.

3. Confidence, or relying upon God’s promises, which are our great support in all troubles and tribulations. Two sort of promises—(1.)

That God will enable you to bear them ; (2.) That he will graciously reward them. First, enable you to bear them, 2 Tim. i. 12, 2 Tim. iv. 18, 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus faith supporteth us. Secondly, that he will graciously reward them. Christianity is nothing else but a life of faith and hope, quickened by future promises ; especially in our afflicted estate. Faith receiveth all its strength from a sense of the world to come, Rom. viii. 18, 2 Cor. iv. 17. A heart in heaven is fortified against all evils below. When we are suffering with the church militant, if we can but look up to the church triumphant, we shall see all made up to us that we can lose or suffer here.

III. The reasons.

1. Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations ; therefore they are called 'the trial of our faith,' James i. 3, *δοκίμιον πίστεως*. And when Christ telleth Peter that Satan had desired to winnow him as wheat, he saith, 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32 ; that is, be not conquered by his terrors, so as utterly to forsake the faith. Satan's spite is at faith, and God permitteth it for the trial of our faith ; and therefore if a man know the strength and vigour of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he hath a clearer proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times.

2. It is the grace that is of most use to us in such times. Nothing can bear us up but faith : 1 Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith ;' adhering to the truths of the gospel, and depending upon the promises thereof, that we neither quit our duty nor our confidence : Eph. vi. 16, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith,' &c. As long as our belief is firm, we are guarded as with a shield. The shield defendeth the body and all other pieces of the armour, and beateth back those violent and piercing temptations whereby Satan would shake our constancy. It engageth the almighty power of God and Christ for us, and is the life and vigour of all other graces. Three benefits we have by it—

[1.] It keepeth us, that we do not for these things question the love of God : Isa. xlix. 14, 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.' Thus did the people lament themselves in the time of their long and tedious captivity, as if God had no regard to them. So Ps. lxxvii. 9, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' We think God hath no love, no fatherly care over us, or question our adoption, Heb. xii. 5.

[2.] Take no sinful course for our escape : Ps. cxxv. 3, 'Let not them put forth their hand to iniquity ;' ver. 5, 'As for them who turn aside to crooked paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.' It should not shake our constancy, and persuade us to do as wicked men do : Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste ;' Heb. xi. 35, 'Not accepting deliverance,' with the displeasure of God and hazard of conscience.

[3.] That we may not faint and grow weary of duties, even of life itself, as Jonah iv. 8. Faith keepeth us from fainting, Ps. xxvii. 13, Ps. xlii. 5.

3. In such times faith is manifested. The true and sensible discovery of faith is patience under manifold tribulations.

[1.] Because then we have nothing to stick unto but the comforts

and supports of faith. While we have anything to live upon on this side God, either for maintenance, or protection, or safety, God hath but the name; as those, Isa. iv. 11, 'We will eat our own bread, we will wear our own apparel, only call us by thy name.' Though the flesh liveth upon its own proper supply, yet we have so much religious manners as to give God the name. But now, when these are removed from us, then it is more plainly seen what we live upon, and how we live, either by faith or sense. Besides, in daily and light trials reason will minister some comfort; as philosophy knew little better than *non si male nunc, et olim sic erit*; that their present troubles will shortly cease, and they shall shortly partake of their delights here, and so force themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles when they cannot help it, and hope shortly it will be better with them as to their worldly estate. Thus in daily and light trials a man of understanding may hold up the head; but when one deep calleth to another, then nature yieldeth. Many persecutions and tribulations spend all our probabilities; these troubles and dangers leave us wholly to faith: Rev. xiii. 10, 'Here is the faith and patience of the saints.' The fit time to exercise these graces; that is, in the trials of antichrist; they will have work enough for faith and patience. Sense findeth nothing to live upon; reason, or confidence, or hope findeth nothing to live upon; only God's promises keep faith and patience alive.

[2.] Its proper genuine effect is then produced to the view of conscience, and of the world also. It sensibly appeareth what boldness and courage our belief of God's promises hath produced in us, by enduring the greatest extremities rather than forsake the way of the Lord. Certainly the strength of faith, as of all other graces, is most seen in the effects. Now there is a twofold effect of faith—to obey with cheerfulness, and to endure with patience. This is called the 'Work of faith,' 2 Thes. i. 11, the imperate acts. Now, when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, there is no longer a veil upon it; the sincerity of it is unquestionable. The latter we are upon, enduring with patience: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, believe, and therefore speak.' Boldly own the truths of the gospel, whatever troubles we endure for it. This showeth a mighty spirit of faith is come upon a man, when death worketh in him, ver. 12. In afflictions, by patience and constancy we confess Christ and his truth, and sensibly express faith in him. But you will say, Is this such a manifest token of our sincerity? Doth not the apostle say, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing?' I answer—We must distinguish between judging of others and judging ourselves. Of others, by the bare outward acts or effects: Mat. vii. 20, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' Of ourselves, by habits and effects together. If the ground or inward cause of our suffering be the love of Christ, the belief of the reward, the humble neglect of the flesh, contempt of the world, and all this verified in forsaking all for Christ, the case is evident and clear.

Use 1. Let us determine with ourselves that suffering with Christ is the way to reign with him. We would fain have continual prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the flesh, but the scripture showeth us another way. God's gold must be tried; they that would overcome

must fight. If we like not of these terms, let the way of Christ alone; but if we desire his glory hereafter, let us be contented with this lot here.

2. Deliberately sit down, and count what it may cost you to follow Christ and save your souls, Luke xiv. 28, that so your thoughts of it may fortify your resolutions, and you may not count it strange when it cometh, 1 Peter. iv. 12. Suffering doth not surprise christians indeed as a thing unlooked for, for they have been long preparing for it. Many read of suffering in the gospel, but see no probability of it, therefore dream of a smooth and easy way to heaven.

3. Consent to do so. In resolution forsake all, Luke xiv. 26; which resolution must still be renewed and strengthened; for if we be careless, faith will fail.

4. When it cometh, endure it with patience. It should be some pleasure and satisfaction to your souls to find yourselves in the common way to heaven, 1 Peter iv. 13. Nothing is too dear and hard for securing heaven.

SERMON II.

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.—2 THESS. i. 5.

THE apostle speaketh from the commendation to the consolation; wherein the apostle declareth the use and fruit of these sufferings—(1.) Generally; (2.) Particularly. A notable means of evidencing the general judgment and their own particular glory.

From the general use, *ἐνδειγμα τῆς δικαίας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ*—

Doct. That the persecutions which the godly suffer from the wicked are a plain demonstration that God shall one day judge the world, and will give to every one according to his works.

I shall first state the point, and then show how it is a demonstration, &c.

1. It concerneth us to be fully persuaded of the truth of a future judgment, wherein punishments and rewards shall be dispensed, for two reasons—(1.) It establisheth our true and proper comfort, for then our wrongs shall be righted, Phil. i. 28, and our labour of love recompensed, Heb. vi. 10. (2.) Our duty is bound upon us by the strictest tie, for this is the great awe-band upon us, Eccles. xii. 14.

2. This judgment is a righteous judgment: Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now he trieth the world in patience, conniveth at many faults; though none are punished now besides or beyond their deservings, yet all are not punished according to their deservings.

3. This judgment needeth to be evidenced to us, not only by the light of scripture, but reason. Though light of scripture be more strong and