

## SERMON XXXII.\*

### GOD'S WITHDRAWING HIS PRESENCE, THE CORRECTION OF HIS CHURCH.

*O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.—ISA. lxiii. 17.*

THESE are words that carry a great deal of dread in them: tremendous words, methinks, as any in the book of God. And according as our concernment shall be found in them, they require very sad thoughts of heart. It is come now to the last, this is the last cast; if we miss in pursuing this great inquiry, we are undone for ever: 'O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways? Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?' God is in this matter whereof we have been complaining.

It is the true church of God that speaks these words. This is plain in the acting of faith as to the great interest and privilege of adoption, in the verse foregoing, where they say, 'Doubtless thou art our Father:' however things are with us, 'doubtless thou art our Father.' When all other evidences fail, faith will secretly maintain the soul with a persuasion of its relation unto God; as you see by the church in this place. They were 'all as an unclean thing,' and their 'holiness all faded away as a leaf;' Isa. lxiv. 6. And yet faith maintains a sense of a relation to God; and therefore they cry, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: O Lord, thou art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.' And I am persuaded some of you have found it so, that faith hath maintained an interest in a relation to God, when all particular evidences have failed. So it is in

\* This sermon was preached on a solemn day of fasting and prayer, March 21, 1675. For which occasion the Doctor had prepared another discourse, but by a special reason which then occurred, had his thoughts directed to this subject.

our head, Jesus Christ, when he cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' When all particular evidences fail, he can still say, 'My God, my God.' So is it here with this miserable and distressed church and people of God; all is lost and gone, and yet faith cries, 'Doubtless thou art our Father.' And if in the matters of this day, God would help us to maintain, and not let go our interest in him as our Father by faith, we should have a bottom and foundation to stand upon. If it be so with us as hath been confessed to God, and I fear it is worse, we shall be at a loss for our particular evidences, at one time or other; but yet it will be a great advantage when faith can maintain its station, and we be enabled to say, 'Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel will not own us,' such vile creatures; 'and though our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' and our holiness 'fadeth away as a leaf,' and our adversaries have trodden upon us, 'yet doubtless thou art our Father.' The Lord help us to say thus when we depart, and we shall yet have a foundation of hope.

I would observe here the condition of the church at that time. It was a state of affliction and oppression; of oppression on the one hand, and of deep conviction of sin on the other. It is well when they go together.

First, It was a time of distress and oppression; as is declared, ver. 18. 'Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.' The adversary had grievously oppressed them: but that which the church was most concerned in, was, that they had trodden down the sanctuary, disturbed the holy assemblies, and broken up the worship of God. And it is well, brethren, if under all oppression and distresses that may befall us, we do really find our principal concern is for the treading down God's sanctuary. Whatever else lay upon them, this was that they complained of; 'Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.'

Secondly, It was also a time of deep conviction of sin with them. As the prayer is continued unto the end of the next chapter, you may see what a deep conviction of sin was fallen upon them, in ver. 6, 7. 'Behold we are all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name.

that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee: thou hast hid thy face from us, and melted us down because of our iniquities.'

Well then, suppose it be a state of great oppression, and a state of great conviction of sin: what is the course that we should take? We may turn ourselves this way and that way; but the church, you see, is come to this, to issue all in an inquiry after, and a sense of God's displeasure, manifesting itself by spiritual judgments. And this, in truth, brethren, if I understand any thing of the state and condition of my own soul, and yours, and of the generality of the churches of God in the world, is that which we are in particular called to, and where we are to issue all this business: namely, to inquire into God's displeasure, and the reason of it, manifesting itself in spiritual judgments. 'O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways? And why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?'

It is but a little I shall speak to you at this time: God, I hope, will give us other seasons to pursue the same design; my present distemper, and other occasions, will not suffer me now to enlarge; however, I will lay a foundation (if God help me) by opening the words unto you.

I. What is it to err from the ways of God?

II. What is it to have our hearts hardened from the fear of God?

III. What ways are there, whereby God may cause us to err from his ways, and harden our hearts from his fear?

IV. What may be the reasons why the Lord should deal thus severely with a poor people, after they have walked with him, it may be, many years, that at length they should be brought to this complaint: 'Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?' And then,

V. What is to be done for relief in this condition? What course is to be taken?

These are the things that should be first spoken to from the text; and then we should come to the last clause: 'Return for thy servants' sake,' &c. I shall proceed as far as I am able.

I. What is it to err from the ways of God?

The ways of God are either God's ways towards us, or

our ways towards him, that are of his appointment. God's ways towards us are the ways of his providence. Our ways towards God are the ways of obedience and holiness. We may err in both.

I think in that place of the Hebrews, 'They have always erred in heart, and have not known my ways,' God principally intends his ways towards them; they did not know the ways of his providential workings, how mightily he had wrought for them. But the ways that God hath appointed for us to walk in towards him, are these here intended. Now we may err from thence two ways: 1. In the inward principle; 2. In the outward order.

1. We may err in the inward principle. When the principle of spiritual life in our hearts decays, when we 'fade as a leaf,' and wither, then is this our case.

2. We err as to outward order, when we fail in the performance of duty in our walking, and in the course of our obedience and holiness that God hath called us unto. These for the most part go together. But from the text, and the whole context, I judge the first here to be principally intended; a failing in the principle, in our hearts, and in a lively power of walking in the ways of God, and of living unto him. So that to err from the ways of God, is to have our hearts weakened, spiritually disabled, often turned aside from the vigorous, effectual, powerful walking with God, which we are called unto.

II. What is it to have our hearts hardened from the fear of God?

There is a twofold hardening from God's fear: 1. There is a total hardening; and, 2. A partial hardening.

1. There is a total hardening, like that mentioned, Isa. vi. 10. 'Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' This was a total hardening that came upon the Jews when they rejected Christ. That is not the hardening here intended: those that are given up to a total hardness will not thus humble themselves before God, nor plead with God. Blessed be God that he hath not given us up to a total hardening, that we should utterly and wickedly depart from his ways.

2. There is a partial hardening, mentioned by the apostle, Heb. iii. 13. Take heed, 'lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;' lest there come a hardness upon you that may be to your disadvantage. And it is this partial hardening that is here intended: and wherein it consists, I shall speak a little afterward. It is this partial hardening that is intended in the text: 'Thou hast hardened our hearts from thy fear.'

III. How is God said to cause us to err from his ways, and to harden our hearts from his fear?

God is said to do it these several ways:

1. God is said to do that (and it is not an uncommon form of speech in Scripture) whose contrary he doth not do, when it might be expected, as it were, from him. If there be a prophet that doth prophesy so and so, 'I the Lord have deceived that prophet,' Ezek. xiv. 9. that is, I have not kept him from being deceived, but suffered him to follow the imaginations of his own heart, whereby he should be deceived. God may be said to cause us to err from his ways, and to harden our hearts from his fear merely negatively, in that he hath not kept us up to his ways, nor kept our hearts humble and soft in them.

Again, God hardens men judicially, in a way of punishment. This is a total hardening, of which we spoke before. And there are these acts of it, which I think are as evident in the times wherein we live, as the judgments of God have been in the plague, or burning of the city, inundations, or any thing else. Spiritual judgments of God in hardening the hearts of men judicially and penally to their destruction, are as visible to every considering person, as any of God's outward judgments whatsoever. This will appear if we consider the following things wherein it consists.

(1.) The first thing God doth, when he hardens men's hearts penally, is to give them up to their own lusts. It is directly expressed, Rom. i. 24. 'Wherefore God gave them up to their hearts' lusts.' When God leaves men, and gives them up to pursue their own lusts with delight and greediness, then he is hardening them. And this is a visible judgment of God at this day: he takes off shame, fear, all restraint and disadvantages, and gives men up to their hearts' lusts.

(2.) The second thing is, that God in penal hardening,

gives men up to Satan to blind them, darken them, harden them; for he is 'the God of this world that blinds the eyes of men.' And the great work of blinding and hardening men is committed unto him: and the principal way whereby he works at this day, is by being a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets, crying, Peace, peace, when God hath not spoken a word of peace. As it was in the business of Ahab, when Satan went and caught at a commission to seduce Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead; he did it by being a lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets. God is visibly at work in the world with this judgment, giving men up unto Satan, acting in the mouths of the false prophets, who cry, Peace, peace, to all sorts of sinners, when God speaks not one word of peace.

(3.) The third way whereby God doth judicially give up men to hardness of heart, is, by supplying them in his providence with opportunities to draw out their lusts. They shall have opportunity for them. It is commonly given for one of the darkest dispensations of divine providence towards men, when it orders things so that they shall have opportunities to accomplish their lusts, and go on in their ways administered unto them.

(4.) Lastly, In pursuit of all these God gives them over to a 'reprobate mind,' Rom. i. that is, a mind that can neither judge nor approve of any thing that is good. Propose to men the most convincing things wherein their own interest and concern lies, shew them that eternal ruin lies at the door, it is all one, they having a mind that can judge of nothing that is good. And the world is full of evidences of this work of God.

3. God may be said to cause men to err from his ways, and to harden their hearts from his fear, by withholding, upon their provocation, some such supply of his Spirit, and actings of his grace, as they have formerly enjoyed to keep up their hearts to the ways, and in the fear of God. And that is the hardening here intended. The Lord had withheld upon just provocations, those supplies of his grace and Spirit which formerly were enjoyed, and which had given them a vigorous spirit in the ways of God, and a tender heart in the fear of God, which now they have lost, or else they could never have been sensible of it.

From what has been said we may make the following observations.

*Observation 1.* Even true believers themselves may for a season so err from the ways of God, as to have their hearts partially hardened from his fear, and may fall under this state and condition, to err from the ways of God, by a decay of the principle of grace; and so to have their hearts hardened from his fear, that they know not where they are, what they are doing, how it is with them, which way to look for relief to supply themselves, or how to recover strength, or heal themselves; but are forced to cry, 'O Lord, why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?'

*Observation 2.* God himself hath a righteous hand in this frame of spirit, that sometimes befalls believers.

*Observation 3.* This frame is the most deplorable condition that can befall the church of God at any time; which is manifest upon these two accounts; that it both takes away all solid evidences of God's special love; and inevitably exposes us to outward distresses and ruin, if it be not remedied. And therefore it is a most deplorable condition to be brought into such a state.

Let us now a little inquire, as we before proposed, what it is to have our hearts hardened thus partially from the fear of God.

The fear of God may be considered in several respects: as it regards sin, and so is a fear of caution and humility; or as it regards judgments, and so is a fear of reverence, wisdom, and diligence to improve them; or lastly, as it regards duty, and so becomes a fear of obedience and watchfulness. Now the want of a due sense of sin, of judgments, or of a due attendance unto duties, is this partial hardening.

(1.) A partial hardening consists in the want of a due sense of sin. It is the fear of God alone that can give us a due sense of sin. Judgments will give dread, and convictions disquiet; but it is the fear of God alone that gives a due sense of sin. Therefore when we want this, our hearts are in some measure hardened from the fear of God, which discovers itself in the following particulars: [1.] A want of a due sense of secret sins; [2.] A want of a due sense of sin in an uncircumspect walking; [3.] A want of a due sense

of surprisal into known sins; [4.] A want of a due sense of the sins of others. Where these things are, there is hardening from the fear of God.

[1.] This hardening consists in a want of a due sense of secret sins. And there is much in this. I shall but just name things unto you. The psalmist lays great weight on it; Psal. xix. 12. 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; and cleanse thou me from secret faults.' In these two lie the life of a believer. And there is no more safety, if we are not cleansed from secret sins, than if we are not kept back from presumptuous sins. Every one will conclude, if they are not kept back from presumptuous sins, they are undone for ever; but the danger is the same, if they are not cleansed, and have not a due sense of secret sins.

If it be asked, What are these secret sins? 1st. They are the vain imaginations of the mind; 2dly. The corrupt actings of the affections of the heart; and, 3dly. A frame of soul suited unto them. These are the things I intend by secret sins.

1st. The vain imaginations of the mind. The Holy Ghost tells us that by nature 'all the imaginations of the heart of man are evil, and that continually.' And God knows what remainders there are of this vanity of mind, and these vain imaginations in all our hearts. I place it at the head of what I intend, whereof, if we have not a due sense, we are under hardening from the fear of God. These vain imaginations of our mind, are such as no eye sees, none knows, not the angels in heaven, nor the devils, but are the special object of the eye, and sight, and knowledge of God.

2dly. The corrupt actings and desires of our affections, wherein lust conceiveth. Lust tempts and seduces in vain imaginations, but conceiveth in the corrupt desires and actings of our affections.

3dly. And both these, if indulged in any measure, will be continually pressing upon our nature; both the vain imaginations of the mind, and the corrupt actings of the affections towards perishing, worldly, sensual things, either to lawful objects in an undue manner, or to unlawful objects, will both be pressing on the mind; and if, by solicitation, they take place upon it, then the mind is cast into a dead,



lifeless, carnal, loose frame; which frame also I reckon among these secret sins.

Now, brethren, more or less these things are true in us, according to the several degrees of grace we have received, through the woful negligence we have been betrayed into. Have we a due sense of these things? Or can we walk with boldness and confidence, peace and undisturbedness in our minds day and night, though these things be upon us? If so, we are in some measure hardened from the fear of God. The fear of God hath not its proper work upon us, which would keep us deeply sensible of these things, deeply afflict us for them, keep us in an abhorrence of them, and make us watchful against them night and day; and not suffer vain thoughts to come and go without spiritual conflicts, nor inordinate affections to the world, without wounds given to it by the Spirit of God. If it is not so with us, our hearts are hardened from the fear of God.

[2.] This partial hardening also contains in it a want of a due sense of an irregular course of walking. There is a course of walking that will please the world, satisfy the church, and which professors shall greatly approve of; and yet if a man come to examine his own heart by the rule, he shall find his course of walking judged: for though the world hath nothing to object against us, and though professors do well approve of us; yet when we come to the rule, that will discover our iniquity. We are bound to walk by rule: 'God will have mercy on them that walk according to this rule.' We are bound to walk circumspectly in all things: 'Walk circumspectly, redeeming the time; worthy of God; worthy of the Lord;' which extend to all duties of our walk in the whole course of our lives. If we satisfy ourselves that our walk is such as answers known duties that are required of us, that none in the world can lay blame upon us, and professors will approve of; but do not bring it to the rule, and judge it there, we err from the ways of God: and if we bring it to the rule, and judge it there, and have not a due sense, so as to be greatly humbled for it, our hearts are so far hardened from the fear of God; for if we were in the fear of God all the day long, as we ought to be, it would be so with us. Many men's boldness and confidence in the world, and many men's peace will be resolved

at length into a neglect of this duty, that they have not proved their walk by this rule, and that light God hath set up in their own souls. We may, I say, brethren, have something of this partial hardness upon our hearts in these instances, want of a deep sense as to secret sins, want of self-judging as to our irregular walking, wherein it comes short of the rule, the holy rule we are to attend unto. And who can say of his walk, that it is worthy of God and the Lord, which yet we are called unto? Alas, it is not worth the owning ourselves, and the profession we make; how much less is it worthy of God?

[3.] This hardening likewise carries it in a want of a due sense of sin upon surprisal into known sins. 'There is no man that liveth and sinneth not;' but this respects known sins: I do not mean sins that are known unto others, but sins we know in particular, wherein we have offended against God. And known sins are great sins, sins against light, and for the most part against engagements and promises of watchfulness; and there is something, if we examine thoroughly, of wilfulness in them: and great sins should have great sorrow and great humiliation. Truly, brethren, I am afraid, and I would be jealous over myself and you, that we are apt to put off even known sins upon slighter terms than the rule of the covenant doth admit of. We are apt to resolve them in general into the covenant of grace and mercy, or to pass them over with one or two confessions, or the like, and do not bring every known sin unto its proper issue in the blood of Christ, as we ought. If we do not do this, we are hardened thus partially from the fear of God. The true fear of God would keep us up to this, that no one known sin should ever pass us, without a particular issuing of it in the blood of Christ, and obtaining peace in it.

[4.] Want of a due sense of the sin of others is a great sign that we are partially hardened from God's fear; as it is a sign men are totally hardened, when they do not only commit sin themselves, but have pleasure in them that do it. We have before us the sins of professors, the sins of the world, the provoking sins of the nation, in the generation wherein we live, and the sins of all sorts of men; and I think there is not in any one duty more spiritual wisdom required of believers, than how to deport themselves, with a suitable

frame of heart, in reference to the sins of other men. Some are ready to be contented that they should sin, and sometimes ready to make sport at their sins, and for the most part it is indifferent unto us at what rate men sin in the world, so it go well with us or the church of Christ. We understand but little of that: 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law;' Psal. cxix. 136. I confess, I think there is little of this in the world that we can truly say, as he did, by the Spirit of God, that our eyes run down with water, because other men, all sorts of men, keep not God's law. There is a 'sighing and mourning for all the abominations that are done among a people.' What people? Truly people that were idolaters, and false worshippers, and very wicked, as that people was at that time: yet God required there should be 'sighing and mourning for all the abominations;' and took special notice of the working of grace that one way above all other things. And the Lord help us, I am afraid we have very small concern for the sins of other men. And it is resolved into these two principles: want of zeal for God's glory; and want of compassion to the souls of men, which would make us deeply concerned for the sins of other men. Sin in the world is grown a common thing to us; we do not rend our garments, when we hear of all the blasphemies and atheism in the world all the blood, uncleanness, profaneness, oaths. Every sin is grown common to us; nobody is affected; 'None taketh hold upon God,' saith the prophet. What will be the end of these things? Yet we speak of them as commonly as of our daily food. This is not to be under the power of the fear of the Lord. There is a partial hardness upon us from the fear of the Lord in that general, and almost universal unconcernedness that is upon us about the sins of other men.

I thought to have spoken to the remaining heads of this partial hardness of our hearts from God's fear; the want of a due sense of God's judgments; and the want of a due attendance unto, and walk with God in a way of duty: but I shall wave them, and proceed to the fourth thing proposed to be inquired into.

IV. Why doth the holy God deal thus with a professing people? What reason can we find in ourselves, why it should be so, in making this complaint, that we neither charge God

foolishly, as the author and cause of sin; nor go about to extenuate our own sins, but aggravate and burden our consciences with a sense of them? Why doth the holy God thus deal with us?

The reasons are of two sorts: 1. What provokes God unto it, which are the procuring reasons; 2. What God aims at in it, which are the final reasons, why it is thus with us.

1. What provokes God to it? I answer, three things.

(1.) Unthankfulness for mercy received. Thus in the chapter wherein is my text, it is said, ver. 8—10. 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.' God doth in this matter turn to be our enemy; he fights against us. Why doth he so? Because he hath redeemed us in his love, because he hath borne us in his arms all the days of our lives, because he hath manifested that in all our afflictions he was afflicted, because he had been a Saviour, and heard us; and under all these mercies received, we have rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit, have been unthankful and ungrateful: therefore he is become our enemy, and fights against us. I beg of you, brethren, that we may call over those innumerable mercies we have received from the Lord, spiritual mercies, temporal mercies, and consider whether these evils be not befallen us; whether our unthankfulness for mercy hath not caused God to become our enemy, and to fight against us.

(2.) A second reason is, inordinate cleaving to the things of the world at a most undue season. It may be it would not provoke God so much thus to fight against us, and harden our hearts from his fear, if the season of it was not undue. Do not we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, that God is unsettling all things here below, and that all these things shall be dissolved? When God gives so many intimations, that 'all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Cleaving inordinately to the things of the world, at such a season, is that which provoketh God to deal thus; 'For the

iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.' God smote them for the iniquity of their covetousness in such a woful undue season. Let us, brethren, be at work; I may be under great mistakes and misapprehensions, but I must tell you what is upon my heart; I cannot but think, that unless we are particularly at work every one of us, we shall be overtaken with these dismal and dreadful effects, and God will appear against us, and fight against us.

(3.) The third reason is, our unprofitableness, and unsuitableness to the means of grace we have enjoyed. O, the barren land of England, upon which the rain hath often fallen, and hath brought forth nothing but briers and thorns! We have had our proportion in it, brethren, you of this congregation can even make your boast of what you have enjoyed of this and that man's ministry for many years; but, O, the leanness and barrenness that is among us now all is done, our unsuitableness to the means we have enjoyed! We may repent one day that we ever had any among us who excelled others in gifts and graces, if we profit no more. We have not profited suitably to the means we have enjoyed, but every vain and foolish imagination hath turned us aside from keeping as we ought to the good and holy ways of God. We do not flourish in fruitfulness, in savouriness, and profitableness answerable to what the dispensations of God have been towards us; for the dew of God hath been upon us from time to time.

Now besides these things named, which are public causes, why God hath brought us under this dispensation, let us all search our hearts, and say, 'Lord, why hast thou caused me thus far to err from thy ways, and hardened my heart from thy fear?' Why have I not former faith, love, affections, zeal? Why do not I mourn more? Where are my tears and humiliation? Those heart-breaking sighs and groans after God which my heart was once filled withal? O Lord, 'why is my heart thus hardened from thy fear?' Let us inquire into the particular reasons, that at last we may come to cry, 'Return, O Lord, for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thy inheritance.'

2. What does God aim at in such a dispensation? We

have mentioned the procuring reasons and causes: now what are the final ends, why God will thus deal with us?

There are two ends the holy God seems to have in these things.

(1.) The first is to awaken us unto the consideration of what an all-seeing God he is, with whom we have to do. When we please the world, and one another, and ourselves in our walkings and conversations, God will have us know, he is displeased. Though we please ourselves, and cry, Peace, and please the world, and one another; yet God will so withdraw his Spirit and grace, that we shall be forced to say, Why is God thus displeased with us? He will have us glorify him, as one that is an all-seeing God; as one that knows our inward frames, and tries us upon them.

(2.) God doth it to awaken us. If there be any thing of true grace in our hearts, a sense of spiritual judgments will awaken us, when all outward judgments in the world will not do it: no, if thunder and lightning be round about us, if ruin and the sword be before us, and the earth underneath be ready to swallow us up, they will not work so kindly upon a believer's heart, as a sense of spiritual judgments. I hope God hath a design of love to awaken us all by this dispensation, to return unto him.

But to proceed to the last inquiry.

V. What way shall we take now for retrieving our souls out of this state and condition?

One way is prescribed here. It is by prayer: 'Return, O Lord.' It is to beg of God to return.

What arguments have we to plead with God to return? This being the case, the arguments here given are peculiar to the case; and we may plead them. They are two: 1. Sovereign mercy and compassion; and, 2. Faithfulness in covenant. They are both here pleaded.

1. Sovereign mercy: ver. 15. 'Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercy towards me? are they restrained?' Our great plea in this case is upon sovereign mercy and compassion. Plead the pity of God; beg mercy of God; come to God, as those that stand in need of mercy, and of the sounding of his bowels.

2. The second argument is, God's faithfulness in the covenant: ver. 16. 'Doubtless thou art our Father:' we are thine.

These are the two arguments we are night and day to plead with God, for our recovery from this state and condition of erring from the ways of God, and of having our hearts hardened from his fear: sovereign mercy, and covenant faithfulness. And this is all I shall speak to at this time.