

THE RUIN OF MYSTICAL JERICHO.*

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days.—HEB. XI. 30.

THIS verse suits somewhat to the occasion : † therefore I have made choice of it at this time. This chapter contains the triumph of faith in the hearts and souls of those in whom this blessed grace is planted ; so that the excellency and office of all graces are attributed to it. There is a stirring up of all other graces whatsoever in faith. All the worthies that are spoken of before, they did that they did, and ‘ obtained a good report by faith.’ The Spirit of God goes on here, and shews a glorious effect of this blessed grace, in the falling down of the walls of Jericho. This short verse is taken out of the story of the conquest of Jericho, mentioned in Josh. vi., in the latter end of the chapter, where you have the whole story set down at large. I need not rehearse it ; and withal you have there a curse set down, that whosoever should go about again to build the walls of Jericho, he should lay the foundation in his first-born, and in his youngest son he should set up the gates. He that would raise up such a cursed building again, he should do it with the overthrow of his own building, of his own family ; as the Scripture calls a man’s house a building. ‡ He should lay the foundation in his eldest son, and build the gates at the death of his youngest son.

And a little to acquaint you with the fulness of the word, before I come to the story, you have an audacious cursed attempt to build the walls of Jericho again, in 1 Kings xvi. toward the latter end, ver. 34, in a wicked king’s time, in Ahab’s time. There was one so adventurous, one Hiel, that he would build Jericho. He laid the foundation in Abiram, his first-born,

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† In margin, ‘ Novemb. 5.’—G.

‡ בן, a son ; from בנה, to build.—ED.

and set up the gates in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua the son of Nun. You see whence this story is fetched. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days.' They were compassed about seven days, and the ark in the midst; and the seventh day they went seven times about, and then the walls fell down, as you have it in the story. But to come to the words; and to hasten to that I specially mean to touch at this time.

First of all, observe here, that Jericho had mighty walls, as you see in the story. It had walls, and trusted in these walls; or else they would have come out and have made conditions of peace with Israel. But as they had walls, so they were confident in them; as you see the spies, in Num. xiii. 28, they tell what walled cities they had, and that terrified them.

And next you see here, that God overthrows their walls; and by what means? By poor and base means, by trumpets of rams' horns. They had silver trumpets, but they used not them, but meaner instruments, rams' horns. Those were the means; and the time that they used them, seven days together; and then that by faith, using these means, they overthrew the walls of Jericho, they fell down. From hence, by analogy and proportion, we may see,

First of all, that carnal men they build up walls, and put their trust in them.

The second is, that God confounds these courses.

The third is, that God doth it by weak and silly means, believed by faith.

The last point is, that faith in the use of these means overcomes all. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days.' And then we shall come to other things that concern us, and apply it to the time.

Doct. 1. Natural men, since the fall, they must have somewhat to trust to.

Since man lost his first prop and confidence, and communion with God, he turns to the creature. There is always some confidence in some creature; and men leave God in what measure they trust that. When Cain was banished his father's house, then he falls to building of cities; he must have some contentment. And those that were escaped the flood, within a hundred years after the flood, they must build a tower of Babel, that should reach to heaven, to get themselves a name, wanting better courses. Every one will have some castle and wall of Jericho to trust to. Riches are the rich man's stronghold, as Solomon saith, Prov. xi. 16. Abithophel trusted to a shrewd head and policy, that proved his ruin afterwards. The Jews had outward sanctity to trust to, opposing it to the righteousness of Christ; the righteousness of faith, Rom. x. 6. They would set a-foot a dead righteousness that could not stand; and therefore they were shut from the righteousness of God in Christ. Man will have a holiness, a wisdom, a strength, and power of himself, in the things below here, as I might shew at large, both in examples and otherwise. Naturally we find it in ourselves. If we be sick, we trust to the physician and other means. If we be in danger, we flee to the arm of flesh, to some mighty man; we trust in some great friend, if we have any. If we be in danger of invasion, or such like, we trust our walls and defences; and till strong temptations come, we trust in our own strength, till Satan pick so many holes in it, that we cannot stay there, and that conscience upbraids us. Always a man hath somewhat to trust to, till he

be brought to desperate conditions ; and rather than he will have nothing to trust to, he will trust to the broken reed of Egypt ; he will trust to that that will deceive him and hurt him, as the reed of Egypt did the Jews ; rather than they would trust God, and the word brought by the prophets, they would trust Asshur, and Egypt, 2 Kings xviii. 21.

Now the Spirit of God in the Scriptures takes notice of this proneness to false confidence. 'Trust not in uncertain riches. If riches increase, set not your hearts on them,' 1 Timothy vi. 17. And man, when he sets his heart upon false confidence, the issues are more dangerous ; he will come against God ; he doth not only set up these holds that he hath in rebellion against God, but he proclaims, as it were, defiance to God, and his word, and his ordinances, till afterwards God destroy all his false confidence, and bring him to shame.

In 2 Cor. x. 4 there is a notable place to shew what holds there are in the heart of man, that oppose against God and his truth in his word ; holds that Satan keeps in man, and man, joining with Satan the enemy, holds against God and his truth : 'The weapons of our warfare,' saith he, 'are not carnal, but mighty through God to cast down strongholds.' The holds are within us, and we are so far from preparing ourselves to grace, and to entertain grace when it is offered, that naturally we set up holds against God and grace. There must be strong power to overturn all, to lead them into captivity to the obedience of Christ : 'To cast down the imaginations, and every high thing, every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring in captivity every thought,' 2 Cor. x. 5. So there are three mighty things in every natural man.

(1.) *This false reasoning and sophistry.* There is no man will go to hell without reason. Take the debauchedest wretch that lives, he is mad with some reason, and he will be damned with some reason. 'God is merciful,' 'Christ is come,' and 'others are as bad as I,' and 'I hope in time to repent ;' this vile reasoning must be turned out of a man before he can be saved.

(2.) Then *there are proud thoughts.* What, shall I yield to such a one as he ? I am better than he ; I understand these things as well as he. As that proud cardinal in Germany said, 'I confess these things that Luther finds fault with are naught ; but shall I yield to a base monk ?' (a) So men think, shall I yield to a minister ? The proud rebellious heart of man is lift up in proud thoughts against God.

(3.) And then there be *forecasts.* If I do thus, this danger will come of it ; I shall provoke such an enemy ; I shall lose such a friend ; I shall endanger myself. Now, when the truth of God comes, down goes all these sophistries and high thoughts, and all these forecasts ; they all lie flat when the Spirit of God comes in the power of the word. But naturally every man hath these ; he builds up some castle against God ; he builds up the walls of Jericho, and trusts in them too. 'Thy wisdom hath caused thee to rebel,' saith God to the king of Babylon, Isa. xlvii. 10. 'Let not the wise man trust in his wisdom,' Jer. ix. 23, insinuating that wise men are subject to trust in their wisdom, and the rich man in his riches, and the strong man in his strength ; therefore God commands that they should not do so. 'Thy wisdom hath made thee to rebel.'

Use. Let us take notice of this, and make this use of trial of it, that if, by the power of God's Spirit, we can use all outward means and not trust in them ; that we can trust in God, and not to our strength, then we have somewhat in us above nature ; for naturally every man, before he be in com-

munion and covenant with God, he hath some earthly false support or other to trust on ; either within him, some policy and wisdom, or without him, some friends or riches, some bulwark or other ; and this sets him against God and against the means of salvation, till God come in effectual calling and overturn all. But this doth but make way to other things, therefore I only touch it.

The second thing is this, that,

Obs. 2. God first or last overturns all vain confidence in the creature.

The walls of Jericho, down they must ; and whatsoever exalts itself against God, either it shall end in conversion or confusion, because the time must come that God must have all the glory. 'Was there ever any man fierce against God, and prospered?' Job ix. 4. 'The rage of man turns to the glory of God,' saith the psalmist, Ps. lxxvi. 10. 'There is neither wisdom nor policy, counsel nor strength, or any earthly thing against the Lord,' as the wise man saith, Prov. xxi. 30. 'God will confound all ; he scattered the proud in the imagination of their own hearts,' as the blessed virgin saith, Luke i. 51. And when they had built Babel, to get them a name, they found confusion. There is a notable place in Isa. l. 11 : 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk,' saith God, 'in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This ye shall have at my hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow.' Men that will walk in the light of their own fire, that will have a wisdom of their own, distinct, nay, contrary oftentimes to God's ;— Well ! go on, walk in the light of your own fire that ye have kindled ; but take this withal with you, 'You shall have this at my hands,' saith God, 'ye shall lie down in sorrow.' What became of Haman's plots ? What became of Abithophel's policy ? They all turned upon their own heads. Although men build up castles to secure themselves in their earthly defences and munition, yet God overturns all.

Use. Therefore let us make that use that Jeremiah doth, Jer. ix. 23 : 'Therefore let not the wise man trust in his wisdom, or the strong man in his strength, or the rich man in his riches.' Let a man joy in none of these ; but if he will joy, let him joy in this, that he knows the Lord, that he is in covenant with God. That for the second, briefly.

The third is this, that,

Obs. 3. God doth this by base and weak means.

He confounds great and mighty enterprizes and mighty persons, and useth but base and despised means ; as here, the walls of Jericho fell down with the noise of rams' horns. This I might carry along through all the stories in the Scripture, from the creation to this present time, to shew how God doth great things by despised means ; sometimes by no means at all, sometimes clean contrary to all means. When our Saviour Christ gave sight to the blind, he put clay upon his eyes, that, one would think, were fitter to put them out. We see in the story of the Israelites what an ox-goad did, and what Samson did with the jaw-bone of an ass. We see by what a trick the Midianites were put to flight by Gideon.* In all the stories we see, when God would do great matters, he doth it by base means. When he would confound the pride of Pharaoh, he will do it by frogs and lice, and such base creatures, that were fittest in God's wisdom to overthrow the pride of that wretched king. God, as he overturns the pride of men, so for the most part he doth it by weak and despised means.

Reason. And the reason is clear, that he may have all the glory. Some-

* Cf. (1) John ix. 6, (2) Judges iii. 31, (3) Judges xv. 16, (4) Judges vii. 16.—G.

times the means he useth have no influence at all to effect the thing, but are only joined with the thing ; as here, what influence could poor trumpets of rams' horns have to cast down walls ? They could have none ; but only it was a thing joined before the walls fell down ; they were things that must be used to try their obedience ; and that they might know that it was not by chance that they fell down, but by God's power ; and for other reasons. But if there be any influence from the cause to the effect, it is supposed it cannot produce the effect of itself, therefore, I say, God doth this that he may have all the glory ; for that is his end, and it ought to be our end. We see here, though they had silver trumpets, yet they must by God's appointment use these base means, trumpets of rams' horns.

Now, they were to use them seven days together, and therefore on a Sabbath day ; but it was no breach of the day, because God can dispense with his own law. In case of charity, good works may be done on the Sabbath, and in case of duty likewise, as the priests kill the sacrifice on the Sabbath. So here was sufficient warrant for them ; God gave them a command ; God, that made the law, can dispense with his own law in things that touch not upon his nature, as his truth and purity, &c., doth. In things that touch his nature, he should deny himself if he should dispense. God cannot lie, because truth is natural to him. God cannot do anything that is unfit for his nature ; but for things that are out of him, he is Lord of days ; he is Lord of goods and life ; he hath a right to dispense here, as we see in the taking away the Egyptian's jewels and the like ; they were outward things. But for those things that are intrinsecal in God, he cannot command that which is contrary to his truth and nature. Other things belong to his sovereignty. But that by the way.

They were to compass the walls seven days. If they had made an end before the seventh day, the walls had never fallen down. Howsoever, there was no power in their going about to effect that, yet God would not work the effect till he was waited on in all the seven days ; the means appointed by God must be used, and so long as God will have them used, there must be a depending and waiting upon God all the time.

Quest. To give a little further light to that I touched before, you will ask why God useth means and doth not work immediately ? why he did not cast down these walls by his own will and pleasure ?

Ans. Besides that I said before, God useth second causes, not for defect of power, but for demonstration of his goodness ; and for the trial of our obedience, and the like. Therefore, being Lord of hosts, he hath multiplicity of ranks of creatures which he useth to effect those things that he could do himself if it pleased him. Therefore let such questions cease ; it pleased God so to do.

The last point is this—

§ *Obs. 4.* *It was by faith in the use of means that the walls of Jericho fell down.*

If they had not depended upon God in their going about seven days, the walls had stood still. It was by faith they did it ; and it was a great faith that, using such a ridiculous stratagem as this, to go about the walls with rams' horns, they should think the walls would fall. It might shake their faith, and likewise expose them to the scorn of those of Jericho within, therefore it was a great faith in them. Not that all had faith, for certainly divers of them were unbelieving persons ; but Joshua their captain, and some others of them, had faith, and all of them had hope of the best. It was faith that believed this in this unlikelihood of second causes, for there is the strength of faith ; when second causes are weak, then faith is strong.

Abraham's faith was the stronger by reason there was more indisposition in the second causes, in Sarah's womb to conceive a child ; for her womb was dead ; in the course of nature she could not conceive. Therefore it is said by Saint Paul, Rom. iv. 20, ' He being strong in faith, gave glory to God : ' strong faith gives glory to God. So here was a strong faith, because the means were weak, or none at all ; for these means had nothing in themselves to work such a glorious effect as this, that the falling of the walls should follow. It was but a means adjoined. That it should be done by such a poor thing as this, it was the strength of faith. But was it the strength of faith in itself ? Could faith do this ?

Oh no ; but that which that faith lays hold on doth, that faith is said to do. God honours the grace of faith by terming that to be done by it that he doth himself ; for it was the power of God, the goodness of God to them, and the justice of God against the sins of these people, that overturned the walls of Jericho. Faith, it was but an empty hand to lay hold upon this power. It was the grace, whereby they went out of themselves, and denied themselves, and gave glory to God, in accomplishing the truth of his word, and his wisdom, and power, and justice. So God did it. But it is said to be done by faith, because, as I said, God honours faith thus much. What strength God and Christ hath, when faith lays hold on them, faith hath that strength, because it builds upon them. Faith sets a man upon God and Christ, and upon the truth of God. Hereupon it comes to be so victorious and conquering a grace as it is, because it carries us to that that doth all. By faith they did this.

But here were other graces likewise that sprang from faith, that helped them also. There was a great deal of patience to go about after that silly fashion with rams' horns seven days together. Here was patience, and perseverance, and hope. But, as I said before, because faith doth enliven all other graces, it gives life to all, and stirs up all, therefore that is named. In the whole chapter the exercise of other graces is attributed to faith, because they draw strength from that to quicken them all, and to stir them all to their several offices. Strengthen faith, and strengthen all other graces whatsoever. Thus you see we have briefly gone over these four main things.

Now, let us by way of proportion raise them higher, and make use of them to other things. To give a little touch. The walls of Jericho represent to us many things.

1. *The kingdom of Satan in general, the power of the devil in himself and in his instruments*, who hinders what he can, our coming out of Egypt to Canaan. He labours to come between us and heaven ; to hinder us all he can by all means. He hath walls of many kinds ; the strength of tyrants, the subtilty of heretics. What a world of ado was there to bring Israel out of Egypt ! God was put to it, as it were, to work so many miracles to bring that poor despised people out of Egypt, to bring them through the Red Sea. When they were in the wilderness, what ado was there to bring them thence ! what opposition ! And then when they came to Jordan, what miracles were wrought ! The division of the waters by the ark coming through ; and then the first, the frontier town, that was, as it were, the key to let in all and to stop all, Jericho, the first town for the entrance into Canaan. There was opposition made when they would have entered into Canaan. It is no easy thing to come out of Egypt and to enter into Canaan. It is a mighty work to bring a poor Christian out of the kingdom of Satan, to bring him out of spiritual Egypt through the wilderness of

this life ; to bring him through Jordan, those waves of death ; to put him into heaven, to bring him at length to his own country, to Canaan ; because there is spiritual wickedness stands in the way, both in regard of Satan himself, and in regard of the instruments he useth.

But Christ came 'to destroy the works of the devil,' as it is said 1 John iii. 8 ; and he himself overcame Satan and triumphed over him, as it is Col. ii. 15. He led him in triumph. He triumphed over Satan himself, and he will triumph over Satan in all his members. As he overcame Satan in himself, so he will overcome in us all : 'For stronger is he that is in us than he that is in the world,' 1 John iv. 4. The Spirit of God, as he is in us, is stronger than Satan. Not only Christ our glorious captain overcame him and is now in heaven, but the Spirit of God in us weak creatures, with faith laying hold upon the word of God, is stronger than he that is in the world ; he is stronger than the devil and all that are against us.

2. But besides Satan, *there is in us much opposition that must be subdued before we come to Canaan.* As we saw before in 2 Cor. x. 5, those reasonings and sophistries, proud high thoughts, all must be brought down, because Satan doth join with these ; and if it were not for enemies within us, Satan could not prevail over us. As it was Delilah that betrayed Samson, or else the Philistines could not have hurt him, so it is with our own corruptions. There be these walls within us. These betray us to Satan. He could not hurt us but that we betray ourselves.

Now, by little and little all these walls shall fall ; not all at once, as the walls of Jericho did, but they shall moulder in pieces by little and little. God by degrees will perfect the work of mortification and sanctification till he make us like his Son Christ, like our husband and head, that we may be fit for so glorious a head.

3. But to come to the particular occasion. Besides other enemies that are between us and heaven, Satan is powerful, and effectual, and strong *in the kingdom of antichrist.* And by all means, that church which is opposite to Christ hath studied to build up walls, to build up Jericho, and to stop the church of Christ, to hinder it what they could. Now, what walls have they built up ? As Pharaoh said, 'Let us deal wisely,' Exod. i. 10. How wittily have they gone to work to overthrow the church of God in all times, and to set up themselves and their own kingdom. It were a large discourse ; it would take up the whole time to shew their policy and the plots they have had. To give an instance in a few.

How strongly have they built up walls in their own conceit when they had got the whole world almost into subjection to them ! Before Luther's time, all the world followed them. They had used the matter so, that kings themselves had betrayed their very crowns to them, they had betrayed their kingdoms, they were rather vassals to them than kings. They had gotten the temporal sword into their hands as well as the spiritual. And they had raised up to themselves a bloody inquisition to suppress all light of truth as soon as ever it sparkled out. All beams of truth were stopped with their bloody inquisition. They thought they had fenced themselves safe enough. Then again, they had disabled all the kings and princes of Christendom. And then because the pope would engage princes to him to strengthen the walls higher, and to make them stronger, the young sons of princes, he would make them cardinals. And then he would arrogate to himself a power absolute to dispense in case of marriage, and oaths, and such like. And besides, what plots have they had for the counterfeiting of authors, for falsifying of authors, purging out true authors,

that they might have none give witness against them! What tricks have they to keep people in ignorance, because it is a kingdom of darkness! The Bible they must have, God hath preserved that; but they would have it in an unknown tongue. And what other devices to abuse the people withal. How have they fenced themselves, by applying themselves to humour all sorts of people! For even as the devil enlargeth his kingdom by applying himself to the cursed sinful disposition of men, so doth the pope here upon earth apply himself to the sinful disposition of all sorts of men. There are no kind of men but they have a bait in popery. For loose libertines, there are stews. For others that are of a more reserved and severe disposition, there are monasteries. For superstitious persons, there they have a world of ridiculous ceremonies, devised to themselves of their own brain, and never used in the primitive church. For those that are covetous, they have the riches of the world in their own hands, they have had at least before more than they now have. For proud, ambitious persons, they have honours of all sorts. For the people, they have many carnal liberties for them. And for all the senses of the body, they have something to delight them, to draw people from the power of religion to carnal outward worship. So they have studied and whetted their wits all the ways that might be, to apply themselves to the dispositions of all sorts of men whatsoever, that so they might strengthen the walls of Jericho. I might be large; I give you but a taste.

Well, but what hath God done? God hath infatuate and overthrown their walls, and by weak means. Luther, a poor monk, with a trumpet of rams' horns, with his preaching and with his writing, you see how he shook the walls of Rome, how much they have lost within the last hundred years. The last age, the last century of years, they have lost a great part of this western part of the world, that they had in slavery before; and how? By weak means, as you heard, by the preaching of the gospel, by learning, and knowledge. It is no wonder that the devil hates knowledge and learning. As Luther saith well, 'He hates the quills of geese, because they are instruments to write against them' (*b*). He hath a kingdom of darkness, and hell, and the pope is a king of darkness. Now when the light of knowledge, the light of the word of God, the ordinance of God, when preaching came, these poor trumpets did shake the Church of Rome. As we see in England, the walls of Jericho fell down. By what means? By a child, in a manner, King Edward the Sixth, and after by a woman;* and if the word of God had gone on in like proportion in other places, popery had been lower than it is.

So we see then, that as high as they built, and as much as they fortified, though they be not wholly cast down, yet they are shaken, and that by weak means. Now the way to effect this, that these walls may fall down more and more, it must be by the spiritual means that God will use. We must use the means that God hath appointed us, poor contemptible means, trumpets of rams' horns, the preaching of the word, the discovery of the truth; and by this means we shall more and more gain upon them. And undoubtedly, let them but give free liberty to the preaching of the word in other countries, and we shall see them shortly as heretical, as they term it, even as London and England is. Such a power there is in God's ordinance, the Spirit of God accompanying it, that it carries all before it, it lays all flat, it beats all strongholds down before it.

What shall we do then?

* Elizabeth.—G.

By faith use the means that God hath appointed. The weapons appointed and sanctified by God, they are strong through God to beat down all strongholds. And take heed especially that we do not build up the walls of Jericho again, nor suffer them to build them. You know Joshua pronounceth a curse upon all that should build the walls of Jericho. He should lay the first stone in the death of his eldest son, and the last at the death of his younger; and so, as we have it in the story of Hiel, it was made good. I beseech you, therefore, let every one of us in our place labour to ruinate these walls of Jericho, and take heed how we build them again, or suffer any to build them again.

Quest. What way have we to prevent their building, that the walls of Jericho be not built again? They go about it what they can. We see what course they take. They have all the art of hell to help them, lies and equivocations. How many kings and great ones have they at this day to support and help them, to keep them from falling! They do all that they can to keep life now. How shall we prevent this, that they build not up the walls of this spiritual Jericho again?

Ans. 1. First of all, *every one labour to do what they can in their callings.* Magistrates to execute the laws of the kingdom, which, as those say that are well acquainted with them, are very beneficial to the church of God. Therefore the magistrates in their place should do what appertains to them.

2. *And so for ministers.* The spiritual means whereby such heresies must be confounded, *it is by the breath of the mouth of Christ*; as it is 2 Thes. ii. 8, 'He shall consume him with the breath of his mouth.' For things are dissolved contrary to that way that they were raised at the first, and contrary to that way they were maintained. Popery, as it was raised, so it is maintained, by darkness, and blindness, and ignorance of the word of God and of divine truth. The way to hinder it, therefore, from being built again, is to lay open divine truths, and to plant the ministry. Every one must labour for this, to be faithful in their place and standing. St Paul saith, 2 Tim. iii. 9, 'They shall prevail no longer, because their madness shall be manifest.' How doth that follow? The very manifestation of error hinders the prevailing of it. That is the way to hinder popery from prevailing, to manifest it by preaching, and writing, and such good means. For the demonstration of errors to be so is a refuting of them; for who would willingly be deceived? Therefore the laying open of the madness of popery, and the folly of their devices, it hinders their prevailing. No man willingly would have his soul led into error. Therefore let us lay their errors open in the ministry, and the grounds of them; the danger of popery, how pernicious it is. When this is discovered in the ministry, men, as they love their own souls, will take heed. That is the way therefore to keep the walls of Jericho from being built, to set an able ministry everywhere, and to countenance them, and those that are God's captains to fight his battles against them.

It is a world of hurt that comes to the church by impropriations, especially in the north parts, as we hear too much by reports. In great and mighty parishes to set up poor and weak men, and others wholly to receive the revenues; and that is the reason of the swarm of dangerous papists in those parts. Oh, that these things had been looked to in time! The walls of Jericho had not been built again in those parts so much as they are. This is one main way, the planting of an able ministry; for this painted harlot, she cannot endure the breath of the ministry. It

discovers all her painting ; it lays her naked and open ; she knows it well enough.*

3. Then again, *take heed of the spreading of infections.* Men should be careful this way. They build up their religion thus, that else would fall down more and more. We are so confident in our cause, that we suffer men to read any popish treatises. They on the other side watch all things, so that there cannot a spark of our light break into them, what by their Inquisition, and other courses that they take. Confidence in our cause hath made us careless and secure in this kind. Therefore care this way is one means to help it.

4. And then *encouragement of good learning.* Popery fell with the beginning of good learning. Religion and good learning came in together. If I were in some place I should speak more of this ; for, as I said before, it is a dark religion, not only in regard of the religion itself, but it grows and thrives with ignorance and barbarism, and not understanding of arts and tongues. They have helped very much towards the overthrow of these walls of Jericho. 'Every one should contend for the faith once given,' as St Jude admonisheth, ver. 3. Every one, the poorest man, may contend with his prayers. He that saith, 'Thy kingdom come,' what doth he pray for ? If he pray in faith, he desires that God would pull down all opposite kingdoms to the kingdom of his Son Christ ; that the kingdom of Christ may come, more and more in the hearts of his people ; that he may reign everywhere more freely and largely than he doth. Every one may help forward the kingdom of Christ ; he may help forward Jerusalem, and pull down Jericho ; every one that hath a fervent devotion of prayer.

5. *And by a holy life ;* for when men are vicious and carnal, they occasion God,—for not loving and embracing the truth,—to give them up to popish errors and such like. Many ways there be to stop the building up of Jericho.

6. But this is one especial, which this day occasions ; that is, *thankfulness to God, a thankful remembrance, how God hath fought for us ;* how God hath by little and little ruined the walls of this Jericho, and hath helped us to build the walls of our Jerusalem. A thankful remembrance is a notable means to hinder the growth of popery ; for when we remember their attempts, how God hath cursed and crossed them, it will make us love our religion that God hath witnessed to by so many deliverances, and it will make us hate theirs the more. Therefore it was a worthy work of that reverend bishop, that set out in a treatise all the deliverances that have been from popish conspiracies, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's time to this present. It was a worthy work, beseming that grave and reverend person (c). 'Prayer gets blessings, but thankfulness keeps them.' So thankfulness to God for that which is past, for so many deliverances, is a means to preserve God's love and care of us still ; that he will be our buckler, and castle, and hold, and all defence ; thankfulness will do this.

We are over-prone to look upon civil grievances,—which are to be regarded and helped in season,—but naturally our nature is subject to complain more than to be thankful. We are so sensible of ill as to pray for remedy ; but then let us always be thankful to God for the good we have had these many years together, and the good that still, blessed be God, we enjoy. What cause have we to be thankful, that we are as the 'three young men' in the furnace ! All Europe hath been in combustion, and we have been untouched and safe in the midst of the furnace under a quiet government.

* Cf. Memoir, Vol. I. p. 60, seq.—G.

What cause have we to bless God, for continuing the liberties of the gospel, whereby the soul is built up in saving knowledge, and ignorance banished! It was a fault in Rehoboam's time, in the beginning of his reign, it was a fault in these men, they could complain of the government of Solomon; and certainly there were many grievances in Solomon's: he was a great builder, and it was not without some cause they complained. Yet notwithstanding Solomon's time was a blessed time, and they had great cause to bless God for the government of Solomon. Now it is very likely in the story that they forgot it, and only lighted upon some grievance. I beseech you, let us in these times stir up our hearts to be thankful; as upon other occasions, so upon occasion of this day we are to bless God for this glorious deliverance, which we have spoken of so oft, again and again; and therefore we need not be much in the particular setting out the facinorous* and prodigious fact, that gives the day occasion to be remembered, as it hath oft done before. Let that remembrance, I say, stir us up to thankfulness, to shew our thankfulness, and love to that truth that God hath defended. 'Hath God been a wilderness to us?' Jer. ii. 31, as the prophet complains. Hath religion done us any harm? Why should we grow cold and lukewarm? Why should we decay in our first-love? Why should we be so unfruitful, when God hath given us so many encouragements to be thankful and fruitful, as he hath done? I beseech you, let us consider with ourselves, if we be not more thankful upon these occasions for these deliverances, and work our hearts to love religion, and to hate popery more, it will be just with God that they shall be thorns in our sides more than they have been, and pricks in our eyes; that we shall see what a dangerous faction they are, and what case we are in. For those that are drunk with the cup of this harlot, it takes away their wits from them. Those that worship images and stocks, they are stocks themselves. Though the danger be great to themselves, yet they labour to make others worse than themselves. There is no trusting to them. We should more fear them than foreign enemies. Both reasons of state, and reasons of religion, and reasons of our own safety, all should be forcible to have a special regard to prevent the growth of popery.

For ourselves, that hear of the destruction of this Jericho, we have heard what Jericho was before it was destroyed. For aught we know, God may destroy Jerusalem, as well as Jericho, and by a worse people than themselves, as the prophet saith, Ezek. xvii. 14, by 'a base people.' It is no matter, though others be worse than ourselves. God, when he plagues his people, will do it by worse than themselves, and cast the rod into the fire when he hath done; 'Asshur, the rod of my wrath,' Isa. x. 5. Therefore let us look to ourselves, that we be thankful to God. It will be no plea that we have been safe thus long, thus many years; for these people of Jericho, God let them alone four hundred years, as it is in Gen. xv. 16. They were threatened, but 'the sins of the Amorites were not yet full.' Jericho was a part of that country; but when their sins were full, then they were destroyed. God had patience four hundred years to the sins of the Amorites, to this people; and at last judgment came upon them fearfully. So howsoever God hath been forbearing and long-suffering towards us, yet let us look about us; oh, destruction may be near. It is not sufficient to think that God will destroy antichrist, that the walls of Jericho shall down. He may do that, and yet he may destroy us. There may be danger towards us too; and it is no comfort to them neither that

* That is, 'wicked to excess.'—G.

God will punish us; for that easeth not their overthrow neither, 'for if he do so to the green tree, what will he do to the dry?' Luke xxiii. 31. If his children be whipped with scorpions, what will he do to rebels? 'If the children of God scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?' 1 Pet. iv. 18. If the children taste of the wrath of God, then the enemies shall taste of the dregs of his wrath. It is no comfort for them, for their doom is set down, 'Babylon is fallen,' Rev. xiv. 8. It will not be so much comfort to us that God will destroy them, as it will be to look to ourselves in time before a peremptory decree come forth, to make our peace with God. The king of Sodom and others were delivered by Abraham, but afterwards we see how fearfully they perished. Pharaoh was let alone for a time, yet after he was destroyed in the sea. Jerusalem had warning after warning, yet afterwards it was destroyed. So, though we have had deliverance upon deliverance, yet if we make not more of religion, and grow more in detestation of that religion, that God would have us set ourselves against, it will be just with God to punish us, and to lay us open to them that we have sinfully favoured.

Use. We see what great matters faith will do in the use of means, though they be poor, weak, base means. Therefore let us set upon popish religion, in our places and callings, in a spirit of faith, in the use of means; and let us never think we are too weak; and now they are mighty and strong. It was said to Luther, when he began to write against the pope, Oh, poor monk, get thee into thy cell, and say, Lord have mercy upon thee! dost thou think to overcome the whole world with thy writing? (*d*). So the walls of Jericho may seem so mighty, the opposite power that we are to set against, as if we should lose our labour to set against it; but whatsoever is opposite to Christ, we have a promise it shall be overthrown. Let us in a spirit of faith set upon them in the use of means, and God will make it good, as in former times.

And for all other things that stand between us and heaven, all the walls of Jericho, all opposition, let us set upon them with a spirit of faith in the use of means; for he that hath overcome us,* as I said, will by little and little overcome in us. These corruptions of ours shall fall before the Spirit of God by little and little. And as Haman's wife could tell him, 'If thou begin to fall before that people, thou shalt certainly fall,' Esther vi. 13; so if the work of grace be begun in us, that corruptions begin to fall, undoubtedly and certainly they shall fall. They cannot stand before the Spirit; for grace is in growing, and corruption is in decaying, continually in a Christian.

Quest. Why doth not God all at once subdue these walls of Jericho in us, but by little and little?

Ans. 1. *God will exercise our faith and patience.* We are warriors here in this world. Our life is a warfare, and he will exercise grace in us; he will have us combat with enemies; these inward enemies among the rest.

2. Again, *He will let us see what he hath done for us.* If we were not exercised with enemies, we should not be thankful sufficient for victory over the devil. When we have been vexed with the devil's temptations, then blessed be God and Christ, that at last these troubles are ceased. How much are we beholden to Christ, that hath freed us from the danger of these! We are only annoyed with the trouble. This will make us thankful when we have smarted.

3. *This keeps us likewise from soul-devouring sins.* Less infirmities in us

* Qu. 'for us'?—ED.

keep us from pride and security. God hath many ends; but to cut off other things, because the point is large, I only give a taste.

Let this comfort us, that the walls of Jericho, that is to say, whatsoever opposeth us in our coming out of the state of nature, and our entrance into the state of heaven, whatsoever opposition is between, shall fall. Therefore let us strengthen our faith in the use of means.

Quest. How shall we strengthen our faith this way?

Ans. Faith is strengthened by the knowledge of the attributes of him, whom we lay hold upon, whose power doth all. The more we know him, the more we shall trust him. Let us labour to know God in covenant to be our Father, and to know Christ as he is, in his nature and offices, what he is to us: to know his wisdom, and power, and truth, that there may be a bottom for faith to build on. The more we grow in spiritual knowledge the more we shall grow in faith; and the more we grow in faith, the more we shall grow in other graces, whereby we overcome all our enemies that set against us.

Again, *Let us, make use of all former experience to strengthen faith.* Hath God begun the work? Do the walls of Jericho begin to fall? 'He that hath begun a good work will finish it to the day of the Lord,' Philip. i. 6. Let us take in trust the time to come, by experience of God's truth for the time past; for the work of the Spirit is a continued work. The Spirit of God, in subduing our corruptions, he would not have begun if he had meant to have left off and interrupted the work. The Spirit suffers us to fall sometimes, but it is to teach us to stand better afterward. He turns our very falls and slips to our good. Let us strengthen faith, therefore, from former experience, as David did. We have overcome the bear and the lion; therefore let us set on the Philistine, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. And as Joshua set his foot on the necks of the ten kings, and said, 'Thus shall the Lord thy God destroy all thine enemies,' Joshua x. 24, *seq.*, so hath the Spirit of God set his foot as it were upon some corruptions. Thus shall God deal with all corruptions and temptations at length, and never leave the blessed government of us till he have subdued all. Let us rise from one experiment* to another, to strengthen faith. God is alike in all truths. You know in Judges v. 31, saith the holy woman Deborah, 'So let all thine enemies perish.' The heart of that blessed woman was, as it were, enlarged prophetically. When one falls, they shall all fall, there is like reason. See how gloriously Hannah in her song enlargeth her faith, by God's power and goodness, because she had experience in herself. So experience in ourselves or others will enlarge our faith to look for greater matters still from our gracious, powerful God. Thus we ought to labour to strengthen our faith.

And the third thing to help faith in all spiritual oppositions that we meet with, is *daily exercise in using it, to make it brighter continually every day, by working with it upon our enemies.* And in the estate of grace to live by it, both for this present life, to depend upon God for all things, and likewise for necessary grace; as the disciples when they were enjoined a hard duty, 'Lord, increase our faith,' say they, Luke xvii. 5, they go to exercise their faith upon it. If that be increased, all is increased. And so in our callings, exercise it by depending upon God for strength and success. Saith Peter to Christ, 'Lord, at thy word I will cast out the net,' Luke v. 5, though it were very unlikely it should do any good. They had fished all day, and caught nothing, but yet he would wait, and go on still:

* That is, 'experience.'—G.

‘At thy word I will cast out the net.’ He did it, and the net brake with the multitude of fish. Let us exercise our faith in daily obedience to God, depend upon him in the use of means.

And learn this, to wait in the exercise of our faith; as they that went about the walls of Jericho, they did it seven days. Put case they had done it six, and no more, the walls had stood still. He that hath ten miles to go, and goes but nine, he shall never come to his journey’s end. When God hath set down such a time, so long thou shalt wait, and use the means, and depend upon me by faith, in the use of the means; if we be short-spirited, and lengthen and strengthen not our faith in the use of the means, we shall never attain our desire, therefore let us labour to wait. Here is the difference between Christians and others. There is no man but he would be happy if so be it were not for this waiting. If a wicked man should see hell open, would he commit sin if he should see it present? If he should see heaven open, and Christ coming with his reward with him, he would be godly. There is not the vilest wretch in the world but he would be so if these things were present. But because it is only discovered in the word of God, and faith must believe, and wait for the reward, and faith must wait all the time of our life, here is the trial. So that a Christian differs nothing from a worldly man, but in a spirit of faith and waiting, and continuance of that faith in the mean time before a man come to enjoy and receive what he looks for. Faith gives God the glory of all his attributes. The glory of his truth; he hath spoken, and therefore he will make it good. The glory of his wisdom; that he hath found out such a course for us to walk in. The glory of his mercy; that he hath made such promises to such wretches. So all other attributes faith gives glory to. Therefore God glorifies faith, and the special act of faith is waiting: ‘If I tarry long, wait thou,’ Hab. ii. 3. And we have need of patience. Faith stirs up patience to help and assist it, as we see here, these waited seven days. Remember therefore to exercise faith in continual dependence upon God. Take heed of being short-spirited. Though God defer the rewarding of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, yet hold out still. He that hath promised will come in time, and make good that that he hath said in due time. Give God the glory of appointing the fittest time. He is the best discerner of opportunities: ‘Our times are in his hand,’ Ps. xxxi. 15, all kind of times; therefore let us depend upon him for that; only labour to have a strong spirit of faith, that we may wait his good leisure.

And to help us, do but consider what if we wait a few years, what is that to eternity? I might enlarge the point.

What great matters faith will do both in heaven and earth every way. We see here faith shakes the very earth. God he is the Lord of heaven and earth. The earth is the Lord’s. Because these walls were built upon God’s earth, we see here one puff of God blows them all down; and faith laying hold upon this casts them down. Though faith doth it not immediately, yet God doth it, because he is laid hold on by faith.

Let us labour therefore to have faith above all other graces. It is the mother grace. It is the grace that is the spring of all graces. If we would have patience, and hope, and love, and perseverance, and constancy together, let us labour to have faith strengthened; and to feed our faith the more, let us look to the word of God, make it familiar to us. The Spirit goes together with the word to strengthen and increase our faith, and that being strengthened, all is strengthened whatsoever.

Now the way to try whether we have this faith or no, not to speak

largely of the point, but as the text leads me, is, if we humbly attend upon the means that God hath appointed, though they seem base to carnal reason. As how do we know that these Israelites had faith when they went about the walls of Jericho? Because they have humbled themselves to use the base means that God had appointed, though they were very unlikely. Naaman, out of the pride of his heart, saith he, what are the waters of Jordan? Have not we waters that can do as much? But if the servants had not been wiser than the master, he had gone home a leper as he came, 2 Kings v. 11, *seq.* So when men hear the word preached, they think, Cannot we read good books at home? And for the sacrament, it is a poor ordinance. What is there but wine and bread, and such like? Take heed of a proud heart. God will have weaker means to try us whether we will humble ourselves to his wisdom or no. Where there is true faith it will be careful to use all good means, or else it is a tempting of God, and not a trusting of him, when we do not use the means that he hath sanctified.

And where there is faith, as there will be a careful use of all means, so there will be a care in the use of means, not to depend upon the means, but to trust in God. There will be a joining of both together. Faith doth not take away the use of means, nay, he that is most certain of the end should strive to be most careful of all means used to that end. There ought no man to be more diligent in using the means, than he that is most certain of the end; because he is encouraged to use the means, knowing that he shall not beat the air, that he shall not lose his labour; so if we by faith lay hold upon God for the destruction of antichrist, and that God would subdue our corruptions, and that they shall fall before the Spirit by little and little; if by faith we lay hold upon this, that God will perfect the good work he hath begun in the use of good means: this will stir us up to use all means with cheerfulness and constancy. There are none that are more careful of the means than those that are most sure of the issue. Those that are careless of the means, let them pretend what they will, they are presumptuous persons, they have no faith; for that will stir us up to use the means, and in the use of means to depend upon God. So careful is faith to use the means, as if without them God would do nothing, and yet in the means it is so careful to depend upon God, as if the means could not do anything without God. Thus faith walks between the means and the great God.

Let us go on constantly in living the life of faith, and using all the blessed means that God hath sanctified. God hath sanctified the preaching of the word to beat down all these spiritual walls. Let us go on all our lifetime; and at length the last trump shall sound, another trumpet shall sound, and then not only the walls of Jericho, but the walls of heaven and earth shall fall down, and then we shall enter into that heavenly Canaan, both body and soul. In the mean time, let us exercise faith, and to quicken our faith the more, let us have those blessed times in the eye of our soul, let us see them as present. It is the nature of faith to apprehend things to come as present. Let us see heaven and earth on fire, see Christ coming to judgment. Let us see all the walls down, the graves open, whatsoever opposeth and stands between us and glory, see all gone. Let us see ourselves at the right hand of Christ, and triumphing in heaven. For the Scripture speaks of that that is to come, as if it were past. 'We sit in heavenly places with Christ,' Eph. ii. 6, and we are saved by faith, and we are glorified. Thus the spirit of faith speaks of the glorious times to come,

when all enemies shall be trodden under foot. Satan and all enemies whatsoever shall go to their place. The opposite church shall be no longer. When the last trump shall blow we shall all stand together at the right hand of Christ, and be for ever glorious with him.

NOTES.

(a) P. 464.—‘As that proud cardinal in Germany said, “I confess,”’ &c. This saying is imputed to the Cardinal Cajetan, but whether a good authority we do not know.

(b) P. 469.—‘As Luther saith well, “He hates the quills of geese,”’ &c. One of his ‘Table Talk’ sayings. Cf. note *uu*, Vol. III. page 533.

(c) P. 471.—‘It was a worthy work, beseeming that grave and reverend person.’ The following is no doubt the work referred to by Sibbes:—‘A Thankfull Remembrance of God’s Mercy, in an historical collection of the great and mercifull deliverances of the Church and State of England since the Gospel began here to flourish from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth.’ 1627. 4to. The author was George Carleton, Bishop of Chichester.

(d) P. 473.—‘It was said to Luther when he began’. A taunt often met with in the contemporary controversies, and one which, at times, flung a shadow of doubt over the great Reformer himself, as witnessed in his ‘Table Talk.’ G.