

SERMONS UPON HEBREWS XI.

SERMON LXIII.

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land ; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.—HEB. xi. 29.

THIS chapter is a chronicle and history of the mighty acts done by faith. The instance which I shall now produce is that of the believing Israelites, who all together, with Moses, their leader, passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea; but the Egyptians, pursuing and trying to follow them, were overwhelmed and destroyed.

In the text you have two things—the preservation and safety of Israel, and the destruction of the Egyptians. The one illustrates the other; the one was the fruit of faith, and the other of presumption and unbelief. In the first, take notice of the act. (1.) *They passed through the Red Sea*; (2.) The success,—*As by dry land*. And suitably in the other part there is—(1.) The attempt,—*Which the Egyptians assaying to do*; and (2.) The issue,—*They were drowned*.

To understand which passages, we must remember the story recorded by Moses, Exod. xiv. The sum is this: When Pharaoh at last had consented to let the Israelites go, he soon repented of his grant; and understanding by spies how they were entangled in the jaws and straits of Pihahiroth, this occasion invited him to make pursuit after them. What should the poor Israelites do? Fight they durst not, being a multitude of undisciplined people of all ages and sexes, and pursued by a regular and potent army of enemies. Fly they could not, having the sea before them, the Egyptians behind them, the steep and unpassable hills on either side of them. This was the case, and in human reason nothing but destruction could be expected. But Moses, by special order from God, commandeth Israel to march forward, and expect the salvation promised. And when Moses gave the signal by his rod, the sea miraculously retreated, standing up like heaps of congealed ice on each side while they passed through. This is done, and they go on safely; the sea flanked them on both sides; the rear was secured by the cloudy and fiery pillar interposing between them and Pharaoh's army till such time as all were out of danger, and safely arrived at the further shore; and so neither man nor child was hurt. The Egyptians follow the chase, as malice is perverse and blind, and

those whom God designeth to destruction take the ready course to bring it upon their own heads; for at the signal again of Moses stretching forth his rod, the returning waters swallowed them all up in a moment. This was a strange and glorious work of God's almighty power and unspeakable mercy, and the fruit of their faith; and it teaches us both to believe and how to believe in God—to believe, since with respect to faith God produceth such wonders; and how to believe with an unlimited confidence in the greatest straits, for nothing is too hard for God to do.

But you will say the age of such miracles is long since past, and these are antiquated dispensations, now no more in use, nor reasonably to be looked for; and, therefore, what is this to us?

I answer—Their passage through the Red Sea may be considered three ways:—

1. Historically.

2. Sacramentally.

3. Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle produceth this instance.

First, Historically, as a notable pattern of providence; and so it represents to us two things—

1. Unspeakable comfort to all believers in the midst of their extremities. God can disentangle and help them out, for he is with them in all their dangers. See how he promises his presence to his people: Isa. xliii. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.' For the waters, Israel is an instance; both in the Red Sea and in the river of Jordan, God preserved them: for the fire, the three children is an instance; when they were cast into the fiery furnace, they walked in it unsinged and untouched, nothing burned but their bands, Dan. iii. 27. Where God calls his people to be, there he will be with them; and therefore we must be content to follow God through fire and water. Surely he can secure his people in the greatest dangers and difficulties, and find a way of deliverance for them in the most desperate cases. As David, when Saul was eagerly hunting after him, Saul on this side of the mountain and David on that, yet God brought him off. There is no danger so great but God can deliver out of it; and many times God's deliverance is nearest when our danger is greatest. Only, those that look for such deliverances must be upright, for to such the Lord shows himself strong: 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect before him.'

2. It speaks terror to the wicked, and such as maliciously pursue the people of God, as the Egyptians did here. They were engaged in an evil design, they had neither command nor promise from God; yea, they went against God's command, for they acted out of malice, pride, cruelty, and desire of revenge, and so justly perished. So that here is a dreadful glass wherein to see the judgments of God against the enemies and pursuers of his people: Prov. xi. 8, 'The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.' Pharaoh

would either kill them or drive them into the sea, and there all his chariots were overwhelmed. Daniel was cast into the lions' den, but the lions did not devour him, but devoured his accusers, Dan. vi. 22-24. That which was a preservation to God's people was the destruction of the Egyptians; passing through the Red Sea is the means of their safety, but of the others' ruin. Which should check the pride and daring attempts of wicked men, who pursue their evil designs to their own destruction, being blinded with malice and hatred, they neither remember things past, nor consider things present, nor foresee things to come, but are led by a fanatical spirit, which is furious and driving, till it hurries them to their own destruction. Thus, if we consider it historically, it is a notable passage to encourage us to trust in the Lord.

Secondly, Sacramentally. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor. x. 2, 'That they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;' that is, in the cloud that hid them from the Egyptians, and in their passage through the Red Sea. This passage had the same signification that baptism hath. How were they baptized in the sea?

1. They were baptized unto Moses in the sea; that is, Moses' ministry was confirmed by that miracle, and so they were bound to take Moses for their leader and lawgiver; as the miraculous dispensations by Christ assure us that he was sent by God as our lawgiver, whom we should hear and obey.

2. It is called a baptism, because it signified the difference that God puts between his people and their enemies, or the deliverance of his people from the common destruction of mankind was sealed to them by this passing through the sea, for here God shows that he would put a difference between his people and others. For which respect baptism is said to be *ἀντίτυπος*, an answerable figure to the ark of Noah; so Peter urgeth it, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, 'While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.' They that were in the ark were exempted from the deluge. So they that are baptized into Christ, that enter into covenant with God by Christ, they are exempted from the deluge of wrath which overwhelms the rest of the world. So that though we have not extraordinary ways of preservation, as the people of God had of old, yet we have special privileges by Christ which answer to it, and a deliverance of a far better nature.

3. They were baptized in the cloud and sea, because by submitting to God's command they gave up themselves to God's direction and the conduct of his providence by this initiating act, that he should lead them through the wilderness unto Canaan, and the land of promise; as we pass through the waters of baptism, that we may give up ourselves to be led through this world, which answers to the wilderness, to heaven, to Canaan, the land of promise, to be commanded and governed by him till he brings us to our rest.

Thirdly, Applicatively, with respect to the use for which the apostle brings these instances; and it is to confirm believers in the faith of Christ, though they were sorely pushed at, and endured great sufferings for Christ's sake. These examples of faith, which the apostle produces, serve for a double use—either to show the nature of that faith by

which the just do live, or else to commend the excellency of that faith, that we may get it, and exercise it, and be eminent in it; and so these instances of faith are of use in all ages, when the miraculous dispensations are ceased.

But now this instance that we have in hand serves not only for one of these ends, but for both uses—to show the true nature of faith, and also to commend the excellency of it. Therefore—

1. I shall show what is the nature of faith, which we may learn from this instance.

[1.] Faith inclined them to obey God's command, and upon obedience to expect the mercy promised: Go through the Red Sea and you shall be saved. Now this is the common nature of all faith: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' This is the great business of faith, as the Israelites were to obey God, and to wait for his salvation out of this imminent danger.

[2.] For the command, faith gives courage to obey God in the most difficult cases. If we be bidden to go into the Red Sea, we must not forbear; for none of God's commands must be disputed, how contrary soever they be to flesh and blood. If God will command Abraham to take his only son, and offer him for a burnt-offering, he must not stick at it: Gen. xxii. 2, 'Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering.' If God commands us to sell all, that we may have treasure in heaven, we must not murmur as the young man did: Mark x. 22, 'He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' We must give up our lives and all our comforts into the hands of Christ, and nothing must be abated; whatever God commands we must do, though it be never so difficult.

[3.] For the promise, the Red Sea was as a grave to them in visible appearance, and for a considerable time they walked every moment in the valley of the shadow of death. But this is the nature of faith, it teaches us to depend upon God's promises in the greatest extremities. Going down to the Red Sea is as our going down to the grave, yet the promise of eternal life is sure to us, and the belief of it is required of all christians: John xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die;' that is, never wholly die; 'believest thou this?' Faith can find a way to salvation through the great deep, and a passage to life through death and the grave; it can see a heaven when we are in the midst of the Red Sea. This passage through the Red Sea had a respect to baptism, and we are said 'to be buried with Christ in baptism,' Col. ii. 12. Now, among other senses implied in the phrase, one great sense is our willingness to die, out of a confidence to enjoy life in heaven, though they are killed all the day long.

2. This instance doth very much commend to us the excellency of this grace of faith, which was so necessary to believers in that age, when they were exposed to such great sufferings. Now, how it is manifested from this instance.

[1.] God's promise produces its miraculous effect through faith, and not otherwise. God could do it, whether the Israelites did believe, yea or nay; but their faith must concur: 'Through faith they passed through the Red Sea.' The apostle doth not mention the mercy, or

the power of God, but their faith. It is true the supreme original cause is the goodness and power of God, but the means is faith. So 1 Peter i. 5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' When we rest upon his word, who is faithful and able to save to the uttermost, then the power of God is exercised for us: Mark ix. 23, 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;' that is, then thou art capable of having the glorious power of God exercised on thy behalf, beyond the ability of nature. On the contrary, nothing but unbelief puts an impediment in God's way: Mark vi. 5, 6, 'He could do no mighty works there,' &c., and 'he marvelled at their unbelief;' there was no occasion or opportunity, for where faith is wanting, how can the power of God be owned and seen? Now, since the promise of God produces its glorious effect by the means of faith, so that our faith must concur, this doth mightily commend faith.

[2.] Here is another circumstance which commends faith likewise: this faith was weak at first, and mingled with unbelief; for first they murmured, as you may see: Exod. xiv. 11, 12, 'And they said to Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness;' words of impatience and distrust, and very near to a plain revolt from God; and yet at length these murmurers, through faith they passed through the Red Sea, as if it had been firm land. There was a great mixture of unbelief, but where faith prevails, it is accepted with God. Though first they murmured, yet afterwards they believed. Now, when after such great faults God takes it so kindly, we will believe the promise, we should address ourselves to believe in him.

[3.] There is yet another circumstance in this instance; all of them were not true believers, but the faith of some made others partakers of the benefits. The ungodly receive many temporal benefits by the faith of others: Acts xxvii. 24, 'God hath given thee all them that sail with thee;' while yet many of them were infidels. The faith of some may save a community; 'through faith,' that is, the faith of Moses, and some of the eminent godly Israelites. We must not think all this multitude had faith; but it was so pleasing to God, that for their sakes the community passed safe, and did arrive at the opposite shore. Now this showeth how much God esteemeth the faith of his children.

[4.] It is commended to us again by the distinction God makes between believers and unbelievers; the one pass through the sea as on dry land, and the other sink as lead, and are drowned. We see our privileges in their destruction. Salvation is not a common favour: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' There is salvation for believers, and nothing but destruction for unbelievers. Presumption ruins, as faith saves. Oh! who would not then be of the number of those that believe in Christ

to salvation, since God makes such a distinction between them and others?

Having laid this foundation, the doctrine is this—

Doct. That they who, upon the belief of God's promises, do resolve to run all hazards with Christ in the performance of their duty to him, are only capable of salvation by him.

This is the end why the apostle produces this instance, to encourage the New Testament believers to constancy in the many sufferings they were exposed to for owning Christ; and to continue faithful to Christ, and depend upon the promises still, though they were butchered and slaughtered everyday. To evidence this, take these five considerations—

First, That true faith receives the promise of God, with the terms and conditions which it requireth. This proposition, I suppose, will not be questioned. If the Israelites in the text hoped to see the salvation of God, they must do what God directed them to do. And of all others the like is required; if they will believe, and expect any benefit from God, certainly they must do what God hath required in order to that benefit. All that can reasonably be supposed to invalidate the truth of this proposition is this: either that the gospel is no benefit, but a due debt from God, which we may expect from his natural goodness, and so that God hath not power to give it upon condition; or that he will give it without condition. One of these must be supposed. Now, if all these be false, then the proposition stands firmly.

1. The first supposition, that the gospel is no benefit, but a due debt from God, which we may expect from his natural goodness, do we whatever we will to the contrary, is an absurd conceit; for the privileges of the gospel are always represented as a benefit. 1 Tim. vi. 2, the apostle shows that christian masters should not be despised by their christian servants, 'but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit;' that is, of the privileges of the gospel: it is always represented as a benefit. And it is such a benefit as is called grace, and this oppositely to debt: Rom. iv. 4, 'Now to him which worketh is the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt;' for God is not bound by any merit to give this grace to any. Well, then, if it be God's free gift, then he hath a power to impose conditions; it is at the liberty of the donor to give it upon what terms he pleases, for who but the Almighty can prescribe conditions and laws of commerce betwixt him and his creatures? It belongs to every donor and free benefactor to make his own terms, and to dispose of his own gifts and donations according to his will. If it be a right which belongs to every ordinary person who is an owner to do with his own as pleaseth him, Mat. xx. 15, much more the great God may determine of his own gifts, and how a right to them may be conveyed to us. Well, then, thus far we go on clearly that the privileges of the gospel are a grace, and a grace to be disposed of by him according to the pleasure of his own will. But then—

2. I add further; either God will give them without any conditions, or he will give those benefits upon certain terms and conditions which he liketh to impose upon the creature. Now, to grant as much as may be granted, there are certain benefits indeed which God gives without asking our consent, or imposing any condition upon us on our part;

as the giving of a redeemer to take our nature and fulfil the law, and satisfy his provoked justice on our behalf, and to merit grace sufficient for our deliverance from sin, and death, and hell, and the devil; this he did without our knowledge and consent, for he considered us as creatures in misery, and in more inextricable straits than the Israelites were when they were shut up between mountains and entangled in the land, as Pharaoh saith. But having laid this foundation, God having given a redeemer, then he doth enact and propound a covenant, without asking our consent, or treating with us in the making of it, that we may bring it down, and model it according to our humour. No; the matter is not left free for us to debate; the covenant is formed to our hands, and we are thankfully to accept of it, and submit to it, not to mould it to our turn; for we must take it as we find it; and so the saints are described, Isa. lvi. 4, 'Those that choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' The question now is, Whether there be any terms or no terms in this covenant? Surely there are; for these blessings are not given to all, as experience manifests, for some die in their sins. How shall poor creatures make out their interest, unless God hath declared upon what conditions we shall be possessed of these privileges? Well, now, if God hath once declared the conditions, if we would have the benefit, we must consent to them; as the Israelites, if they would be safe, they must take God's direction, and pass through the Red Sea, though it seem to threaten apparent death. If we would have justification and adoption into God's family, we must believe in Christ: John i. 12, 'For to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.' If we would look for everlasting life, 'we must by a patient continuing in well-doing seek for honour, and glory, and immortality,' Rom. ii. 7. To expect a benefit without terms is to lay the foundation of a great building upon a shadow, and to deceive ourselves with a covenant of our own making, or to presume of that which was never given to us by God. Indeed, whence we have the grace to perform the condition, whether from God or ourselves, that is another question; but a condition there is; we are only proving the way and order of being instated into the benefits promised, and the necessity that true faith should submit to it. It is true we have the first grace from God; the conversion of the heart is from God as a free lord; it is his resolved gift to the elect. But we are speaking now, not of what God does as a free lord, but of a condition stated by our proper and rightful sovereign—the giving of the grace whereby we fulfil the condition that belongs wholly to his free dominion; but appointing the condition, that belongs not wholly to his free dominion, but his being the supreme ruler and governor of the world. Now we must take the promise with the terms and conditions annexed.

Secondly, That the conditions which God requireth are, partly a belief of the promise, and partly obedience to the command annexed; as the Israelites were to believe that God would carry them safe and sound to the next shore through the Red Sea as upon firm land; and therefore, believing this, they were, upon the authority of God's word, to resolve to go down into the great deep, and try what God would do

for them. Their faith was seen in trusting him with the event, without any anxiety and trouble of mind; and their obedience was seen in taking the course and way they were prescribed by God, even through the deep water; though it was so unlikely a way for their preservation, yet they ventured themselves. So we, that believe in Christ for eternal life, must first believe God's promise, that he will bring us to that blissful estate through the way appointed; and so we must resolve to take this way, and follow God whithersoever he leads us by his word and Spirit, that we may obtain this happiness. It is a great point, and a part of faith, to believe the promise; there is very much in that; for though we all desire to be happy, yet this happiness being promised by an invisible God, and lying in an invisible world, it is not easily assented unto; it is not received with that trust and strength of faith by us while we dwell in flesh, and have a corrupt nature within us, which is importunate to be pleased with present things or carnal vanities, which are nigh at hand, and therefore ready to be enjoyed. Therefore it is a great work of the Lord's grace 'to open our eyes, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,' Eph. i. 18; to look to things unseen, which are eternal, and to overlook those that are seen, that are temporal: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, which are but temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal.' This is a mighty act of faith. Most men mind earthly things, cannot take heaven for their whole happiness, or the word of God for their great security, for that is only done by a soul that sincerely believes: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies I have taken as an heritage forever, they are the rejoicing of my soul.' The next part is to resolve to seek this happiness in God's way, to follow it close whatever it cost us, to hold on in our journey, be our way safe or dangerous, rough or pleasant: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' A christian must come to this; whatever way it is that God leads me into by his word and Spirit, so I may attain happiness at last, I will hold on my course. And so it may fall out that we must 'hate our own lives, and forsake all we have,' Luke xiv. 26, 33; not as casting it away needlessly and unprofitably, but venturing it for God's sake, running the hazard of life, and leaving all we have, rather than miss of eternal life, and being unfaithful to Christ.

Thirdly, These being the conditions, the belief of the promise, and thorough obedience to submit to the appointed way; lest we deceive ourselves with a notion, God loves to try us, to see if we have received the promise sincerely, whether we thoroughly believe his word, and are fully obedient to his commands: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' The Lord loves a tried obedience, because it is most for his honour when his people are tried, and they are faithful to him; and it is most for our comfort to make our sincerity evident to us. Sometimes the difficulties lie against our assent to the truth of the promise; at other times, against our resolution to follow God's way, cleaving to him and Christ, and not looking back.

1. Against the strength of our assent, whether we can believe such unlikely things as God hath promised (for so it seems to carnal reason), as that he can carry his people through the deep waters, and they shall not overflow them. Certainly many doubts arise in our minds concerning unseen things, which we cannot enjoy till we shoot the gulf of death. Now Abraham, the father of the faithful, was so called because he could assent so strongly to the promises, and give glory to God 'by believing in hope against hope : ' Rom. iv. 18-20, ' And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Faith can expect a deliverance when it seems impossible to reason. When Abraham was childless, and had been so for many years, yet he expects an issue that for number shall be as the sand upon the sea-shore. If there be not some difficulty in the thing to be believed, it is not an object of faith ; for things present within the view of sense, and things easy and next at hand, are, as it were, already enjoyed. It is no trial of your faith to look for probable things ; but if you can believe when the case is never so difficult, if you can depend and rest yourselves upon the word of God, that you shall be carried through the sea and not be drowned, because you have God's word for it, this is faith. Many difficulties may be objected against such things as God hath revealed in his word ; yet it is enough to a believer that God hath revealed them. Our inquiry, when we come to look into the things we are to believe, should not be, How can these things be ? No ; but, Are these things revealed by God, yea or nay ? How can these things be ? is the voice of unbelief, at the least, of a weak and staggering faith. Nicodemus said, ' How can these things be ? ' John iii. 9. We are to receive supernatural truths as men take pills, not chew, but swallow them, take them upon the credit of the revealer ; if the testifier be God himself, his word should be more to us than the greatest evidence in the world.

2. Sometimes the difficulties lie against our resolution to take God's way. A total resignation of ourselves to the will of God is required of all that will be saved. Now by dangers we are tried whether we will keep this resolution. Strength of assent excludes speculative doubts and errors ; strength of resolution fortifies us against worldly temptations, both on the right hand and on the left. On the right hand temptations do arise from worldly profit, pleasure, and glory ; on the left hand temptations do arise from fears of danger and terrors of sense. Now, when these come with full power upon the soul, they are ready to shake the most confirmed resolution ; but a christian is to maintain the vigor of his faith, and cherish such a confidence in God's promises as may check all fear, and cause him, when God calls him thereunto, to venture on the greatest dangers rather than quit his duty: Ps. xxiii. 4, ' Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' It was a comfortless journey in the midst of waves for so many men, women, and children to hold it ; yet a believer that ventures upon God's command fears nothing : Dan. iii. 17, 18, ' If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king !

But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' Thus are we to show our undaunted confidence of God's protection and deliverance.

Fourthly, Because we are fickle creatures, God will have us, by the solemn profession of such a faith, visibly to enter into his covenant. As God meant to season Israel for after trials, therefore they were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, as was said before, that they might the better submit to his conduct throughout the wilderness, before he brought them into the land of promise; so all those that are willing to take Christ and his cross, Christ and his yoke, the Lord will not leave them under the tie of a bare purpose and resolution, but will have it solemnised in the baptismal covenant, wherein we profess a belief of God's promises, and vow to run all hazards with Christ in our warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh. We cannot forsake the devil, but he will make as hard pursuit after us as Pharaoh did after Israel, to bring us back again into bondage; he doth violently assault new converts. We cannot renounce the world, and the vain courses thereof, but it will hate us, and be exasperated against us. The world only loveth its own, and those that are of a worldly strain, and will not part company with them; they hate others, speak evil of them, and do evil to them. The flesh will entice us to some unfaithfulness to Christ, and compliance with the world, and disobedience to God, and it will be troublesome to resist its motions. Therefore God will have us solemnly roll ourselves in this calendar, and as soon as we are baptized we put on our armour: Rom. vi. 13, 'Wherefore yield ye your members instruments, *ὄπλα*, weapons of righteousness;' and Rom. xiii. 12, 'Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.' Then we are solemnly listed in Christ's service. He was baptized as the captain of our salvation, and we as his soldiers: and when we are baptized soldiers we are to arm ourselves with this resolution, through many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of God. Christ's first work is to lead us into the waters, that we may be seasoned for other encounters, or that fight of afflictions and troubles we are likely to meet withal before we get to heaven: Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.' Baptism was heretofore called an enlightening, because there was wonderful grace given in the use of that ordinance in the primitive times. Now, when we are enlightened, we presently enter upon our warfare, and we must look for a fight.

Fifthly, Having thus solemnly entered into covenant with God, certainly we are bound to make it good, if we would have benefit by it. For it is not enough to make covenant, but all the promises run to him that keepeth covenant. Salvation is promised not to the undertaker, but the conqueror: Rev. ii. 7, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;' and ver. 11, 'He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death;' and ver. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it;' and ver. 26, 'He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;' and chap.

iii. 5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my father and before his angels.' Therefore it is not enough to undertake, but we must perform; it is not enough to renounce, but we must overcome, not only forsake the devil, but resist him: James iv. 7, 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;' Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' We must not only renounce the flesh, but we must mortify and subdue it by the Spirit: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof;' Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' We must not only renounce the world, but overcome it: 1 John v. 4, 'Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith;' and we must be crucified to it: Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world,' and so persevere in our duty to God.

Use 1. To inform us of the nature of true faith, so to believe the promises as to be ready to do what God commandeth, to obtain the benefit of them. It concerneth us very much to understand the nature of faith, for we live by it: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God;' and can we live by it and not know what it is? What is it then? It is such a trusting ourselves in the hands of Christ, upon a confidence of his promises, that we are willing to do anything and suffer anything rather than commit the least sin, and be unfaithful to him. Or a resolution to go on with our duty, trusting ourselves entirely in his hands, whatever dangers befall us. This is called a committing of our souls to him in well-doing: 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.' And the apostle saith, 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' The Israelites, when they went into the Red Sea, did entirely commit and put themselves into God's hands. It is a notable faith when we can so readily believe God, and hold on our duty with quietness, whatever evils do befall us, or whatever dangers threaten us: Ps. xxxvii. 34, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall cause thee to inherit the land.' Obey God's directions, and see how God will make good his word.

Use 2. Reproof. It condemneth several sorts of persons—

1. Those that are always urging difficulties against their duty, and pretend danger when there is no cause: Prov. xxii. 13, 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets.' And again, Prov. xxvi. 13, 'The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets.' In those countries lions were frequent, and their range was in the night, when they went forth to seek for their prey: Ps. civ. 20, 21, 'Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.' Now the slothful man's pretence was, that if he should go forth too early to his labour, he should meet a lion in the very streets. Now it is used proverbially of those that urge any slight danger against their

duty ; because sometimes the lions came into the cities and inhabited places, therefore he durst not go out of his house. There are some that will not venture a frown or a scorn for Christ, and dare not own religion, when there is no probable cause for fear ; and so are frighted out of their necessary duty, not only by real dangers, but by imaginary fears : the shadow of any trouble quite discourageth them.

2. Those that attempt anything without a lawful call. The Israelites had a good call ; they had a command from God to enter into the Red Sea, and they had a promise of God's protection. He that will undergo dangers, let him see how his matters stand with God, and what ground he hath both for his undertaking and for his confidence and courage.

[1.] For his undertaking. For these Israelites, who at God's bidding could enter the Red Sea, yet presuming against God's warrant to go up against the Canaanites, were beaten : Num. xiv. 44, 45, ' But they presumed to go up unto the hill top : nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord and Moses departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.' The case was this, they had murmured at the report of the spies, and when they had smarted for that by a sore plague, they would all of a sudden go up and fight the Canaanites to expiate the suspicion of their cowardice. The ark removed not, but at the removal of the cloud, Num. v. 17, 21 ; and Moses would abide by the ark. But God showed his dislike of the action, because they went without the Lord, and the signs of his grace.

[2.] What ground there is for their courage and confidence ; for in particular events we have no assurance but from God's especial promise. Indeed, in all lawful undertakings we have the promise of God concerning eternal life to bear us up, and we may be confident of this : Luke xii. 32, ' Fear not, little flock ; for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' But for other things we must refer them to God. For eternal salvation we may be sure, but for other things nothing but a particular promise can be the strong pillar of our confidence.

Quest. But if we have no express promise, may we not bear up ourselves against difficulties and improbabilities by believing in God ?

Ans. If believing be meant only of a confidence in God's power, not determining the certainty of the event, we may. Many times we are cast upon God's providence ; all human refuge and helps fail, there is no possibility of escape ; but then God forbiddeth despair : 2 Cor. i. 9, 10, ' But we had received the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' It was when the furious multitude at Ephesus was let loose upon him. But the truer trust is showed in a ready adherence to his call and to our duty : Ps. xlv. 18, 19, ' Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.'

3. It condemneth them who pretend to faith, and yet do not make a total resignation of themselves to God.

[1.] Some reserve their interests. Now you have not saving faith till you can sell all for the pearl of price: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' One cometh boldly to Christ: Mat. viii. 19, 'Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;' but when he heard, ver. 20, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,' we hear no more of him. The young man came to Christ to know 'what good thing he should do to have eternal life,' Mat. xix. 16; but when Christ said to him, 'Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me,' ver. 21; when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, ver. 22. Therefore faith being so necessary to salvation, cheat not yourselves with the image of it.

[2.] Some reserve their lusts; but true faith is inconsistent with the predominancy of any lust or sin; for a christian wholly giveth up himself to the will of God. Therefore he that continueth in his sins, not resolving in his heart to forsake them and to renounce all righteousness in himself, and wholly and solely to rely upon the mercy of God and merit of Christ, betaking himself to a new course of life, mistakes God's promise, and his faith will end in shame and confusion: Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'

Use 3. Of exhortation. To exhort you to such an entire resignation of yourselves to the will of God, and dependence upon his promises, that you may be prepared to go on with your duty, whatever hazards you incur by it.

To press you to this, consider how obedience and dependence do mutually befriend each other. It may be made good by these two considerations—(1.) None can hope for salvation but he that keeps God's way; (2.) None can keep God's way but he that hopes for salvation. They each depend upon one another.

1. None can hope for salvation but he that would keep God's way, because God hath by a wise ordination conjoined ends and means. He hath not simply promised blessedness, but requires a qualification and a performance of duty in the persons to whom the promise is made: Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' And Ps. cxix. 1, 2, 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord: blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.' There is blessedness; ay, but we must keep the way of the Lord, and that punctually, and be undefiled in that way. To look upon one side of the covenant, as upon the promises only, is a groundless presumption; so that whosoever live in any sin against conscience, they may take notice how fearful their estate is

for the present, how needful it is to begin a good course before they can have any good hope towards God.

Besides, there is no such course to damp our hope and weaken our confidence as sin. Surely we cannot trust him whom we offend freely and without restraint. Sin will breed shame and fear, as pain will follow upon the prick of a needle; and where it is allowed, you will soon find the effects of it. On the contrary, faith and love go together; faith that hopes in his promises, and love that seeketh to please God. Sin, that now weakens the faith we have in the commandment, will in time weaken the faith we have in the promises. It may be for the present our confidence in God's mercy and promises is not directly assaulted; we bear on with a little slight hope till the hour of death, or the time of some extraordinary trial; but when the evil day comes, the consciousness of any one sin which we have indulged, allowed, and lived in, will be of like force to withdraw our assent from God's mercies, as the delight and pleasure of sin is now to tempt us to transgress his commandments: 'For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law,' 1 Cor. xv. 56. When we feel the stings of sin, then we shall doubt of the mercies of God. And that is the reason why dying persons, when they are serious, have so many troubled thoughts within them. And take the experience of the godly, they find this still; when they have been acquainted with a spiritual life, their hope increases by their diligence in a holy life. And the scripture tells us so: Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' The more diligent we are in a holy life, the more hope and the more confidence we shall have in God's mercy and in the merits of Christ; for then our qualification is more clear. So far as a man neglects his duty and abates in his qualification, so far does his assurance abate; it must needs be so. Therefore, mark, none can hope for salvation but he that will keep God's way, and that is resolved to be at God's direction.

2. None can keep God's way but those that hope for his salvation; for without this we can never have a heart or head to do anything for God. It is a notable passage of Bernard, *Peccator nihil expectat, indeque peccator est, quod bonis presentibus non solum detentus, sed etiam contentus*—A sinner hopes for nothing, and therefore he is a sinner, because he is not only withheld by present things, but satisfied with them. They that look for no great matters from God in another world, no wonder they are so negligent and careless of their duty; they can never be diligent in his service, or faithful and true to him. Besides, the difficulties and dangers which attend us, if we will be sincerely obedient, are so many and great, that if we begin with God, we shall not go on with him unless we surely depend on the blessedness he offereth to us: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul;' that is, who purchase the salvation of the soul with the loss of other things, as the word signifies. Well, then, let these always be coupled: if we would keep the commandments of God, we must hope for the salvation of God; and if we would hope for the salvation of God, we must keep the commandments of God. This is most acceptable to God, most comfortable to you, and most honourable to religion. It is

most acceptable to God: Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' Oh! when these two are coupled, the fear to offend him and dependence upon his grace in Christ, the Lord takes pleasure in them. And it will be most comfortable to you: Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' And it is most honourable to religion, for this is the religion of Christ's making; religion is then in its true constitution and frame: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' When we reflect upon the proper ground of comfort, the mercy of God, the covenant of grace, and the merits of the Redeemer, and keep up a due care of obedience, this is christian religion. And it is an honourable thing in the world; and this will show that you are sincere and upright; and that after a while that you have gone on walking in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, you shall enjoy his blessed presence in heaven.

SERMON LXIV.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.—HEB. xi. 30.

IN the last verse we have represented the faith of Israel under the conduct of Moses, now we shall represent their faith under the conduct of Joshua. There we saw what was done in their passage out of Egypt, here we shall see what is done in their entrance into Canaan. 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,' &c. Here is—

1. The grace exercised—*Faith*.

2. The event that followed—*The walls of Jericho fell down*.

3. The manner how it was accomplished—*After they were compassed about seven days*. Where—(1.) The means, 'They were compassed about;' (2.) The time, 'Seven days.'

1. The grace exercised—*Faith*. The great skill of christians is to find out the new testament pre-signified in the old, and the old testament fulfilled in the new; both agree to tell us the way of living by faith in Christ. Joshua was a type of Christ, as his name shows, which in the new testament is always written *Jesus*: as Acts vii. 45, 'They were brought in with Jesus into the possession of the gentiles,' and Heb. iv. 8, 'If Jesus had given them rest;' that is, Joshua. Now this also was the name of our Lord: Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus (which signifies a saviour), for he shall save his people from their sins.' Joshua was a great captain; and Christ is the 'captain of our salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. Joshua was to overcome strongholds, and whatever let the people's possessing the land of promise; so doth Christ demolish all strongholds, the devil and the grave, death and hell, that he may introduce us into the heavenly Canaan, the land of our eternal rest. Joshua overcame by God's appointed means, by