

## SERMON XXXV.

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*—HEB. xi. 7.

IN the history of faith the apostle passeth from Enoch to Noah. He is fitly subjoined as being the next person of eminency in the line of the church. Enoch was famous for walking with God, and so was Noah: Gen. vi. 9, 'Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with God.' Enoch received a testimony that he pleased God, and so did Noah; he is said, 'to find grace in the eyes of the Lord,' Gen. vi. 8. And therefore Noah is the fittest instance that could be mentioned, next to Enoch, as being the inheritor and successor of his graces and privileges. Besides, the former verse spoke of the respects of faith to the rewards of religion, ver. 6, 'He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Therefore now the apostle would bring an instance of the respects of faith to the threatening and commination of the word—'By faith Noah,' &c. The person then whose faith we are now to consider is Noah, the true Janus, with a double face, looking forward and backward; the last of the patriarchs of the old world, and the first of the new. In the commendation of his faith we may take notice of many circumstances—

1. The ground of his faith—*Noah being warned of God.*

2. The strength of it, intimated in the object—*of things not seen as yet*, or of things that by no means could be seen.

3. The consequents and the fruits of his faith, and they are four—

(1.) *He was moved with fear*, or out of a religious respect to God (so the word signifies); (2.) *He prepared an ark*; (3.) *He condemned the world*; (4.) *He became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* I shall open each part in this order and method proposed.

But before I discuss the parts, let me premise somewhat. That we have not only to do with a private instance and example of faith, but such as is of public use and accommodation. God's dealing with Noah, and the world in his time, was a pledge and a type of his dealing with the world in all after ages. To amplify this—

[1.] It was a pledge, or a public evident testimony of future dispensations; this was a document God would give to the world. In the destruction of the old world he would show his displeasure against sin, and in the preservation of Noah the privileges of the godly.

(1.) The destruction of the old world was a pledge of his vengeance and recompense upon sinners in all ages. It is notable that in the book of Job, those that denied providence, that God took notice of human affairs, they are called to look upon this instance, the example of the old world: Job xxii. 15, 16, 'Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overthrown with a flood.' God's first dispensations were visible pledges and testimonies: his dispensation to Sodom was

a pledge of hell-fire; and his drowning of the world, it being a more universal instance of his displeasure, was a pledge of the general judgment. Here we may read several things: the severity of his justice, the verity of his threatenings, and the greatness of his power and majesty. The severity of his justice: oh, what a dreadful instance was this of God's displeasure against sin and sinners! Luther saith, *Moses vix sine lachrymis scripsit, et nos esse saxeos, si siccis oculis ista legere possumus*—Moses could not write it without tears, and we have stony hearts if we can read it with dry eyes. The whole world perished in the deluge of water which sin vomited out; men, women, infants, beasts, and all things in the world perished. For forty days together nothing but rain, rain, rain; and the great deep opened its mouth, and sent forth floods. It would have melted a heart of stone to hear the cries and shrieks of parents, women, and children. God now had rained 'a horrible tempest' upon sinners, Ps. xi. 6; the whole world was become now as one great river, and all things in the world were now afloat. Again, we have a pledge of the verity of the threatenings, what would come of their carnal course. The foolish world thought this was but a dream of the good old man, but see how the Lord made good Noah's word. It is said, Hos. vii. 12, 'I will chastise them as their congregation hath heard.' God would have us mark not only his justice, but his truth in all his dispensations; he will not only chastise them as they had deserved, but as their congregation had heard. There is a double conviction, and such as may keep the soul in more awe and obedience. And then it is an evidence of the power and majesty of God, that he cannot want instruments of vengeance; fire and water are at his beck and command. He that punished the old world with water to quench their heat of lusts, can punish the new world with fire because of the coldness of love that shall be in the latter days. Whenever the Lord will dissolve the confederacies of nature, what can poor creatures do? Oh, let us regard the power and majesty of God, and the rather because we are kept by a continual miracle: the water is above the earth, as may be proved by undoubted arguments, and the whole world would become but as one great pool were it not for the restraint of providence.

(2.) The preservation of Noah was a pledge of God's mercy in the preservation of his people. In general and common judgments God can make a distinction. In the primitive times the christians were troubled how God should punish those seducers by whom religion was scandalised and yet save the godly; and what doth the apostle say to this? 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished.' The Lord knows he is versed in the art, it hath been his practice for many thousands of years; and there he brings the instance of Lot, how he was delivered out of Sodom, ver. 7; how the good angels were preserved when the bad were tumbled down into the place of darkness, ver. 4; and he brings the instance of the old world, how God could rescue Noah, and avenge the disobedience of the old world, ver. 5. Especially this is a pledge of the different recompenses that shall be made at the last day, when all the ungodly world shall perish, but the elect shall be taken into glory. You shall see vengeance executed upon the ungodly. Christ will have it done not only in his own sight: Luke xix. 27, 'Those

mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me,'—Christ will see execution done himself in his own person; but it shall be done in the sight of the godly. The wicked are first punished in the sight of the godly, before the godly are taken into glory: Mat. xxv. 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment,' and then 'the righteous into life eternal.' You shall first see the wicked have their doom, then you shall receive your privilege. Thus you see it was a pledge of God's general dispensations both to the godly and the wicked.

[2.] It was a type, too; for all things happened to the fathers by way of type and symbol, and so did this.

(1.) There is a great similitude between the day of judgment and the drowning of the world in several cases. It is good, I know, to be wary in allegories, yet we find in scripture the flood is mystically applied. There is a resemblance between the destruction of the old world, and the day of judgment when Christ shall come in glory. And that is the reason why the days of Noah and the day of the general judgment are often compared together; the flood was to them as the general judgment is to us: 2 Peter iii. 6, 'Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished;' so Mat. xxiv. 37-39, 'As in the days of Noah they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be;' and in Luke xvii. 26, 27, the like comparison is made. The comparison holds true in several cases. Those that lived in Noah's time a little before the flood, were extremely secure; their ears were sealed up with their bellies, they nourished their heart with pleasure; they ate and they drank, they married, they gave in marriage; as if they had said, Come let us eat, drink, and enjoy the pleasures of the flesh while we may; if this scrupulous fellow's words be true, we shall surely die; they looked upon him as an old dotting man that dreamed of destruction. Just such kind of men shall there be at the last day, men of a secure luxury, that shall scoff at the ministers of the gospel when they press strictness and holiness, and propound the threatenings of God. It is said of the men in Noah's time: Mat. xxiv. 39, 'They knew not till the flood came, and took them all away.' They knew it well enough; Noah gave them warning; but they took no notice of any such threatenings; they behaved themselves as if they had known no such matter, though they knew there was such a thing threatened. The scripture measures our thoughts by our practice. So carnal men, the day of the Lord comes upon them, and they know not till the judgment takes them away; they do not believe in the great day of accounts, for they live as if there were no such day when they securely give themselves up to secular business, and neglect their poor souls. And look, as it was with sinners at the coming of the flood, so will it be with those carnal wretches at the judgment day; when the great deep had opened its mouth, and all the world was like a deep river swiftly flowing, the waters prevailed and increased greatly. They that did not fear before, how did they run to and fro—from the lower rooms to the higher, from the floors to the tops of the houses, from the houses to the trees, from the valleys to the hills, and yet still the waters increased upon them. Some possibly might swim towards

the ark, and desire that refuge which before they despised; but still the waters prevailed over them, and so they were drowned. Such will be the consternation of the wicked in the great day. The hypocrites in Zion shall be afraid, and they shall cry, Who shall hide us? and, Where shall we go from the wrath of the Lamb: Rev. vi. 15-17, 'And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' Then they shall cry out, Oh, that I had accepted Christ, and that I had gotten into the ark! All the wolves shall tremble then at the presence of the glorious Lamb, when he shall come in majesty and power.

(2.) In the preservation of Noah and his family there was a type. Noah and those that were of his household were under the oath and covenant that they should be safe: Gen. vi. 18, 'With thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.' God had passed his word. God made two covenants with Noah; one when he went into the ark, that he should be safe; and another, when he came out of the ark, that the waters should no more return: Gen. viii. 21, 'I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake,' &c. This may be spiritually applied of God's oath to believers as soon as they close with Christ. See how the Spirit of the Lord applies it: Isa. liv. 9, 'As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee;' it is an allusion to the later covenant. God invites us by his promise and covenant to come to Christ, and we shall have security there; then he plighteth his oath that a deluge of wrath shall never return more; they shall be safe for the present, and happy hereafter. Again, as there was no safety but in the ark, the only means of salvation was the ark, and then the ark must not only be looked upon, but entered into; so there is no safety but in Jesus Christ; and it is not enough to know Christ, and to have a naked contemplation of his sufficiency to save sinners, but our safety by Christ is by virtue of our union with him: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' As they that were in the ark were safe, so those that are in Christ, united to him, are secured. Again, look upon the ark as an instituted means, which preserved them in the midst of the deluge. God, by his absolute power, could have preserved Noah upon the waters or in the waters as well as in the ark, as he saved the fishes in the water; yet he is pleased to prescribe some probable and likely means of safety, and the means prescribed must be used. So if we would be saved, we must use the means of salvation, however derided, as baptism and the word. For the word: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Though the world opposeth and despiseth it, yet this is the way and means. So also for baptism, for so the apostle applies it, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, 'Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, 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.' Look, as those eight souls that were in the ark were saved, the ark being borne up by the water; so God hath appointed the water of baptism, and other means, to be the means of our salvation. Again, the carpenters that made the ark had no entertainment in the ark; for they wrought as Noah's workmen for their hire, not as the servants of providence for the ends of God. And so there may be some men that are employed and minister in holy things, that may build up an ark wherein others may enter and be safe, but after preaching to others themselves may be cast away, as the apostle seems to imply, 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

Now I come to the words themselves—'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark.' &c.

*First*, I shall take notice of the ground of his faith—'He was warned of God.' In the original it is *χρηματισθεις*, warned by an oracle; the word is proper to those dispensations which God used in the primitive times in the planting of the church. It is said of the wise men *χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ*, Mat. ii. 12, 'Being warned of God in a dream;' so of St Paul, Acts x. 22, *ἐχρηματίσθη ὑπ' ἀγγέλου ἁγίου*, 'Being warned from God by a holy angel.' Now in this warning of God I shall observe several things.

First, I observe God's condescension, in that he would be pleased to give warning. He acquainted Noah with his purpose that he might acquaint the world. Oh, what a slow progress doth God make in his judgments! Though the pace of mercy be swift and earnest, yet judgment walketh with leaden feet. When God comes to refresh a sinner, he comes 'skipping over the mountains,' Cant. ii. 8, as if he never could be soon enough. And the father 'ran to meet his son,' Luke xv. 20. But yet now in the progress of his judgments God's motion is slow, and he comes on by degrees. The apostle takes notice of this, 2 Peter iii. 20, 'The long-suffering of God waited as in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing,' God waited long, and Noah gives warning; there were one hundred and twenty years respite for repentance, and all the while Noah is building the ark, and he is preaching of righteousness to the ungodly, to see if he could move them to repentance. Nay, when the time was expired, God allows seven days more, Gen. vii. 4; and when those seven days were expired, the heavens did not pour out of a sudden, but the rain was increasing till it came to the height—forty days and forty nights. When God would discover his goodness and power, he did it in a small time; he perfectly made the world in six days: but now, to show his pity and patience when he would destroy the world, he allows forty days, to see if any of them would then repent: though they were drowned, yet they might be saved eternally hereafter. Thus still is God wont to give his people warning of their approaching dangers. Judgment seldom takes the world by surprise; but first there is notice given. It was the law of arms which God established among the Israelites; when they came before any city to assault it, they were first to offer terms of peace:

Deut. xx. 10, 'When thou comest nigh unto any city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it;' so still the Lord observes the same course. God first summons a parley, and would fain capitulate with sinners; gives warning of his purpose, that they might prevent their ruin by repentance: Jer. xviii. 11, 'Behold I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you; return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.' God would fain be prevented, Behold, I tell you what I am doing; if you be wise, repent. If God threatens, it is that he may not punish; and when he punisheth, it is that he may not punish for ever. God is still giving warning. But you will say, How doth he give warning now oracles are ceased? Why, by the threatenings of the word; and this should be as forcible a warning as if the Lord had given you a solemn prediction. Certainly, there is a great deal of keenness in Elisha's sword: 1 Kings xix. 17, 'Those that escape from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.' The prophets, they have a sword: Hos vi. 5, 'I have hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth.' It is true, we do not speak by oracle, and so sensible an inspiration as the old prophets did; but when the practice is threatened in scripture, and condemned by the word, it is as much as if we had a particular oracle: the constitutions of heaven will not be violated.

To apply this hint.

*Use 1.* Take notice of the rich mercy and patience of God, and aggravate it by his great hatred of sin. Though God hates sin exceedingly, yet how long doth he bear with sinners? how long doth he protract his wrath? and how many courses doth he take to reclaim you from the evil of your ways? You may sooner reconcile fire and water than God and sin: Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.' He is no favourer of your sins, but only gracious. Under the law, the mercy-seat was the cover of the ark; and there was the book of the law, where all God's curses were kept, that was put into the ark: Exod. xxv. 21, 'And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee,'—to show that mercy hath the moderation of all threatenings; and therefore is it that we are not consumed. Mercy suspends the execution of his just revenge: we wrest destruction out of God's hands, judgment is called his strange work.

*Use 2.* Again, whenever you are warned of the evil of your ways, lay it to heart. We cannot determine the actual events; God hath put times and seasons in his own hands. We may show you the merits of the fact, a storm in the black cloud, and then you should tremble; and therefore do not think slightly of reproof and threatening. When Lot told them of the wrath of God against Sodom, 'He seemed to his sons-in-law as one that mocked,' Gen. xix. 14; so men think we work ourselves into a passion and rage. But when warning is neglected, wrath is exasperated. This will be your great torment in hell, to think you were warned of the evil of your courses, and you would not regard it. Look, as Reuben said to his brethren, Gen. xlii. 22, 'Did not I warn you to do nothing against the child?' So will the Lord say

when you are under torment, Did not I warn you? Your own heart will return upon you, as the heart of him that dreamt he was boiling in a kettle of scalding lead, and his heart cried to him, It is I that have been the cause of all this; so your hearts, when in torment, will upbraid you with the frequent warnings you have had.

Secondly, I observe again, that this warning was immediately made to Noah, who was a prophet and a righteous man, and by him it was delivered to the world at second-hand. God usually revealed himself to holy and righteous persons; they are his familiars, and you know it is a part of friendship to communicate secrets; and therefore the Lord will communicate his secret to them that fear him: Ps. xxv. 14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant;' Gen. xviii. 17, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?' God looks upon it as a violation of friendship to Abraham to conceal this matter from him; and so to his prophets, as it is expressly said: Amos iii. 7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets,' God's messengers are as his heralds, to offer terms of peace, and to proclaim war to the world; and he gives them commission to go of his errand. It is true there is no necessity laid upon God that he should do it always; but this is the course which he usually takes, and this was the way he often used in the old testament, oftener than in the new. What should be the reason of this? not because his grace is straitened: it is more enlarged in the gospel, for the defect of prophecy is recompensed by the clearness of saving truths. God opened his mind to them about particular events and successes, because evangelical truths were not so open and clear as they now are, and the eternal recompenses were more darkly delivered to the patriarchs. But now, God having opened his good treasure to us, we have higher arguments of piety, a larger measure of gifts, clearer discerning and understanding of the truths of the word, therefore prophecy ceaseth. Yet now, in the times of the gospel, he doth not altogether fail his people; for though they can have no certain knowledge of future contingencies, yet he begets some strong instinct in the mind of his children, puts it into their hearts to avoid this and avoid that: we have no infallibility of the event, yet we may discern much of the providence of God.

To apply this hint.

*Use 1.* When the generality of holy men are apprehensive of judgments, it is a sad omen; when they have ill thoughts of the times, it is a sad presage. When the prophet was making up his stuff, it was a prognostic of ruin to Jerusalem, Ezek. xii. 3-7. When you see them ready to depart, it is a sad thing, for God is wont to communicate his secret to them that fear him. Then again—

*Use 2.* It presseth us, if we would know the secret of the Lord, be holy. Grace opens the eyes, and a man discerns things more clearly. A holy man hath a greater insight into truth than a carnal man, for lusts are the clouds of the mind. He that is encumbered with lusts is blind: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' Grace will be an advantage to you in point of knowledge.

Thirdly, I observe, in Noah being warned by God that this warning

was by oracle and special revelation ; from whence I note that revelation is the ground of faith ; for faith relates to some divine testimony. What we know by reason is knowledge or opinion, but not faith, which supposes a revelation and a testimony. Now divine revelations can only be the object of faith, because they are certain infallible truths, and cannot deceive us, and such whereunto men absolutely give credit. But you will say What revelations have we now oracles are ceased ? I answer, It is true, these are God's ancient ways. Of old time, God spake—*πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*—‘at sundry times and in divers manners’ to his people, Heb. i. 1. Sometimes he spake to them by voice, sometimes by vision, sometimes by dream, sometimes by miraculous inspiration, or by urim and thummim, or by a sign from heaven, or by an angel ; now God speaks to us by his Son. God's mind is fully revealed and disposed into a settled course. Enthusiasts may delude themselves with their own imaginations. Christians now have but two revelations ; the one is ancient, and the other is new, and happens every day : there is the light of the word and the light of the Spirit.

1. The light of the word ; this is our oracle, and therefore it is called, ‘The oracles of God,’ Rom. iii. 2. This is our urim and thummim, God tries us by that ; the standing rule of justice is settled in the word, and this is more sure and less liable to deceit than an oracle, voice, or angel ; for the devil may transform himself into an angel of light. Saith the apostle : 2 Peter i. 19, ‘We have a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place’—more sure than what ? He speaks of the voice upon the holy mount, the voice that came from the excellent glory, that said, ‘This is my well-beloved Son,’ Mat. xvii. 5. Oracles and voices as to us are more liable to deceit. The apostle doth not say, We have a more *true* word, but a more *sure* word. The oracle was true, because it came from God ; but a standing rule is not so liable to deceit and mistake as a transient voice.

2. We have the light of the Spirit in our hearts, by which our understandings are opened ; we cannot be able to understand the word without this inward revelation of the Spirit. When we are reading and hearing the word, we cannot discern it with any favour, till the Spirit opens our eyes. As Christ, when he came to his disciples—first he opened the scripture, then he opened their understandings, Luke xxiv. 44, 45. And it is the Spirit that gives us a constant revelation, that reveals the secrets of God to us—all his purposes of grace concerning our souls : Rom. viii. 15, ‘Ye have not received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.’ The Spirit of God, by inward suggestions, tells us God is our Father. By this voice God saith, I am thy salvation, as David prays, Ps. xxxv. 3, ‘Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.’ It is the Spirit that comes and reveals to us when it is a fit season to come and call upon God ; and when the arms of mercy are ready and open to receive us ; and what are the answers of our prayers ? 1 John v. 6, ‘It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.’

*Use,* Learn hence whereon to bottom faith—upon the word of God. Let us be contented with this dispensation. Foolish creatures would give laws to heaven, and we would indent with God upon our own



terms and conditions. Look, as the devil comes and indents with Christ : Mat. iv. 3, ' If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread ; ' he would have him do a miracle, else he would not believe him. And the Jews would indent with Christ : Mat. xxvii. 40, ' If thou be Christ, come down from the cross and we will believe. ' So carnal men indent with God. We think if God did speak by miraculous inspiration, then things would not be so doubtful. Oh, let us be contented with our light ! the Lord hath stated our salvation in an excellent way. Chrysostom saith, The saints do never complain of the darkness of the word, but of the darkness of their own heart : Ps. cxix. 18, ' Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law : ' David doth not say, Lord make a plainer law ; but, Lord, open mine eyes. If things be dark to you, do not accuse the scriptures, as if they were an uncertain rule, but desire the Lord to open your eyes that you may look into them. We would have Christ speak to us from heaven, as he did to Paul. Men that neglect ordinances require miracles ; they would have all things decided by voice, oracles, and miracles, because they would save the pains of study, prayer, and discourse. If men were not drowned in lusts and pleasures, all would be clear. When the church was destitute of outward helps, God used the way of miracles and oracles ; but that dispensation is not continued, because we have a better way : providence, the Spirit, and the word, take them all together, do exceedingly open the mind of God to us. We have the advantage of the revelations and miracles of former ages, and we have a supply by ordinary and standing means. Instead of new miracles, we have the testimony of the church, who hath had experience of the power and force of the word for many ages, and invites us to believe. Observe, every age of the church hath sufficient means so proportioned to the diversity of times that no age could have better than the present ; but we affect the extraordinary signs and revelations of former generations. In this case, it is all as God will ; and God's wisdom knows what is best for us. When miracles were most rife, they were not exercised at the will of man. The apostle saith : Heb. ii. 4, ' God bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ; ' it was not as the apostles would. The Lord is a wise God, and he knows what dispensation is fit for every age. There are a great many reasons why God should use the way of miracle and oracle then ; as that there might be some external motive to draw the world to hearken to the doctrine of the gospel. The apostles' work was to lay the canon and foundation, but we do but explain it. Saith St Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 10, ' As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereupon. ' We only explain what the apostles had laid down ; our duty is only to build upon the apostles' foundation. Now we know explication and inference need the confirmation of reason and discourse rather than of miracle. It is true, for the apostles' part of their work was to explain the old testament ; but that was somewhat obscure, and that was not acknowledged of all nations, only received among the Jews ; therefore there was need of miracle to make their interpretation authentic, and that they might lay a clear foundation of faith for all nations ; and besides, the church then was not armed

with magistracy, and therefore much of the coercive discipline which God then used was by miracle. Ananias was struck dead with a miracle : Acts v. 5, 'And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost.' But now, when magistrates should be nursing-fathers, the dispensation ceaseth. Besides, this should be a consideration to content us. Those that had miracles were not merely converted by the miracle, but by the hearing of the word ; the miracle was only the occasion, not the cause of conversion. The bells may call the people together to hear the word, but the word converts. Miracles were as bells to draw the heart to hearken to the doctrine of Christ. The fowler's pipe may allure the birds, but they are caught by the net. Let it suffice, then, that you have the word of God confirmed by miracle, sealed by the blood of so many martyrs, manifested to your consciences by such divine force. All the miracles we have now are either inward and spiritual ; they are miracles of grace in changing the heart. The children of God have testimony enough within themselves ; they feel the force and power of the word upon their consciences : John viii. 32, 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' When the word doth help to disentangle us from lust, we cannot have a more clear revelation and warrant from God concerning the truth of it : John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth.' When God sanctifies the heart by the word, then we know it is truth, or else outward miracles ; God's wonderful providence in maintaining the church by suffering and martyrdom, not by the power of an outward sword. This is the finger of God : Neh. vi. 16, 'It came to pass, when all our enemies heard thereof, they were much cast down in their own eyes ; for they perceived that the work was wrought by our God.' These are the miracles and oracles we are to expect.

Here is an objection. It is said : Acts ii. 17, 'It shall come to pass, that in the last days I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,' &c ; so that it seems God would still continue the dispensation in the last days, that he will give us visions, dreams, and oracles again.

I answer, These are but figurative expressions, to signify the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which we receive by virtue of Christ's ascension, abundance of knowledge, faith, and holiness, for mark, the words are quoted out of a prophet. Now the prophet speaks according to the dispensation of his own age, or else how should he be understood by the men of his time. Dreams and visions were the ordinary means whereby God then revealed himself to his prophets, and therefore the prophet useth words calculated to the Jewish dispensation. In the prophetic writings, whenever they spake of the worship in the new testament, they used words suited to the then present worship ; as altars, sacrifices, incense, and the like, which are words proper to the legal rites ; so when they speak of the gifts of the new testament, then they use the words—prophecy, vision, and dreams. All the meaning is, God in the latter days would give them abundance of light and knowledge, for, take the words literally, they were not made good in the case to which he applyeth the prophecy. The apostle applies it to take off the reproach of the people that said they were filled with

new wine. Now they could not be said then to see visions and dream dreams; but the words set out the excellent gifts of the Spirit in the new testament. But if you would more particularly know why the Spirit of God should use these words of prophecy, visions, and dreams; that sons and daughters should prophesy, &c., I answer then, By prophecy you may understand the gifts of illumination; by vision, gifts of consolation; and by dreams, the gifts of sanctification.

1. By prophecy, the gifts of illumination, or a clear understanding of God's will in Christ, which should be in the new testament above the old testament—'Your sons and daughters shall prophesy;' that is, the little boy and girl shall be able to understand the mysteries of salvation in scripture; they need not run to the prophet for the meaning of such a ceremony and rite.

2. Then by vision understand a more intimate apprehension of the truth, or a manifestation of things to the conscience, gifts of consolation. We have a kind of vision here, when we have a lively sense of divine grace: here we see as in a glass; hereafter we shall see face to face.

3. Then by dreams you may understand the more inward instincts and motions of the Holy Ghost, by which the soul, being severed from worldly desires and objects, is raised to the contemplation of heaven and spiritual things; as dreams are the thoughts and commotions of the soul, which are framed when the outward senses are shut up. When a man neither seeth, heareth, smelleth, toucheth, nor tasteth, then the soul worketh on things at the greatest distance; so, possibly, it signifies those spiritual instincts, those sanctifying motions, by which the soul is raised up to the contemplation of heavenly mysteries: then there is such a distribution of the persons to amplify the clause that went before—'I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.' 'Old men,' to show that no condition is excluded from the communion of the Spirit, your 'sons and daughters,' that is, your children, they shall have their memory sanctified to retain prophecy; your 'young men' shall have visions, their consciences sanctified, to feel the force of what is in their heads; and your 'old men' shall dream dreams; they who are deadened to the world shall have their affections raised to heaven, and God will clearly manifest himself to them.

### SERMON XXXVI.

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet.—*  
HEB. xi. 7.

FOURTHLY, I observe that this warning was of a judgment to come—'Being warned of things not seen as yet;' that is, of the horror of the flood. From whence I note that the threatening as well as the promise is the object of faith; not only the mercy of God in the promise, but the judgment of God in the threatening, is to be applied by faith. I shall confirm the doctrine in hand with some reasons.

1. Because every part of divine truth is worthy of belief and reverence, because it is the word of the same God; and that is the reason why we read of faith in the promises, faith in the command, faith in the threatening. There is faith in the promises: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' there is faith in the commandment: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments;' that is, I have believed them to be of divine authority, and to be just, equal, and good; and there is faith in the threatening, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God,' &c. It is true, belief in the threatening is not so much pressed in scripture, because guilty nature of itself is presagious of evil: Rom. i. 31, 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.'

2. Because faith is but a loose presumption, if it be not carried out to the threatenings as well as the promises. In all right belief there is mixture. Men that look altogether to be honeyed and oiled with grace, to be fed with the promises and feasted with love, they mistake the nature of God and the state of his economy, and the manner of his dealing with the world; they mistake the nature of God, for God is just as well as merciful. And in such a mixed dispensation hath he revealed himself to the creature: Ps. cxvi. 5, 'Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful;' gracious, and yet righteous. And they mistake the ordinances of God and the state of his dispensations; for he will be known in his judgments, as well as in his mercies. God hath always delighted to deal with men in the way of a covenant. Now the right covenant form is a precept invested with a promise and a threatening; therefore we are bound to believe that God will condemn the obstinate as well as save the penitent. In the covenant which God made with man in innocency, it is notable the only memorial we have is of the curse; nothing but that is mentioned: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death.' The promise is but implied; if thou forbearst eating, thou shalt live; but the threatening is expressed, What was the reason? Partly because the effect of that covenant was only to oblige the guilty creature to death; and partly because God would show us that man's nature doth always need a bridle. In the state of innocency, when we were most holy, as there was use of a law for the exercise of obedience, so there was use of a threatening to keep him from sin, because of the changeableness of his nature; therefore it is much more needful now in our degenerate estate. Though the new nature needs no other argument but love and sweetness, yet the old nature needs a curb and restraint. Therefore men that would only hear of promises and arguments of grace, sin against God's ordination and the wisdom by which he will govern the world: they would have God yield to them and speak them fair, else they will be none of his; so that the faith they cry up is rather a fond delicacy, or carnal presumption, than a serious respect to God.

3. Because it is necessary and profitable. There is no part of scripture without use and profit. Man may write a book, but there may be a great deal of waste in it; but when God hath written a volume or book, there is nothing in it but what is of profit: Rom. xv.

4, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' It is true, it is the aim of the whole scripture to beget hope; ay, but there are some things, in order to hope, that are first to work upon fear; something to bridle the flesh as well as to comfort the spirit, though all endeth in hope. There is nothing in the word of God superfluous, and the threatenings are a considerable part of the word.

But more particularly I shall show you how the threatenings are necessary.

[1.] To beget humiliation for sins past. In the threatenings we see the desert of sin, therefore after grievous offences it is good to wound the heart this way with the more remorse. Josiah's heart was tender and made soft—by what? by the threatening: 2 Kings xxii. 19, 'Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse,' &c. Certainly there is great advantage by the commination. You will never understand how displeasing things are to God till you look upon the flying roll, and read the curses; then the soul will say, Oh, what have I done? I have done that which makes me guilty of all the curses of the law; and this will make you earnest after pardon, nay, it will make the pardon more welcome when it comes; We have deserved to be cast into hell, but grace hath saved us. Then will your hearts be enlarged in praises and thanksgivings to God, and you will exalt him to the highest heaven who hath delivered you from the lowest hell. Daniel, when he was in the den, had more cause to bless God than if he had been kept out of the den; to be in the midst of lions, and to see their mouths muzzled. So when we think of the evil of sin, and the terrible consequents of sin, and all this taken away by Christ, how will this commend our portion? how will we bless God for Jesus Christ? This is the fruit of sin, but 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

[2.] The consideration of the threatening will be an advantage to us to make us vigilant and watchful; when we see the danger we shall not be so secure. This is the argument by which Christ himself would convert Paul: Acts ix. 5, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' It is a metaphor taken from a husbandman's goad or prick; wanton oxen, when they run against the goad, they do not hurt the goad, but themselves. So it will be dangerous for you, God's wrath will gore the soul. We should have this goad and prick before our eyes; and this will make us watchful. Solomon saith, Prov. i. 17, 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' Birds, when they see the snare, will not venture upon the bait; and so, when we see the danger and consider the sad consequences of sin, it will make the soul to be the more careful; we will not dally with sin, and grow so bold with God and his cause.

[3.] It is an excellent means to strengthen us against carnal fear. The fear of man is apt to prove a snare, Prov. xxv. 24. Solomon spake it, and many of the servants of God have found it so. It was fear that made Abraham deny his wife, and it was fear that made

Peter deny his master. Now there is no way to cure the fear of man but by presenting the fear of God. Look, as Aaron's rod devoured the rods of the magicians, and as the stronger nail drives out the weaker, so doth the fear of God drive out the fear of man. What is the ground of all carnal compliance? We fear man's power, and presume of God's mercy; a slight belief is given to the threatenings of God, and we think the wrath of man is more to be feared than the wrath of God. The only cure will be to consider that there are no terrors to those which faith represents; therefore holy persons always used this remedy to drive out the fear of man by the fear of God. It is said 'The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them,' Exod. i. 17; and the Holy Ghost prescribeth this remedy, Isa. viii. 12, 13, 'Fear not their fear, nor be afraid, but sanctify the Lord God of hosts in your hearts, and make him your fear and your dread.' The prophet speaks against those that would cry up a confederacy with them that cry up a confederacy; that would yoke themselves in combination with the public enemies of God. Oh, think of the terrors of the Lord, and that will quell and allay all the terrors of men. So our Saviour: Luke xii. 4, 'Be not afraid of them that can but kill the body. But I will warn you whom you should fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.' The terrors of the Lord, and the threatenings of the Lord, they are the cure against the terrors of men. Better all the world your enemy than God. We live longer with God than we do with men; he can kill body and soul.

[4.] The threatenings of the word are necessary to be propounded to our faith, to check indulgence to carnal pleasure. Pleasure and delight are dear bought if they cannot be compassed but with the danger of our souls; and therefore there is no way to counterbalance delight but by fear, to consider the wrath of God that shall come upon every sinner: 2 Peter ii. 10, 'But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.' Whoever escape they are sure to be punished; there is bitter judgment for these sweet pleasures.

*Use 1.* Here is counsel to the children of God, not only to take a view of the land of promise, but it is good sometimes to take a view of the land of darkness; they should not only reflect upon the promises, but the threatening; it is profitable, though less pleasing.

*Quest.* Here ariseth a case, Whether or no the children of God, those especially that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, and have a sense of the favour of God, whether they may make use of the threatening and terrors of the Lord or no? I answer to this affirmatively; they may, and they must, and shall prove it by several reasons.

1. It is a part of the Spirit's discipline, necessary because of the remainders of corruption, and the Holy Ghost makes use of every advantage. There are some corruptions that will bear down all milder arguments, that will not be restrained by any calm motives. You had as good discourse with the rough wind as hope to charm the rage of lusts with the soft and comfortable words of the grace, mercy, and kindness of God; therefore it is good to propound terrors. The apostle Paul, though he were a sanctified and chosen vessel, yet he saw a need of making use of the terrors of the Lord. It is true, he saith, 2 Cor. v. 14, the love of Christ constrained him. The great motive of

obedience was the love of God. But he makes use of the other argument: ver. 10, 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' It was the terror of the Lord which made him so faithful in his work against all the disadvantages he met withal in the world. Sometimes it is necessary we should stand in the way of a furious lust with a flaming sword. The children of God find all methods little enough to break the force of a boisterous inclination.

2. Because the wrath of God is the proper object of fear, yea, the highest object. The wrath of man is the object of fear; therefore much more the wrath of God. The apostle saith, Rom. xiii. 3, 'That rulers are a terror to evil-doers;' much more should the wrath of God and destruction from the Almighty be a terror to them; Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' Affections may lawfully be exercised about their proper objects without sin. Fear was planted in us for this very purpose; and grace doth not abolish nature, but regulate it; as Joshua made the Gibeonites to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, so grace serves our natural affections. Indignation and fear are good for the uses of the sanctuary, for the expulsion and extermination of sin; indignation against ourselves for sins committed, and fear for the prevention of sin.

3. We may make use of the Spirit's argument without sin. Usually men, instead of being over-spiritual, grow over-carnal. Terrors and threatenings are propounded to us to drive us from sin, even to men that are assured of God's love. Though we have an indefeasible right in the great inheritance, yet we must look upon the Lord 'as a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. The Lord would help our infirmity this way. This argument is of most force, because the Spirit of God argues and discourseth in the heart of believers just as he argues in the scripture; now, thus the Spirit argues in the scripture, and therefore the word of God is called 'The sword of the Spirit,' Eph. vi. 17. In all your inward combats, or the civil wars of the soul, the renewed heart makes use of scripture arguments; and in scripture, as God encourageth with love, so he aweth with threatening.

4. The threatenings are a part of the object of faith, and therefore they may be used. They are propounded to be believed as well as the promises; and you should as surely consider God will condemn the wicked and impenitent as save them that believe and repent; and as there should be a closing with and loving the promise, so a trembling at the threatening; it is a note of God's children, Isa. lxvi. 2, 'They tremble at his word.'

5. I prove it from the example of the saints; and surely they were not under a lower dispensation than we are. Job bridled and curbed the excesses of his power and greatness hereby, for saith he, Job xxxi. 23, 'Destruction from God was a terror to me.' Men in great places have shrewd temptations to oppress: Oh, but, saith he, I dare not, because of God's terrors. So Noah was warned by God, and out of fear of the threatening prepared the ark. So Paul, he mortified and kept down his body, 'Lest,' saith he, 'I should be a cast-away,' 1 Cor. ix. 27. We cannot pretend to a higher dispensation than Job, Paul, and other holy persons, as if they were but novices in the school of Christ. Your undaunted courage is to be suspected. Sin is not less

rooted in us than it was in Paul, or less dangerous to us; neither are we more skilful than holy Paul: the devil is as subtle and our corruptions are as strong as ever.

6. The promises will be the better relished when we reflect upon the threatening; the bitterness of the threatening makes us to relish the sweetness of the promise. God is therefore the most desirable friend, because he is the most dreadful adversary. Look, as the sight of the Red Sea and the floating Egyptians, when they were drowned there, moved the Israelites to praise God; so when we consider the curse wherewith wicked men are overwhelmed, it is a great argument to quicken and stir us up to praise. Solomon would have us view the field of the sluggard. The brambles and briars that grow in the sluggard's field commend diligence; and so look upon the portion of wicked men—the snares, and brimstone, and horrible tempest, which is the portion of their cup: this commends our portion in Christ, and makes the promises more sweet.

*Use 2.* Direction how we are to use the threatening.

1. When you consider the threatening, let the punishment of loss be more terrible to you than the pain; I mean, let separation from God work more upon you, than your own misery and distress: 'Depart from me' is worse than 'eternal fire.' It is the greatest evil that can fall upon creatures to be separated for ever from the chiefest good. I press this, partly because nature will reflect upon its own pain, but grace counts the loss of God the chiefest misery. The wicked will think this no punishment to depart from God; they excommunicate, and cast God out of their company now—'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. And partly, because such considerations will be of great use; they that prize communion with God will be afraid to lose him by their sins; for they thus argue, this will work a divorce between me and my God. Look upon the privative part of the threatening rather than the positive part of it; 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'I keep under my body,' saith the apostle 'lest I be a cast-away.' The main thing he feared was to be cast out of the favour of God, and lose the fellowship of God.

2. Consider the threatening, so as to weaken security, not to weaken faith. There is a great deal of difference between these two; we are not to weaken the certainty of faith, but the security of the flesh. It is good for christians to observe what is the issue and result of their fear, and of their reflections upon the threatenings, torment, or caution: 1 John iv. 18, 'Fear hath torment in it;' that is, slavish fear; but godly fear makes us more wary in our walking with God; it makes us more circumspect, but not less comfortable. Though there may be assurance to escape damnation, yet still there is care to avoid sin: this is the godly fear. Now to do that, you must consider God's ordination of punishment is with a supposition; that is, if I go on in a carnal course, then my end will be death, and I shall be undone for ever. It is with an 'if,' propounded to the children of God: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' If it be possible that a man in Christ could live after the flesh, it is as possible and safe to conclude he should die for ever. So the apostle, Gal. vi. 8, 'If ye sow to the flesh, ye shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Where there is sin in the



seed, there will be a curse in the crop; not as if the children of God were actually to expect eternal death, but to look upon it as the proper demerit of sin, and so to depart from it.

3. The children of God should reflect upon the sad consequences of sin in the present life: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' God hath still a bridle upon them. Though you are exempted from eternal death, yet your pilgrimage may be made very uncomfortable; you may feel the anguish of conscience, and be humbled by spiritual desertion, and lose and forfeit the sense of your joys and spiritual consolation; you may stand under a spiritual excommunication; that is, by being separated from the comfort of the covenant, and cast out of the actual fruition of God's favour, and be under much anguish of conscience, which is a spiritual part of discipline. A disobedient child may be whipped, though he be sure not to be disinherited; so God hath sore and bitter afflictions to lay upon you; he hath other evils besides damnation to bring on you.

4. The times when you should use this argument are these. When lusts are boisterous, it is good to oppose these stronger and more terrible motives of the terrors of the Lord; and when you are slack and remiss in the work of the Lord. When oxen do not labour, the husbandman useth the goad; when you begin to wax wanton and careless, it is good to use this spur—when we begin to grow deaf, slack, and cold in the work of God. So in the time of special temptation, when the fear of man is like to prove a snare, as Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 25, say, I know the terrors of the Lord, and what a dangerous thing it is to please men, and to engage omnipotency against me. So after grievous offences, the children of God, when they foully sin, do not only lose their peace but their tenderness; therefore this will enforce them to run for their pardon.

*Secondly*, I come to the strength and force of Noah's faith, intimated in these words—'Of things not seen as yet—*περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων*—of things that by no means could be seen; not any way liable to the judgment of sense; by which the apostle means the tidings of the deluge and the manner of his own preservation in the ark, which were things strange, full of difficulty to be done, and likely to be entertained with the scoff and opposition of the world; yet he prepared an ark. To instance, either in the flood or ark. For the flood: never such a thing had been before, therefore it was more difficult to be believed, there being no precedent; for the world was but newly created, and it seemed unlikely to the men of that age that God would destroy it presently; besides, this judgment was to come after many years. By the grant of God himself they had the respite of a hundred and twenty years, and all others besides Noah were utterly secure; yet, though he had but the naked word of God, he believed. Then for his own gracious preservation, the means was by an ark, which was an improbable and incredible way of safety, as the flood was of the world's ruin; for the ark was made like a grave, or coffin, or sepulchre, wherein Noah for some months was to be buried, rather than preserved, without the comfort of light or fresh air; there was he with the cattle and all kinds of living creatures for many days. And besides, it was of

that vast frame, that it was one hundred and twenty years a preparing, as appears by that of the apostle, 1 Peter iii. 20, 'The long-suffering of God waited all the while that the ark was a preparing.' Certainly a work of so great receipt must needs be of vast expense and charge, and take up a great deal of time to fit the matter, and to gather together all the species and kinds of living creatures. And it was a work that was like to meet with many mocks and scoffs in the world. Noah seemed to them, as one of our chronicles tells us, of one that out of a dread of a great flood built a house upon a high hill; so the wicked of that age, they looked upon Noah as a vain person, mocked and laughed at the design every day; he had a thousand discouragements, yet, being moved with fear, he prepared an ark. Now these things being so remote from sense, and only certain in God's word, it shows the great force and virtue of his faith, to be persuaded of the world's ruin, and his own preservation.

*Doct.* That it is the property of faith to be moved by such things as are not liable to sense.

The reasons are these—

1. Because when things are seen and known, there is no room for faith: Rom. viii. 24, 'Hope that is seen is not hope.' Hope there is put for the object—things hoped for; they are no more objects of hope when seen. Faith giveth over its work when we once come to fruition and view. When the sun is up, we feel the warm influences of it; we cannot be said so properly to believe it, as to feel it and know it. If we were in a dungeon we might believe one that tells us the sun shines, but when we see the glittering light it is otherwise. The elect, after the resurrection, cannot properly be said to believe the articles of faith, because faith and hope then ceaseth, and love only remains. Faith and sense are opposed, 2 Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' Here things that are propounded to us, the glory of God in heaven and the reigning of the saints, they are not matters of sight and present sense and apprehension. In heaven it is quite contrary; there we have sight, but no faith; but here we walk by faith, and not by sight.

2. There is no trial in things that are seen, for all objects of sense force an impression upon us; we cannot choose but fear; when sense feels wrath, it is a judicial impression. There is none fears more than wicked men when wrath comes; they fear not wrath in the word, and wrath in the threatening, but wrath in the providence makes them to tremble: Isa. xxxiii. 14, 'The sinners in Sion are afraid; fearfulness surpriseth the hypocrite.' It is no exercise of faith, but a judicial impression. So the apostle saith—'The devils believe and tremble,' James ii. 19; because they are under their actual punishment, they cannot do otherwise. This is the difference between the godly and the wicked; the one trembles at the judgment, the other trembles at the threatenings—'He trembles at the word,' Isa. lxvi. 2. Wicked men do not consider the threatening, till, by all circumstances of providence, it is ready to be accomplished. The wicked tremble in hell, or at the hour of death; but the godly tremble in the church at the word of God. So did those in Noah's time, when they ran from the bottom of houses to the top, from thence to trees, from trees to mountains, but Noah trembled when God did but speak of these things. Feeling is left for the next life.

## SERMON XXXVII.

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet.—*  
HEB. xi. 7.

THE use of the foregoing doctrine is—to check the security of the world, both in respect of particular and general judgments.

First, In particular judgments, the prophet saith, Hosea vii. 9, ‘*Epit-  
rain hath gray hairs here and there upon him, and he knows it not.*’ Many times a nation is full of gray hairs. As gray hairs are the fore-  
runners of death and the decay of nature, so many nations have gray  
hairs—sad intimations of ruin and destruction; and they do not  
tremble at it, especially if it be afar off, and if there be no visible pre-  
paration: if God be not upon his march, they do not tremble. When  
the world was given up to pleasure, when they were marrying and  
giving in marriage, who would believe that within a few years the rain  
and waters should cover the whole earth? Many would be ready to  
say, as that nobleman, 2 Kings vii. 2, ‘*If the Lord should make win-  
dows in heaven, could this be?*’ Oh, consider all things are liable  
to change; and when your mountain seems to stand strong, yet if  
there be such sins as are certain prognostics of ruin, there may be a  
change, notwithstanding the greatest flourish of outward prosperity; for  
the gray hairs of a nation are not only the beginnings of misery and  
declensions of their glory, but their guilt, these are the saddest gray  
hairs: then you are liable to great ruin. See what the apostle speaks  
to the despisers of the gospel: Acts xiii. 41, ‘*Behold, ye despisers, and  
wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which  
you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*’ The  
horrible devastation of Judea by the Chaldeans, who would believe it,  
that the city and temple should be so destroyed? and yet it came to  
pass. If a man should but tell you what God is about to do, you  
would think he were mad to mention such things.

*Quest.* You will say, you press us to believe, and all that you can do  
is but to bring conjectures; you cannot give such infallible warning as  
Noah did.

I shall answer to this—

1. We may speak to you as the apostle did in Acts xiii. 40, ‘*Beware  
therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets.*’  
Let me tell you, it is a ruled case—the despisers of the gospel shall  
surely meet with an unexpected judgment. The credit of every threat-  
ening stands upon two feet—the irresistibleness of God’s power, and  
the immutableness of his counsel. Now we cannot say God will change  
his counsel, though he may his sentence; yet we may say, Take heed  
lest this be brought upon you: we know not future contingencies.  
God hath taken away that from a gospel ministry, because he hath  
given them a more excellent dispensation.

2. It is security and carnal confidence. If you neglect reformation,  
and depend merely upon present likelihoods, and say, It is impossible  
these things should be: Jer. iv. 14, ‘*O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from  
wickedness. How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?*’ vain

thoughts, that is, reflections upon their present prosperity and greatness. You know there is much spoken of depending upon an arm of flesh and creature confidence. Now when men neglect God's means, and trust to their own, this is a sure note of creature confidence in their present welfare and prosperity. When we have no other shelter against judgments but prosperous armies, numerous ships and fortifications, how soon may God blow upon these things? Who would believe that which God did twice to the state of the Jews, both by the Chaldeans and Romans? who would have believed thirty years ago what hath happened in Germany? who would believe what befell the churches of Asia and Greece, that they should be overrun so? If we should speak to you of England being unchurched, a man would think this were an idle dream that ever christianity should be banished from this island, that we should lose our church and our glory; and if yet we should look to the spiritual causes of such a judgment, there is nothing so probable as this. God may in justice remove the old light, because we have set up so many new ones; and take away the candlestick from us, because we are despisers of the gospel.

3. When prophets threaten, it is very likely it will come to pass, though we cannot absolutely determine future contingencies. Certainly if a sparrow lights not to the ground without God, the messages of his servants, and the words that are uttered by them with reverence and fear, you cannot but acknowledge God in it: Hosea vi. 5, 'I have hewn them by my prophets, and I have slain them by the words of my mouth.' Israel was a knotty piece of timber, and therefore God pursues them with blow after blow. When a prophet falls a-hewing with blow after blow it is a sad intimation. I do not justify every idle dictate and fond suggestion spoken out of passion and discontent; but when we make collection upon collection, when we show you the sin and the judgment out of scripture, it should not seem to you as an idle tale; and when we speak to you, we should not seem as Lot to his sons-in-law, 'as if he had mocked,' Gen. xix. 14. All that you can pretend for your safety and security in such a case as this, is either your present strength or the mercy and free grace of God; but to pretend grace and mercy and neglect duty, is but to choke conscience. Mercy will never be exercised to the prejudice of God's truth and justice.

4. This is certain, it is better to believe the threatening than to feel the stripes and blows. There can be no harm if we should take this occasion to humble ourselves before God. It is true, in uncertain cases this is a good rule—hope the best; but yet it is good to prepare for the worst. Carnal hope such as is lifted up against the threatening in the word is but a bad nurse to piety. They that do not tremble at the word, but are left to be taught by sense, are taught in a sharp school of discipline; they are taught by briers and thorns. It is better to learn by the word than by feeling blows and stripes: Prov. xiv. 16, 'A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but a fool rageth and is confident.' Usually, when we speak of the evil of the times, men go away; and they fret and foam, and think we rail, and the word of God is to them but as a reproach; God leaves them to be taught by briers and thorns, by their own sorrow and fears. So Prov. xxii. 3,

'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself'—here is the very description of Noah—'but the simple pass on, and are punished : 'carnal men run desperately upon danger, and against warning.

Secondly, With respect to the general judgment, it reproves the security of the world. We are apt to think it is but a well-devised fable to keep the world in awe. Oh, consider, if Noah could believe the flood, we are much more bound to believe the general judgment—why? Because we have the word of God for it, which is of more force than an oracle, and we have a pledge already; and therefore the future destruction of the world by fire being more credible to us, God looks for a more active faith from us.

*Quest.* But you will say, Who doth not believe the day of judgment?

I answer, Flatter not yourselves, for in the latter times men will be just as they were in the days of Noah; there will be scoffers at the day of judgment; and usually the best of us content ourselves with a loose and naked belief of things to come; and therefore, that you may drive the privy atheism out of the heart, let me propound but two questions.—(1.) Are you affected with these things, as if you saw them? (2.) Do you make a careful provision and preparation, as if this were a matter that you did believe,—'As Noah was moved with fear, and prepared an ark?'

1. Are you affected with these things as if they were present? So it should be; for faith is the evidence of things not seen; it substantiates our hopes, and makes them real to our souls; therefore we should live as if we did see Christ coming in the clouds with power and great glory; as if we heard the blast of the great trump, and the voice of the archangel, saying, Arise, and come to judgment. God hath made a promise, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'That if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.' Now, art thou affected with this promise, as if the judgment were set, and as if the books were opened? Consider, in the process of the great day, when all sinners stand trembling at the bar, and their faces gather blackness and paleness, if Christ should single thee out by name, and say to you, If thou judge thyself, thou shalt not be put to this severe trial; with what thankfulness would we receive this offer? Now, an active faith should make this supposition. So again Christ saith, Luke xii. 8, 9, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will confess him before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.' When thy heart is tempted to carnal compliance, canst thou represent by a lively faith the day of judgment? and say, Would I deny Christ before his face? or by compliance betray the truth? Would I do this act if I heard Christ say, Father, these are mine, and these are not mine, when Christ is making a distinction between sheep and goats, and the two herds were standing before mine eyes? It is good to make suppositions and put cases concerning that great day.

Do you do as Noah did? make serious preparation for things to come and yet unseen. God doth not look to opinions, but to the disposition of your heart. Actions have a voice before God. We content ourselves with a naked and inactive belief, which, if it be searched to the bottom, will be found to be nothing but uncertain guess and con-

jecture. Do we do as Noah did, venture upon a work of such charge and such difficulty? Though the flood was yet a great while to come, he presently falls about it.

[1.] It was a work of great labour and trouble; and so is the work of mortification, strictness, and the spiritual life; it is a work of labour and trouble to weaken carnal desires, to subdue your affections to the just temper of religion; yet, though it be harsh to nature, can you say, Heaven will make amends for all? can you say, It is better to take pains than suffer pains? can you say, If I digest the severities of religion, 'if I mortify the deeds of the flesh, I shall live?' Rom. viii. 13. Can you reason as Noah did?

[2.] It was a work which he should have no use of a long time; so can you tarry God's leisure and wait for the season of the promises, and for the time of accomplishment? Always between the making of the promise and the making good of the promise, there is a great deal of time. The Israelites were long in the wilderness ere they came to Canaan, and endured a tedious march; they might have gone over in forty days, but God kept them in it forty years to exercise them. So David was anointed king a long time before he reigned, 1 Sam. xvi. 13, so long, that in the end he despaired of the kingdom; and therefore he saith, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars,' Ps. cxvi. 11. So, can you tarry God's leisure for the accomplishment of his promise, and during the time of your pilgrimage wait, 'And be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise?' Heb. vi. 12. Seldom any go to heaven, but they have a long time to exercise their faith and patience. Can you be content in your journey to Canaan to tarry God's leisure, and wait for your deliverance?

[3.] It was a work that met with many scoffs in the world; they looked upon Noah as an old doting man that envied their jollities and pleasures. And truly, when you fear God and walk strictly, the world will speak of you with great contempt—you will be set up to be as a sign to be spoken against. You must expect this as your portion: Gal. iv. 29, 'As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, so it is now.' So it was in the apostle's time, and so it will be to the end of the world. There will be tongue persecution at least; you must endure mocks for a good conscience, to be counted hypocrites and foolish, and men that are prodigal of their interests, and humorists and the like. I know not what secure presumptuous men may foster in themselves, and conceive the children of God should have a dispensation. The carnal seed will always be mocking. Now, can you endure all this and go on with your work of strictness, and preciseness, and patience? They will howl for their mocking when you shall be safe.

[4.] It was a work which put him upon great charges, to provide the kinds of all living creatures, and to build an ark that might be of so great receipt, to take in the beasts, and fodder for the beasts and fowls of the air; so you should consider, At what expense have I been for Christ? If I believe eternity and the everlasting recompenses, what have I done for Christ? That which you lay out upon the flesh and outward conveniences is mere prodigality; for you owe the flesh nothing—'We are not debtors to the flesh,' but all that you have you

owe to Christ; and what have you done for him? God hath given you a promise, as a bill of exchange; now he takes it ill if you should protest against it. Jesus Christ will not own you at the last day: Luke xii. 33, 'Sell that you have (saith Christ) and give alms, and you shall have treasure in heaven.' This is Christ's bargain—whatever you lay out on earth, he will pay it in another country. Now, what have I ventured upon this promise? Christ saith, 'Sell that you have,' not to deny propriety of goods; but certainly it shows that rather than we should reserve our estate to purchase lands, and grow great in our families, we should rather lay them out to purchase an estate in heaven. Men are all for buying more rather than for selling that which they have; therefore Jesus Christ would bend the stick the other way; as he saith, John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth;' not to deny honest labour, but to blunt the edge of our spirits, that we may labour more for better things. So, 'Sell that you have, and give alms;' rather than by hooking in an estate, you should be laying it out; you should look upon your estate as most safe in God's hands. Noah was at great charge and expense; no doubt wasted himself and his all; but what lost he by it? Noah and his sons had the possession of all the world when he came out of the ark. It is the best bargain that ever we made, when we lay out our estate upon religious uses. Thus may you try yourselves. It is the most foolish thing in the world altogether to look to the present. We that are not affected with things that are not seen, may learn of the creature. Solomon bids us go learn of the ant, Prov. vi. 6-8; so certainly if we did believe there was an after-reckoning, and that one day we must give an account, we would make more provision for our souls.

*Thirdly*, I go on to the fruits and consequences of Noah's faith—'He was moved with fear'—*εὐλαβηθεῖς*—being wary, or piously fearing. The same word is used of Jesus Christ, Heb. v. 7. His holy and innocent fears are expressed by the same word—'He was heard in that he feared;' indeed, it is always used in a good sense in scripture. The word is sometimes used for caution and wariness, sometimes for reverence; in the latter sense often in scripture: as Acts ii. 5, 'Devout men in every nation.' In the original it is *εὐλαβεῖς*, reverend men; so Acts viii. 2, 'Devout men carried Stephen to his burial'—*εὐλαβεῖς*,—men touched with a reverence of God, and with a sense of religion; so was Noah moved with a godly reverence and godly caution. The note is this—

*Doct.* That godly fear is a fruit and effect of faith.

Faith, as it works upon the promises, begets love and hope; but as it works upon the threatening, so it begets fear. Love, fear, and hope, are not contrary, though they be different; they may stand together, and they all proceed from faith.

1. All graces are conjoined, though they seem contrary. See how they are conjoined in scripture. Ps. cxix. 119, 120, there is fear and love—'I love thy testimonies;' and then presently, 'My flesh trembleth because of thy judgments;' so Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' Fear and delight are joined together: so Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' There

was something likely to entice them into a snare, and something likely to oppress them. That which was likely to draw and entice them out of the way was the relics of sin, the baits of the world, and the suggestions of Satan; therefore they walked 'in the fear of the Lord.' That which was likely to oppress them was the burden of their own conscience, and outward crosses ready to overwhelm them; therefore it is said, they walked in the 'comforts of the Holy Ghost.' There is need of a double remedy. They walked with 'fear' to keep them from sin; and they walked in the 'comforts of the Holy Ghost' to keep them from sinking under affliction. On earth we still need this mixture; in heaven there is all joy, no fear of punishment. But on earth there is a mixture of flesh and spirit, something to comfort us, and something to humble us; there is no true piety without either. The object of these affections is often changed. The children of God can fear him for his goodness, and love him for his judgments: Hosea iii. 4, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;' Ps. cxix. 62, 'At midnight I will arise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.' Love would grow secure without fear, and fear would grow slavish without love; therefore these graces are conjoined, that there may be a fit temper both of reverence and sweetness.

2. All these graces flow from faith; for all affection is grounded upon persuasion. Who would fear the threatening that doth not believe it? or fear to offend God that doth not love him, and that doth not acknowledge there is a God? The fear of the people of Nineveh is excited by their faith: Jonah iii. 5, 'The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth;' and the word, which is the object of faith, is the object of fear. They that feared the word of the Lord housed their cattle, Exod. ix. 20; that is, they that believed the word.

But now the great question is, what is this godly fear? There are three effects by which it may be discerned—caution, diligence, and reverence; caution respects sin, diligence respects duty, dread and reverence respects God himself.

[1.] There is caution, or a cautelous prudence—a fear lest we should dash the foot of our faith against the several stumbling blocks that are in the world. Look, as those that carry precious liquor in a brittle vessel, are very cautelous; especially if they walk in the dark or rough ways, they walk with care lest the vessel be broken—and the liquor spilt. The children of God know what a precious treasure they have about them, that they have a soul that cannot be valued; and they know that the world is a rough passage, and here many stones of stumbling; therefore they 'Work out their salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. The main grace that keeps in and maintains the fire of religion in the soul is a cautelous fear; they consider their own hearts, look for direction from the word, and call in the help of the Spirit: Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left unto us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.' This doth not hinder the assurance of faith, but guard it.

[2.] There is diligence in fear, and that respecteth duty. Every good fear endeth in duty; it ariseth from faith, and ends in duty; it stirs up the soul to use all the means to prevent the danger. If Noah had not



believed, he had never feared; if he had not feared, he had never prepared an ark. The fear of the wicked ends in irresolution, perplexity, and despair; their terrors differ only in degree and duration from the pains of hell—mere involuntary impressions, whose end is not duty, but despair and torment; but the fear of the godly sets them a-work. Noah, being moved with fear, sets to building the ark. It is said of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 3, 'He feared, and set himself to seek the Lord;' so Paul, Acts ix. 6, 'He trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' As if he had said, Lord, I see my danger, what is my work?

[3.] There is in fear a reverence and a dread of God—his holiness, his majesty, his power, his justice, and the like. Now we may dread God either as creatures or as sinners; either as our maker, or as our judge, or as both; as our maker, so we dread God for himself; as our judge, so we dread him for our own sakes, because of sin. These two are distinct; the one may be where the other is not. As in heaven, the saints and glorious angels fear God—fear being an essential respect of the creature to God; in heaven, it is a grace that never ceaseth. Now they dread God as full of majesty and goodness, and as the great creator of the world; and in paradise there was this fear of reverence. Adam did not fear God as a judge till he had sinned: Gen. iii. 10, 'I was afraid, therefore I hid myself:' this fear entered into the world with sin. Adam in innocency only revered him for his majesty, goodness, and holiness, as the saints and angels do in heaven; and there may be fear where only God is feared as a judge. The wicked stand in fear of nothing but hell and wrath; they fear not God for God, but for themselves; not because of the dignity of his majesty, but because of their own danger.

*Quest.* If you ask me, then, what fear is lawful?

I answer, It must be a mixed fear, partly because of his majesty and holiness; and partly, because of his justice while we are in the present state, not wholly exempt from the strokes of God's justice; and this is the fear that is in the children of God, and is usually called by the name of filial fear; whereas the other in wicked men is called by the name of servile and slavish fear. The distinction is grounded on scripture, and so called with allusion to the fear of children and servants; children fear their loving parents, and servants fear their hard and cruel masters. The grounds of this distinction are famously known—the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father:' the spirit of bondage is the root and ground of servile fear, and the spirit of adoption is the ground of filial fear. Now, though there may be some servile fear in the children of God, yet it is more and more wrought out the more we increase in the apprehension of God's love: 1 John iv. 18, 'Perfect love casteth out fear.' I take it there for the apprehension of God's love, not for our love to God.

Now I shall state the differences between these two kinds of fears, servile and filial.

(1.) Filial fear is always coupled with love—for there is a harmony between the graces—but servile fear with hatred. Filial fear ariseth from a humble sense of God's goodness, and thereby God is made

more amiable and lovely to the soul : Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared ;' they are afraid to displease so good a God as they have found him to be in Christ : Hosea iii. 5, 'And they shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' Mark, it is not the Lord, and his wrath and his justice, but his goodness. Filial fear is rather because of his benefits past, than of his judgments to come ; but now servile fear ariseth merely from a sense of this wrath, and so causeth hatred of God. *Oderunt dum metuunt*,—they hate God while they fear him. Wicked men, it is true, stand in dread of God ; but they have hard thoughts of God, and they could wish there was no God, or that he were not such a God ; *aut Deum extinctum cupiunt aut exarmatum*—either they wish the destruction of his being or of his glory ; either that there were no God, or that he were a weak or powerless God ; not such a God, not so holy, just, and powerful. It is a pleasing thought to a carnal heart if there were no God to punish him. Such fear there is in the devils themselves : James ii. 19, 'They believe and tremble ;' they abhor their own thoughts of God, and their bondage is increased with their knowledge. So do wicked men hate those characters of God engraven upon their consciences, they stand in dread of God, but it is a fear that is accompanied with hatred rather than love.

(2.) Filial fear is accompanied with a shyness of sin, but not with a shyness of God's presence. Adam, as soon as he had sinned, he betrayed this slavish fear ; the more he feared, the more he ran away from God : Gen. iii. 10, 'I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself.' His guilt makes him run into the bushes. When men feel God's wrath they cannot endure the presence of his glory. Before man fell, there was nothing sweeter to him than familiarity with God ; but as soon as he sinned,—'I was afraid, and hid myself.' Now when fear makes us to fly from God, it must needs be culpable ; for the aim of all graces is to preserve a communion and a respect between God and the soul ; and therefore the proper use of fear is rather to fly from sin than to fly from God. In short, there is a fear that keepeth us from coming to God, and that is carnal ; and there is a fear that keepeth us from going away from God, which preserves the soul in a way of holy acquaintance and communion with God, and that is a holy fear : Jer. xxxii. 40, 'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Fear is the preserving grace, therefore it is mere bondage and horror that sets the soul at a distance from God ; yet this is in all wicked men ; they think they can never banish God far enough out of their thoughts ; they would, if they could, withdraw themselves from his government and get out of his sight ; they would fain run away from God ; they hate his presence in their consciences, because they carry their hell and their accuser always about them ; and it were happy for them they think if they should never more see God. But now a gracious fear makes the heart to cleave the closer to God. A child of God is troubled, because sin is apt to breed a strangeness ; and because they cannot more delight in his company, they are never near enough to God. A godly man is afraid of losing God, and a carnal man is afraid of finding him. The voice of slavish fear is—'Hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,' Rev. vi. 16 ; but true fear is afraid lest God should hide himself—afraid lest God should

shut up himself in a veil of displeasure. Observe that place : Hosea iii. 5, 'They shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' That filial fear which ariseth from the the goodness of God makes us to seek God and run after him. It is a blessed fear that drives us to seek the face of God, and bring us into his presence.

(3.) Servile fear only respecteth the loss and punishment, but true fear is mixed : it respecteth the punishment, but not only ; it respecteth both offence and punishment ; only with this difference, they do not fear judgment so much as sin ; and in the punishment and judgment itself, to a gracious heart the loss is more horrible than the pain ; they are afraid lest there should be a divorce between them and God, lest they should grieve their good God, and cause him to depart from them. But now wicked men *non peccare metuunt sed ardere*—they are afraid to burn, but not afraid to sin. When it is merely for the punishment, then it is slavish fear. See how the apostle speaks of the habitual bondage that is in the heart of every wicked man : Heb. ii. 15, 'Through fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Now this kind of fear can never be gracious, partly because there is more of torment in it than there is of reverence ; and so it wants the chief and formal reason of fear, which is not the creature's danger, but God's excellency ; a carnal man fears hell more than God, which is an act of guilty and corrupt nature, not of religion. And partly, because it can never produce any genuine piety ; for if a wicked man should leave off sin out of this fear, it is not out of hatred to sin, but out of the fear of the punishment, as the bird is kept from the bait by the scarecrow. And so the sin is not hated, but forborne ; they love the sin and fear hell ; there is nothing restrained but the act ; servile fear restraineth the action, but the other mortifieth the affection. Godly men do not only forbear sin, but abhor sin, and hate it. A wicked man dares not sin, and a good man would not sin. Or suppose that out of this fear he should practise some duties (as a wicked man may out of the compunction of slavish fear), yet this is but forced from him ; and forced fruit is never so kindly as that which is naturally ripened. All the duties of a wicked man are rather a sin-offering, than a thank-offering ; not done out of any respect to God, or from reasons of religion, but to appease conscience. And therefore, upon the whole matter, we see that gracious fear must have another object besides the punishment ; we may fear the punishment, but not only. A godly man doth not only fear hell, 'but fears an oath,' Eccles. ix. 2 ; that is, to be false to an oath. 'He fears the commandment,' Prov. xiii. 13. His greatest fear is lest he should cast off duty, and commit known sins.

(4.) Servile fear is involuntary. The wicked do not fear out of a voluntary act and exercise of faith, but a judicial impression. The fear that is in the godly ariseth naturally out of faith and tenderness of spirit ; but in a wicked man, it is out of guilt of conscience ; there is bondage impressed and forced upon his heart, which, though it be not always felt, yet it is soon awakened—'All their lifetime they are subject to bondage,' Heb. ii. 15 ; and if God do but touch the conscience, then they are troubled. Belteshazzar seemed to have a brave spirit, and not to be daunted with the forces with which he was besieged ;

but God takes off the edge of his bravery with a few letters upon the wall—‘Then his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him; so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another,’ Dan. v. 6. God arms wicked men’s thoughts against them, and it is more than if he should bring the greatest terrors from without. At that time he was besieged with the Persian forces; but that one hand upon the wall works upon him more than all the forces with which he was beleaguered. So Felix of a sudden trembled, Acts xxiv. 25. A man would have thought the story should rather have said that Paul trembled; but mark, the prisoner makes the judge to tremble, but sore against his will, because he had the advantage of his conscience. Paul was discoursing there of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come; now Felix was notoriously guilty of bribery and incontinency; Drusilla, though she was used as his wife, was but his minion; he took her from Azizus, king of the Emisenians; and when Paul rubs him up with judgment to come, trembling comes upon him, and he could not withstand it. And such trembling there is in wicked men in the midst of their revelling and bravery; guilty conscience recoils and boggles, and then they are afraid. This fear is involuntary, as will appear, partly because it is not constant, and comes but by fits and starts, and is a trouble to them: Prov. xxviii. 14, ‘Happy is he that feareth always.’ A child of God is under fear, not by fits and pauses, but he bears a constant respect to God, and seeth him that is invisible. A godly man looks upon it as a great blessing when he can work up his thoughts to a sight of God, that he may not sin in his presence. But now in wicked men it is not a fear begotten by the exercise of faith; but now and then enforced upon the soul by the evidence of a guilty conscience when it is awakened—a mere effect of the spirit of bondage. And it is plain this is involuntary, partly because wicked men are apt to take all advantages to enlarge themselves. Their desire is not to please God, but to dissolve the bonds of conscience, and to allay their fear; therefore they fly to the next carnal course. How often may we find that the Spirit is quenched, without a metaphor, by the excess of wine and the rays of conviction, when God darts them into the bosom, extinguished by mirth and company. As in Belteshazzar, there was a fit came upon him which sets him a-trembling, what doth he do? he sends to the star-gazers and astrologers, Dan. v. 7. Daniel was famous in the kingdom, and his skill well known in such cases; but anything serves, so we may come out of the stocks of conscience. Felix, when his conscience boggles, seeks to put it off when he cannot put it away, and foolishly dreams of a more convenient time.

(5.) Servile fear is a fear without any temperament of hope and comfort, and so it weakens the certainty of faith, rather than the security of the flesh. But now the gospel-fear is mixed with hope and joy: Ps. ii. 10, ‘Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.’ Because our affections are apt to degenerate, therefore God would have this mixture. Hope is apt to degenerate to presumptuous boldness, and joy to grow into a fond boasting; and therefore God hath required that we should allay the excess of one affection by the mixture of another, that so the spirit may be kept awful, but not servile; and there-

fore in the children of God there is always such a mixture ; their fear it ends in reverence and caution, but not in torment ; for it is overmastered by the apprehensions of God's love : 1 John iv. 18, ' There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment : he that feareth is not made perfect in love.' The fear of the godly makes them more circumspect, but not a jot less comfortable ; the more they fear, the more blessed, the more comfortable—' Blessed is he that feareth always.' They are more wary and cautious in their walking with God, more serious in their special converses and conferences with God. But now the issue of slavish fear is not love but torment ; it is full of discomfort and dejection, and makes us anxious rather than cautious ; and therefore it is good to temperate your fear, that you may be comfortable in the use of holy duties, and your walking with God.

Out of all you see that there is a godly fear, which is the fruit of faith. There is a fear of reverence, proper to heaven ; a fear in the church, that is a fear of caution ; and a fear in hell, and that is despair, or a fearful looking for of the fiery indignation of the Lord.

### SERMON XXXVIII.

*Prepared an ark.*—HEB. xi. 7.

It follows in the text, ' Prepared an ark.' As his fear was the fruit of his faith, so this was a fruit of his fear. Faith by the affections hath an influence upon the practice and conversation. I look upon this act of Noah in several regards.

1. As an act of great obedience. Though it were a matter of high difficulty and charge, and likely to be entertained with scoffs in the world, yet Noah prepared an ark. Observe that God must be obeyed, whatever it cost us. Though duties cross interest and affections, and blast our repute in the world, yet God must be obeyed. Noah was now put to trial, and so in all difficult cases we are put to trial. Now, that we may not deny and retract our obedience, I shall show you upon what grounds we are to obey in difficult cases. Partly, because we have entirely given up ourselves, and all that is ours, to God ; and when we have given a thing to another, he may do with it what he pleaseth. When thou art given up to God, thou art the Lord's. Rom. xiv. 7, 8. At first conversion there was a perfect resignation. God had right in thee before, but thou then gavest up thyself by the consent of thine own will. We did not then indent with God to say, Thus far I will obey, and no farther ; we reserved no part of our will, no interest, and no concernment of ours. Now unless we will retract our own solemn vows, and our spiritual resignation, God must be obeyed. Christ bids us at first to sit down and count the charges ; can you part with all for him ? And partly, because we have no cause to repent of our bargain, whether we consult with our experiences or our obligations to

God. With our experiences, God is not a hard master; we never lost anything by God; we were gainers when we were the greatest losers. God puts his people to the question: Jer. ii. 5, 'What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?' Have I broken contract? Have I been worse than your expectation? So again: Micah vi. 3, 'O my people! what have I done unto you, and wherein have I wearied you? testify against me.' When Israel was grown weary of God, and began to stray and go off from God, saith God, 'What cause have I given you?' Ignatius was an old and ancient servant of God, and saith he, 'These eighty-six years have I served God, and he never did me any harm.' Certainly in those persecuting times that gracious soul met with a great deal of injury in the world, yet saith he, 'God never did me harm; he made it up again with consolation. And much more if we consult with our obligations to God. God doth not repent of the bargain made with Christ, and Christ doth not repent of the bargain made with God the Father; and why should we repent of our part of the covenant? God doth not repent of the bargain made with Christ: Ps. cx. 4, 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' Though the world abuseth mercy, and puts many affronts upon grace, and abuseth the doctrine of the gospel, yet saith God, 'I have sworn, my word is past, Christ shall yet be a mediator. So Jesus Christ repented not; he did not only freely offer himself when the matter was propounded and broken to him at the first in the eternal treaty between God and him: Ps. xl. 7, 8, 'Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God,' but when he was about to engage in suffering, his love was hottest: John xiii. 1, 'Jesus therefore having loved his own, he loved them to the end.' The meaning is to the end of his own life, though it was exceeding difficult, for then came his torment and agonies for sinners. It is true indeed he said, 'Let this cup pass,' to show his natural abhorrency; yet he said, 'Not my will, but thy will be done,' to show his voluntary submission: Luke xxiv. 42, 'The cup which my Father gave me shall I not drink it,' John xviii. 11. When he was despitefully used by men, he did not repent of the bargain; so we should never repent of our solemn contract made with God.

2. I look upon this again as an act of obedience, as a means in order to his own safety; and then the note will be—Though a man be certain of safety, yet he must use the means. God had promised to save Noah and his household, he had made a covenant with him, Gen. vi. 18; but still Noah was to provide an ark; the covenant was upon this condition, that he should use those means. If Noah had made no ark, he must have taken his lot and share with the ungodly world. And as Noah had a promise of his own life and the life of his household, so Paul had a promise of the lives of all the men in the ship; yet, Acts xvii. 31, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;' he had told them before, ver. 22, 'Be of good cheer, there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship,' yet 'except these abide,' &c.—not as if the accomplishment of the promise did depend upon second causes, and hang upon the endeavours of men, but only thus, he that hath appointed the end hath appointed the means, and we tempt God by putting that asunder which he hath joined together.

This being observed, it will be a check to libertinism; we cannot be saved if we live as we list. And assurance is no idle doctrine, though we be under a sure covenant with God, yet we are to mind our duty. Elijah, that had foretold rain, yet prays for it as earnestly as if the thing had been utterly uncertain and unlikely.

3. I observe again, that this means was instituted and appointed by God, not devised and invented by Noah. He might have been saved some other way; but he received a commandment concerning the matter, the proportion, the measure, and the fashion of the ark. And it is said, Gen. vi. 22, 'Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.' The ark seemed an unlikely way to preserve him, being a dark receptacle, likely to be dashed in pieces against rocks; yet so did he as God commanded. The note is—we must use the means which God hath instituted in order to salvation, and that both with faith and obedience.

[1.] Use them in obedience. It is enough that God hath commanded them. All ordinances are simple in appearance, therefore the creature is apt to carp at them. In baptism there is but a little common water; yet baptism saves. As in the ark eight souls saved by water—'The like figure whereunto baptism saves,' &c., 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. So in the Lord's supper there is a little morsel of bread and a small draught of wine, yet they are high and mysterious instruments of our comfort and peace and grace. And so in the means that seem to be more rational, and to have some ministerial efficacy, as in the ordinance of the word: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' The world thinks it a foolish way. Men will say, for substance, We know as much as they can teach us, and we can bring nothing sublime and new; and yet this way the Lord is pleased to work. Though there be no carnal allurements, yet mere obedience must keep up our respect to the institutions and ordinances of Jesus Christ.

[2.] We must use them in faith. It is a great part of the life of faith to live by faith in the use of ordinances; when we come to use them, and can refer ourselves to the mercy of God for a blessing, for edification, and strengthening in comfort and grace; nay though we want comfort a great while, yet when we will try again, because it is an ordinance that God hath appointed. There is more grace in waiting upon God, though there be more comfort in receiving. There is a command to keep up endeavours, and a promise to encourage expectation; and upon the bare command of God we must keep up our endeavours, though we have been discouraged by former experiences; as Peter: Luke v. 5, 'We have toiled all night, and caught nothing; yet at thy command we will let down the net;' Lord I have come again and again, and found no profit; yet I will come once more. Noah knew this was the instituted means, that he and his should be saved in the ark; and therefore he waited in the ark many months, ere the rain ceased and the flood was dried up.

4. I observe again that the only instituted means was the ark, which was a type of Christ, by whose resurrection, saith the apostle, we are saved: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' All God's dispensa-

tions to the fathers happened by way of type: 1 Cor. x. 11, 'All these things happened unto them—*τύποι*—as ensamples.' Observe, the faith of the fathers and the obedience of the fathers was conversant about a double object: spiritual good things promised to them, and in common to all believers—and then particular blessings which were proper to themselves, and were types of good things yet to come. So here was a temporal salvation in an ark, which was a figure of our spiritual deliverance by Christ. There is a great deal of similitude between Christ and the ark. The ark was the only means of salvation, and so is Jesus Christ: Acts iv. 12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' If they had builded towers, and gone up to the tops of mountains, though they were of a giant-like stature, they could not escape the flood that overwhelmed them. So all other things are but vain confidences; though you are strict and severe in life, and practise many duties, yet out of Christ they signify nothing. So again, all without the ark perished in the waters. Many saw the ark; but unless they entered into it, they were not safe. So, though you hear of Christ, and are of this opinion that there is a Christ, yet unless you be in Christ it will not avail you anything: there is salvation in no other, and you must be in him before you can have any benefit by him. Therefore say as the apostle, 'Oh that I might be found in him,' Phil. iii. 9; that I may not only know Christ outwardly, but that there might be a real union between him and me. And look, as all that were gathered into the ark, so all that shall be saved shall be added and gathered to the church: Acts ii. 47, 'The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.' Those that were out of the ark, though many of them had large possessions and a great deal of money, yet that would not avail them. So 'riches profit not in the day of wrath,' Prov. xi. 4. When God comes to take us away in judgment, our estates which we idolise will be our greatest burden, and sit heavy upon our consciences; they will be a trouble and no profit to us. Again, those that were once in the ark were sure and safe, and could not miscarry. So there is a sure salvation in Christ; once in Christ, and salvation for ever: all the floods of calamity can never overwhelm them, they will be your safety, and not your ruin. The flood mounted the ark higher, and made it safe from rocks. There is a notable expression of the apostle, 1 Peter iii. 20, 'They were saved by water,' the water that drowned others saved them, by hoisting up of the ark from the hills and mountains; so all those conditions of life which to the wicked are a snare, shall be to you a blessing. When floods arise, this will be a great advantage; afflictions and outward blessings are all faithful administrations.

Again, as Noah was buried alive in the ark for a good while, then had a joyful deliverance; so we are 'buried with Christ in baptism,' Rom. vi. 4, mortified with affliction; and we should live as if we were dead to the pomps of the world, and then the end will be glorious as it was to Noah. He came out and enjoyed the whole world; so shall we when we are delivered from the prison of the body: when our souls go forth as Noah out of the ark, we shall reign and triumph with Christ for evermore. Oh then, get into the ark, get an interest in



Christ. Noah prepared the ark himself; but the Lord hath prepared an ark for us; all things are ready, there wants nothing but our faith. The ark is built to our hands, and Christ is a complete saviour, fit to shelter us and save us. Oh, let us enter into this ark!

To go on—'To the saving of his household.' It is meant of a temporal salvation, though thereby the spiritual salvation was typified and figured: for indeed some of Noah's house that were saved in the ark, are represented in the scripture 'as accursed from the Lord:' Gen. vi. 16, and vii. 1, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark.' There was Ham in the ark, as well as Shem and Japhet; wretched Ham, in whose line the cursed offspring or malignant race was continued. Hence note—

*Doct.* Bad children of good parents are partakers of some temporal blessings for their father's sake. Saving grace doth not descend from parents to their children, yet many temporal blessings may for their parents' sake. We read that Ishmael was blessed for Abraham's sake: Gen. xvii. 20, 'I have heard thee for Ishmael; and behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes he shall beget, and I will make him a great nation.' Though he did not continue the blessed line, yet he had much of the outward part of the covenant; he lived and had some common privileges, the principal blessing was settled on Isaac. So when Solomon had warped and turned aside from God, the Lord tells him, 1 Kings xi. 11, 12, 'I will rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant, nevertheless, in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake, but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.' There is mercy to one child for his father's sake, and there is judgment to the next child for his immediate parent's sake. See how various the dispensations of God are to children by reason of their parents; for that is the reason given, because of his promise made to David—not for Solomon's merit. The Lord doth not speak of Solomon's building the temple, and those costly sacrifices that he offered; no, but for David's sake. To instance in such a blessing as is parallel to the text of temporal deliverance, preservation, and safety: Gen. xix. 12, 'And the men said unto Lot—that is, the angels in men's appearance, 'Hast thou here any besides? sons-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, bring them out of this place.' God would extend mercy for Lot's sake to all his relations; not only to his sons and natural children, but to his sons-in-law; nay, their relation at that time was exceeding loose, for Lot's daughters were but espoused, for they are called virgins elsewhere. Yea, to express the largeness of his grace, God hath saved a whole nation for their sakes, and therefore they are called 'the chariots and horsemen of Israel,' 2 Kings ii. 12. And if ten righteous persons had been found in Sodom, God would have spared all Sodom, Gen. xviii. 32, much more their kindred and their near relations.

To apply this—

*Use* 1. For encouragement to godly parents concerning their children.

1. Consider the mercy of the covenant, how it overflows; it is not only stinted to their persons, but runs over to their children; they are beloved for our sake. Oh, fear the Lord not only for your own sakes,

but for your children's sake! this will be the best way to provide for your children; not to heap up wealth and honour for them, but to leave them the honour and wealth and privileges of the covenant. It is true, the election shall obtain; sanctification and regeneration doth not descend from the parents to their children; yet in outward mercies they have their share, if they have nothing else. Though you have nothing to leave them, yet leave them God's love, and that will be enough. It is a usual observation, many parents go to hell in getting an estate for them, and their children go to hell afterward in spending that estate. In Exod. xx. 5, 6, the commandment which forbids idolatry and compliance with outward false worship, hath a promise annexed concerning children. What should be the reason of this? Because parents are drawn to comply with things against their conscience out of an aim to maintain their children and preserve the interest of their families; therefore God hath made a special providence; walk in the fear of the Lord, and the Lord will provide for them; keep in God's ways and then you will leave them to his blessings.

2. Instruct your children; you have more encouragement to do so than others, because they are born within the covenant, and by this means you make way for the blessing: Gen. xviii. 19, 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.' Instruction makes way for a blessing; and so saith David to Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 3, 4, 'Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways, . . . that the Lord may continue his good word which he hath spoken concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel.' Hereby you open the dams and obstructions, that grace may have its free passage.

*Use 2.* If children are beloved for their parents' sake, then it serves to shame and terrify them that are born of godly parents, yet are not godly, but by their luxury and riot have forfeited all their blessings, their spiritual privileges in the covenant, and many times the outward blessing too. Or if you have temporal blessings, they do but harden you to greater torment, especially when you are so wicked to mock and reproach your parents because of their strictness and holy life. God looks for more from you than from others; the natural branches are more easily grafted into the good olive-tree. You are natural branches of the covenant, and you might plead the promises made to your parents with God; you have had a greater sufficiency of outward means; the example of your parents, frequent instruction, and many prayers have been laid out for you, and you have been more acquainted with the ways of religion.

*Use 3.* It may press us to admire the grace of God to his children. He cannot satisfy himself in doing good to you, but he must do good to your children too. How should we entertain this with reverence! When God told Abraham, I am thy God, and the God of thy seed, 'Abraham fell upon his face,' as humbly adoring the goodness of God, Gen. xvii. 3; so David, when God spake concerning his house and his children: 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19, 'What am I, O Lord, and what is my

house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; for thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; he stands wondering at this mercy of God.

*Use 4.* We learn hence that we are to save ourselves, and others committed to us. Noah prepared an ark 'for the saving of his household;' 2 Tim. iv. 16, 'In so doing, thou shalt save both thyself and them that bear thee.' It is good to instruct and teach our families: Gen xviii. 18, 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord.' And this is to be done morning and evening: Deut. vi. 6, 7, 'And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' All religion at first was in families, and to this we are bound by all the bonds of nature and religion.

I go on to another fruit and consequent of Noah's faith—'By which he condemned the world.' By the world is meant all mankind, except the family of Noah, But how did Noah condemn the world? It may be conceived in two ways: by his preaching, by his obedience. Let us see which will most suit this place.

1. By his preaching. That Noah was a preacher, it is clear from 2 Peter ii. 5, where he is called 'a preacher of righteousness.' All the while the ark was preparing he warned the wicked of their approaching danger, and admonished them to repent in time and turn to God, seeking the forgiveness of their sins through faith in the promised Messiah, or else they should perish: which is there meant by 'a preacher of righteousness.' Thus he might be said to condemn the world that admonisheth them by pronouncing the sentence of God upon the wicked world in case they did not repent. From hence I might observe—

*Doct.* That men receive their first sentence in the ministry of the word. There they are condemned first: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already;' that is, he that after warning and sufficient light stands out against the gospel, he can expect no other sentence from God. So John xx. 23, 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.' The sentence is first pronounced on earth, and then ratified in heaven. When we go to work according to the doctrine of faith and repentance, *clave non errante*, God will verify and make good that sentence. So Rom. ii. 16, 'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel;' according as it is declared in the gospel, so will the process of that day be. Mat. xii. 32, it is there said concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, 'It shall never be forgiven in this world'—by the ministry of the word—'nor in the world to come'—by Christ at the last day, when the pardon of the elect shall be pronounced and ratified before all the world out of Christ's own mouth; therefore we have need to regard the present voice of the gospel. The church is the seminary of heaven. In the angel's song the word was, 'Peace upon earth,' Luke ii. 14. According as you

make your peace with God upon earth, so it will be with you for ever. Those that obstinately stand out against the word, and put it away from them, they condemn themselves by their own fact; they pass a sentence upon their own souls, 'and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life,' Acts xiii. 46. It is not we that condemn you, but you yourselves; you condemn yourselves interpretatively when you do such actions as will end in certain ruin; and the ministers of God condemn declaratively when they declare the mind of Christ; and Christ will do it authoritatively in the great and terrible day.

2. He condemned the world by his obedience. This sense is most proper: the words 'by which' are to be referred to his preparing the ark, not to his faith, which is a more remote antecedent. A man is said to condemn another when he doth by his own actions and obedience declare what they should do, which they not doing are left inexcusable, and liable to the greater blame. So it is said, Mat. xii. 41, 42, 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment against this generation, and condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.' The pains and diligence of others in a good course, unless it be imitated, serves but to aggravate men's sins to a greater judgment; and therefore it is said, the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south shall condemn that generation. So Noah condemned the world; that is, by his care, and pains, and cost, in preparing the ark; it was a means to aggravate their carelessness and security, and to leave them liable unto a greater judgment. Noah was a preacher of righteousness; but if he had spoken nothing, there had been sermon enough in his very building the ark to convince, condemn, and leave them without excuse. I shall prosecute this sense: the point is this—

*Doct.* That the carelessness and the security of the wicked is aggravated and condemned by the faith and obedience of God's servants. The pains which they take in their lives to escape wrath will be an argument by which your carelessness will be upbraided in the day of judgment. Indeed God condemned the world; but divine justice taketh notice of this argument whereby to make the process against sinners the more righteous, and by consequence the more dreadful.

To prove this point, the main reason is because we are responsible for every talent. Now the example of the godly is one of the talents. They that live among humble and mortified christians have more advantage than others have; they are entrusted with another talent for which they are to be responsible to God. That you may be sensible of it, I shall show how many advantages you have by the examples of the godly.

1. It is a means of grace appointed by God, and as all other means, it hath a ministerial, natural efficacy. The word is a means, and the word hath a ministerial efficacy. It is a rational way to deal by counsel, and the voice hath a natural force to work on the affections. So the conversation and example of the godly is a means God hath appointed, and it doth naturally provoke and draw us forth to imitation.

Saith the apostle, 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' The first visit that God giveth the soul may be by their example. It is an ordinance of God that a man should seek to work upon his neighbours, by an innocent and comely carriage to draw them to God and religion. There is ἀγαθὴ ἔρις, an innocent emulation planted in our nature, by which we are moved, not only to imitate others, but to excel them; therefore God would have us display the lustre of a godly conversation. So it is an ordinance of God that a woman should seek to gain an unbelieving husband: 1 Peter iii. 10, 'That if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.' The wife, by lying in the bosom, and by the intimacy of converse, and as being void of suspicion of partiality, hath an excellent advantage to instil the knowledge of God and a care of religion, or at least to take off his prejudices by her holy conversation. For the apostle means there by 'winning,' not a formal conversion, but to gain them to a good liking and better opinion of the ways to God, that so they may wait upon the word, by way of preparation to receive further manifestations and discoveries of God. We are provoked by their endeavours; example hath a natural force this way; we love to do as others do, and to follow the track.

2. It confuteth atheism, and those prejudicate and hard thoughts which men have against religion. Godly men are God's witnesses to the world that there is a reality in religion; they give a testimony to it by the strictness and mortifiedness of their lives. Certainly when men can abjure and renounce all the pleasantness of their lives, and all their dear contentments for the interest of religion, there is somewhat more in it than a mere notion and imagination, or a mere naked pretence. As the primitive christians, when they were so just, temperate, willing to suffer for the cause of God, the heathens cried out, It is impossible but that these men must be moved by some reasonable principle. Isa. xliii. 12, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.' Now miracles are ceased, God will leave the world no other confirmation of the truth of religion, but the efficacy of the word upon the conscience and the conversation of believers: John xvii. 10, 'I am glorified in them,' and ver. 17, 'Sanctify them by thy truth; thy word is truth.' By their innocency, strictness, and sanctification, they discover the truth of the word unto the world; which certainly should make christians very strict in their lives, for the honour and glory of the Lord Christ lies at stake. There is no such dangerous temptation to atheism as the scandalous lives of professors. They that pretend to special nearness to God, when they fall, it makes the world believe that christianity was a fancy; as when one surprised a christian in a filthy act, he cried out, *Christiane! ubi Deus tuus?*—Christian, Christian! where is thy God? And as it confutes the privy atheism of the heart, so it confutes those devised scandals by which they would blot and stain the glory of religion. Worldly men cannot endure to be outshone; and because they have no mind to be as good as others, they would fain make others to be as bad and as vile as themselves; therefore they are full of hard thoughts and hard speeches against good men.

Now nothing convinceth the world so much as the godly life of professors. As the apostle speaks of the gravity of church-meetings: 1 Cor. xiv. 25, 'Falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' When he shall see the christian assemblies managed with such awe and reverence, and all things disposed in a comely manner, it would be a means of conviction, and bring him to fall down on his face, and say, Surely God is here. So, if christians did not let fall the majesty of their conversation, the prejudices of the world would soon vanish, and those that live about you would be forced to say, Certainly God is with these men. Of all apologies, the real apology is the best: 1 Peter ii. 15, 'That with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;' what we translate 'put to silence,' in the original, is *φιμούν*, that you may muzzle or bind up the mouth of a wicked man, that he cannot bark against religion. I like apologies well that are made to take off the prejudices of the world; as those of Tertullian and Justin Martyr for christians, and others for reformed churches. But there is no apology like your own lives to put an end to all the reproaches of the world, for works are a visible evidence of our sincerity; and so far the world seeth that the ways of God are to be approved and respected.

3. The examples of God's children are but the word exemplified, the rule drawn out into practice. The word is the means of conversion, wherever it is written, preached, or lived. and every christian is as it were a walking bible. As it was said of a learned man that he was *μουσείον περιηπτούν*, a walking library; so a child of God that walks in innocency and strictness of life is a walking and a living reproof; therefore his life must needs convince and condemn the world. There are some whose special office it is to preach; but every christian may live a sermon. You may be all preachers in this kind: 2 Cor. iii. 3, 'Forasmuch as you are declared to be the epistle of Jesus Christ.' Mark, Christ doth by his servants, as it were, declare and write his mind to the world; they are a living rule. You that are believers are to make out the glory of Christ, the efficacy of his Spirit, and the strictness of his doctrine to the world; you are to show forth—*τὰς ἀρετὰς*—'the virtues of him that hath called you,' 1 Peter ii. 9, to declare what manner of person Christ is, and what is his glory: he sends you out as so many lively copies and stamps of his image. The gospel is called the image of God, and a christian is the image of God too. The gospel is the glass wherein we behold his glory: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We all as in a glass beholding the glory of the Lord,' &c; it is the picture which Jesus Christ hath sent to his bride. As you know there is Cæsar's image upon his coin, and Cæsar's image upon his son, he is his living image; so the scriptures are the image of God, where he hath displayed the excellency and perfection of his nature as we are capable to understand it; but christians who are his sons and children are his living image that must discover his glory.

4. The example of the godly shows the strictness and severity of religion is possible; so that by that means it condemns the world of their negligence. Men think the rules of the gospel, because they exceed the power and force of nature, are only calculated for angels.

But now when men that live in the flesh, that live such a kind of life as we do, yet live above the flesh, the world is left without excuse, and their negligence and carelessness is hereby condemned. 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They think it strange,' saith the apostle, 'that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.' Carnal men think that there is such a felicity in their kind of lives that they wonder others are not as greedy of it as they; but now they are condemned in their thoughts when they behold the strictness, the mortification, the self-denial that is in the lives of christians. You may do it, it is possible; for there are many about you that have done it; and if you do not, you are left without excuse: Heb. vi. 12, 'Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' When the apostle speaks of resisting of Satan, and maintaining the spiritual life against the assaults of the powers of darkness, he gives this as one reason: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' Your brethren in the flesh—that have bodies as you have, that need the common supports of life as you do, that have not divested themselves of the interests and concerns of flesh and blood—they can resist a busy devil and a naughty world, and can wrestle with the corruptions of their own hearts: they that are of the same lump and nature that you are, they can do these things.

5. Because the examples of others make conscience work whenever you see it. Natural conscience doth homage to the image of God which is stamped upon his children. When they see their works and their strictness raised to such a height and proportion as nature cannot reach it, then they tremble; it makes their conscience to work: 1 Peter iii. 1, 2. 'They that obey not the word may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear.' The word 'coupled' is not in the original, and the sense is perfect without it; it may be read thus, 'When they behold your chaste conversation with fear.' A wicked man cannot look upon a strict christian without trembling; when they behold the strictness and severity of their lives, it makes them to quake. It is said of Herod, Mark vi. 10, that 'he feared John;' not so much because he was a severe preacher, one that would rub truth upon his conscience; he did not only fear him as a prophet, but as a 'just man.' Innocency and strictness beget fear; they are objects reviving guilt, and make conscience return upon itself: when they see their holy and godly conversation, it makes them to think of their own carelessness and sin; it is like a blow upon a sore, which makes the heart ache. The presence of God is dreadful to sinners anywhere, be it in eminent providences or in ordinances; but in the lives of his children it begets secret fear and some nips of conscience: Deut. xxviii. 10, 'All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee;' when they behold the graciousness of conversation which the godly hold forth. That is the reason why wicked men are in prison when they are in good company; they are taken with a fit of trembling. How despicable soever the godly are in their eyes, yet there is one of their judges present that condemns them for the present, and will pass judgment upon them hereafter. Ignatius.

speaking of the bishop of the Trallians, saith, that he was of such severity of life, that I think the greatest atheist that is would even be afraid to look upon him. Mortification shines effectually into the conscience of a wicked man. The strictness of God's children darts itself into their breasts, and begets a veneration and reverence.

*Use 1.* To press christians to walk so that they may even preach in their conversations, that you may condemn the world, not by your censures,—that is not the christian way, it is forbidden in the gospel—but by your lives, especially ministers to second their doctrine with practice. It concerns all christians, especially when we have to do with them that are without. 'Walk wisely' saith the apostle 'toward them that are without,' Col. iv. 5. There needs a great deal of wisdom and care, whenever we are cast upon the company of wicked and carnal men. Of all things, be careful of your conversations before wicked men; you are one of God's witnesses that must reprove and condemn them; therefore be careful that thou dost not disparage thy testimony. That you may do so, take these directions and motives.

*First.* For the directions.

1. Be sure to show forth those graces which they approve in their consciences, though they are loth to practise them; as strictness of life, which naturally strikes a veneration into the heart of a sinner: Mark vi. 20, 'Herod feared John, because he was a just man, and holy.' A loose christian that walks like the men of the multitude is a disgrace to his profession, and hardens carnal men in their wicked ways. Then diligence in the means of salvation. Certainly the world will see that there is somewhat in it when men are so busy and in earnest; when they see the children of God, that are wise and discreet, so diligent in the means of godliness. It is somewhat answerable to that which is spoken of in the text: Noah's preparing an ark, and providing beasts to enter therein. So when you work out your salvation with fear and trembling, the world will think there is somewhat in it, or else you would not be so busy and careful. So for charity: James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and the widow.' The world is mightily taken with these things: so that, Rom. v. 7, 'For a good man one would even dare to die.' A man that is only of a rigid and severe innocency, a sour man, it may be he may have little love in the world; but he that is good and charitable, the world esteems him exceedingly. So also for suffering and constancy in the matters of religion. Venture somewhat upon your hopes, that the world may know they are worthy hopes. So for a contempt of the world; it doth mightily affect a natural conscience, for they are transported with a greedy desire of earthly things; therefore they wonder when they see christians deny their interests and overlook their concerns upon just and convenient reasons; this hath a marvellous influence upon a natural conscience. I do the rather instance in this, because worldliness is a corruption that is incident to men that are serious, and of that kind of temper which is fit for religion. When you are full of cares, and covetous as the men of the world, you do exceedingly disparage and stain your profession, and you do not condemn the world.

2. What you do, do it in such a way as morality cannot reach it.



There are many corruptions which nature discovers, and we may avoid them upon such arguments as nature suggests. Now you are 'to show forth the virtues of Christ,' 1 Peter ii. 9, and the influences of the Spirit of Christ, and not 'walk only as men,' 1 Cor. iii. 3. When men only content themselves with the civil and orderly use of reason, they may be just and temperate; this is but to act as men. Your way should be above the rate of the world; you should be holy, and maintain an awful reverent fear of God; this is such a way as the world cannot reach: Mat. vi. 46, 'If you love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?' You should do somewhat above that which is enforced by the light of nature; as in giving, forgiving, and righteous dealing, a christian should be a point above others; so in loving enemies, in providing for the glory of God, and laying out himself for good uses. A christian should not be contented with the proportions of nature, but do somewhat to answer the self-denial of Christ, who when he was rich in the glory of the godhead, became poor for our sakes. There is a height becoming religion, above the size and pitch of morality; and this you should aim at.

3. Let all things come from the force of religion, and not from by-ends. There is nothing amiable but what is genuine and native. Forced actions lose their lustre and grace, and do not prevail with the world. It is said of the children of God, that they were altogether bent for the heavenly recompenses: Heb. xi. 16, 'They declared plainly that they sought a country.' You should declare plainly you have no designs but for heaven. Do all things for the love and fear of God; by-ends will never hold out. It is said of the hypocrite, Prov. xxv., 26, 'His wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation.' Varnish will off; and whenever it happens, it will be much to the prejudice and disgrace of religion.

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## SERMON XXXIX.

*By the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*—HEB. xi. 7.

*Secondly,* FOR the motives to press you to this: to live, so that you may condemn the world, that you may make them own their guilt and shame.

1. You may be a means to convert them. All are bound as much as they can to co-operate to the conversion of men. It is a debt of charity that we owe to the world, especially if we consider the relation we sustain as God's witnesses, as Christ's epistles. Now what an honour would this be to further the good of souls! What glory would it be to God, and honour to yourselves: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify

your Father which is in heaven.' Oh, how sweet will this be when men shall come and bless God that ever they were acquainted with you, when they shall bless God for the lustre of your conversation, and for the light of holiness that shines forth in your lives! Ministers have a great deal of honour in that they are employed in the conversion of souls, when they are successful in the work; they will all have their crown and rejoicing in the day of Christ. Now God invites you that are private christians to the conversion of souls. It may be you formerly have done hurt by the carelessness of your lives. Nature is very susceptible of evil; we easily take sickness one from another, but not health; and therefore you should be the more earnest to lay the pious holy snares of a godly conversation, that you may be a means to win them to God.

2. If you do not convert them, you will leave them without excuse; you will have further cause to applaud the righteous counsels of God in the great day, when you shall sit with Christ upon the bench. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. vi. 2, that 'The saints shall judge the world;' then by sentence, now by conversation; then by applauding of the righteousness of God in their just execution. Now if you look to judge the world with Christ, begin it for the present, condemn the world in your conversation.

3. If you do not condemn them, you will justify them. A carnal profession justifies the world, and a godly christian condemns the world. Judah justified Sodom and Samaria: Ezek. xvi. 52, 'Be confounded, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters.' You do justify their prejudices; you put an excuse into their mouths, as if religion were as bad as they make it. It will be sad for the account of hypocrites in the last day, when wicked men shall come forth as witnesses, and plead, Lord, we never thought these had been thy servants, because they were so proud, so self-seeking, so full of aspiring projects, so factious and turbulent. When wicked men are hardened by carnal professors, at the last day this will impress a shame upon them. A professor overtaken with sin may do more hurt than a thousand others; the Hams of the world will laugh to see a Noah drunk. The wickedness of some hypocrites crept in among the church hath always been a great means of hardening the world, and been a stone of stumbling to them; and by 'such the way of truth is evil spoken of,' 2 Peter ii. 2.

4. By condemning the world you will justify the ways of God; you will force wicked men whether they will or no, to say that the ways of God are holy and true, and to say these men are honest, and that which they profess is religion. It is the duty of every servant of God to justify his profession from the reproach and scandal of the world: Mat. xi. 19, 'Wisdom is justified of her children.' Justification implies condemnation and reproach. So Titus ii. 10, 'That you may adorn the doctrine of God your saviour.' Look, as men of great parts, and are carnal, when they take the wrong way, they put a varnish and ornament upon the devil's cause; so godly and strict christians, when they keep up the majesty of their conversation, they adorn their profession, and are an ornament and credit to Jesus Christ.

5. You will lose nothing by it: then God will not be ashamed of you as those, whose design was for heaven: Heb. xi. 16, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God.' God will think it to be no dishonour to himself that he hath such kind of servants; he will not be ashamed to be called your God, and Christ your Christ. But usually it may be said of most of us, *Dicimur christiani in opprobrium Christi*; we are called christians to the very disgrace of Jesus Christ, because of the folly and sinfulness of our lives.

*Use 2.* To wicked men, to press them to observe and improve the conversation of those godly and mortified christians with whom they do converse. Look to the frame of your hearts whenever you are cast into their company. How often hath thy heart smote thee when thou hast heard their gracious discourse, and seen their holy conversation? Observe, what hast thou done upon such occasions? Some wicked men, more touched with a sense of religion, when their consciences work, when they see the beauty and heavenliness of their lives, they seek to drive them out, and forget these things. Ah! consider, this will be a means not only to harden thee for the present, but to condemn thee; when men have had much remorse and smiting of conscience, if they do not observe it, they grow the more obdurate and hardened in sin, which will be a means of thy utter ruin. God hath a book of remembrance, and how many witnesses will there be brought against thee at that day? Not only ministers that have shaken off the dust of their feet against thee, but godly men who condemn thee by their lives. God will remember thee; those agonies and secret nips of conscience shall rise up in judgment against thee, to the confusion of thy face; thy rebellion is mightily aggravated and sealed up by it to destruction, when thou art condemned by the innocency of their lives. But now others, when they are smitten in conscience by observing the strictness and graciousness of God's children, they rage and rail, imagine scandalous thoughts against them; or else they hate and persecute them, as it is the old trick of the world to malign what they have no mind to imitate,—as 'Cain slew his brother because his works were righteous,' 1 John iii. 10. Few there are that confess the wickedness of their estate, that give glory to God when they are convinced. If thou canst not endure the lustre of godliness in a saint, how wilt thou endure the presence of Jesus Christ in that day? Noah condemned the world, and did not a judgment follow? When you are reproached in your conscience by the sight of their conversation, take notice of it that it may be a day of visitation to thy soul.

*Use 3.* For comfort against the reproaches of the world. They may condemn you in word, but you condemn them in life. When a man is running a race, no matter for the judgment of standers-by, or those that contend with us, all depends upon the master of the sports and the umpire of the race. So wicked men may scoff at you, standers-by may mock and slander your godly conversation; it is no matter, if God acquit you, and if you have praise with him. As a man that outruns another is said to cast his adversary; so you that outrun the wicked, and outshine them in godliness, you condemn them really, and the judge of the race will determine of your side. And therefore if the world reproach you, this is the revenge you should take upon them, to

be the more strict, to give out the greater lustre of holiness, so you will be revenged upon wicked men in an innocent way; if you be more strict, this will stop their mouths.

Some things might be observed from that expression, 'the world,' viz.—

1. Observe, that we must obey God, and walk in innocency and strictness, though we be alone. As here most of the world were nought; there were but a few good, but eight persons, saved in the ark, and among them a Ham. Sometimes it is safer to go against the stream than with it.

2. Observe also, that multitudes cannot keep off the strokes of God's vengeance. God can dissolve all confederacies and combinations against himself: Prov. xi. 21, 'Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.'

3. Observe also, compliance with the multitude doth not lessen the sin, but rather increase it. When we see men fall into the gulf, it is more foolish if we will follow after them.

I might clear a doubt which some move, whether all the world that were drowned in the flood were eternally lost? Certain we are the scripture rather doth carry it that they were all eternally lost, for they are called 'the world of the ungodly,' 2 Peter ii. 5, and the 'spirits that are now in prison, who sometimes were disobedient,' 1 Peter iii. 19, 20; and yet by probable conjectures some exception may be made, for it is probable that some might have time to call upon God for mercy, and some of them that perished came of the holy race, and possibly some might be moved with the approach of the judgment.

I come to the last words—'And became,' &c. To make way for the points, I shall first open the words—

'He became;' that is, he was then discovered to be so. Noah was righteous before, and had 'found grace in the eyes of God,' Gen. vi. 8; and verse 9, 'Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation; and Noah walked with God.' Yet it is said after he built the ark, then 'he became;' that is, then he was discovered to be what he was. It is the fashion of scripture to say that things are done when they are clearly manifested and discovered. There is a parallel instance: James ii. 23, 'And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness;' then it was fulfilled when he offered up Isaac, yet the saying was used of Abraham long before he offered up his son: Gen. xv. 6, 'And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness;' but the meaning is, then it appeared how truly it was said of him, God giving him again a solemn testimony: Gen. xxii. 12, 'Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing then thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me.' So it is here; Noah, after he had prepared an ark, 'became,' that is, then he was visibly declared to be, an heir of the covenant of grace; God dealing with Noah just as he dealt with Abraham, confirming his faith by a solemn testimony: Gen. vii. 1, 'God said to Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation;' now I have found thou art righteous before me, that is, by a righteousness of faith;

for by the works of the law none can be righteous in his sight: Rom. iii. 20, 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' And to that testimony the apostle alludeth here.

'An heir.' The word 'heir' is sometimes put for 'possessor,' especially if we have a firm right, and if it be such a possession upon which there depends a further heritage. So Jesus Christ, who is lord and possessor of all things, is said to be 'the heir of all things,' Heb. i. 2. All firm and perpetual possession among the Hebrews is expressed by the term 'heritage;' so that to be an heir is nothing else but to obtain, to be a possessor, to be interested in this righteousness of faith. Though possibly the apostle might intend that he succeeded as immediate heir in the line of the church, or head of that race among whom the righteousness of faith is professed.

'Of the righteousness which is by faith.' By faith is meant faith in the Messiah; and righteousness is here put for the righteousness of justification, or rather I conceive for the reward of righteousness—acceptance with God, possession of the whole world, and the enjoyment of the everlasting recompenses, all which are here called righteousness, because all these things are built and founded upon the righteousness of Christ which is possessed by faith; of which righteousness Noah professed himself an heir. And this is that righteousness he did press upon men in his age, inculcating and commending the same hopes to others. Therefore he is said to be 'a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 5, because he pressed them to return to God, and seek the forgiveness of their sins by faith in the Messiah.

The points are three—(1.) That there is a righteousness by faith; (2.) This righteousness is an heritage; (3.) That our title to this heritage is evidenced to be right and good by the special operations of faith.

*Doct. 1.* That there is a righteousness by faith. This I have largely spoken of in ver. 4. I shall only now observe two things—

1. That this righteousness is a righteousness opposed to the righteousness of the law, or exact obedience as fulfilled in our own persons. A clear place for that is Rom. iv. 13, where it is said of Abraham that 'the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law,'—mark the opposition,—'but through the righteousness of faith;' where there is a plain distinction and opposition of the law to the righteousness of faith. The best of God's children are accepted out of grace, and justified by faith, not works. Noah was a just and perfect man in his generation; he was the best alive in his time, and yet his claim was not of right but of grace; 'he found grace' though he were 'a just man,' Gen. vi. 8, 9. In the children of God there is a care of holiness and obedience; but their reception into God's favour is not built upon their obedience, because that is imperfect and mixed with sin; but upon the righteousness which is by faith.

2. It is a righteousness that is opposed to any act, virtue, and grace of our own. When the apostle had spoken of his own personal excellences, he concludes all thus, Phil. iii. 9, 'That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness;' where Paul clearly shows that it is such a righteousness as we have by being found in Christ;

such as doth not arise from any act of ours, but by virtue of our union with him. Our guilt is so great that when wrath makes inquisition for sinners, nothing will cover it but the righteousness of the Son of God: Rom. iii. 22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; so that there is no difference.' He saith it is the righteousness of God, either such as God hath appointed, or such as is merited by a person that is God; for indeed there is a righteousness of God, that essential righteousness which Christ hath with the Father, which is incommunicable either to man or angel, no more than God can communicate to the creature any other of his essential attributes, as omnipotency, eternity, &c; but it is the righteousness of Christ who is God-man, his cautionary or surety; righteousness, which he performed in our stead, which by virtue of our union to him is made ours; and the instrument on our part to receive it is faith, and therefore by consequence the objects of it are all believers without difference.

*Doct. 2.* That this righteousness is a heritage. So the apostle intimates when he saith he 'became an heir.' Now it is a heritage in several respects.

1. Because of the dignity and excellency of the blessing itself, with all the consequences of it. The blessing itself is a fair portion; it is a legacy left us by Jesus Christ. Look, as when Elijah went to heaven he left Elisha his cloak; so when Jesus Christ went to heaven he left us his garment, his own righteousness as a legacy to us, which is a covering that is not too short to make us accepted with God. The gospel is called the new testament; it is the will of Christ, and among other legacies he hath left us his righteousness. Look, as a father entails his land upon his children, so Jesus Christ hath left us what he had. As to the outward state, Christ had nothing to leave us, he was poor and despicable; but that which was eminent in Christ was his righteousness and obedience, and this he hath left to us as the pledge of his love. Christ's righteousness is an excellent privilege and heritage, a better heritage than all the world; he is a rich man indeed that hath it. All other things are but an additional supply, that is the main blessing: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all other things shall be added to you.' The great and main blessing that we should seek and look after in the world is an interest in the righteousness of Christ; other things are cast in as paper and packthread into the bargain. This is a jewel which cost Christ very dear to purchase it for us, and he is a rich man indeed that hath it. Look, as the wise merchant sold all to purchase the pearl of great price, Mat. xiii. 46; so if we suffer the loss of all, it will make us amends if we have this pearl of great price; all else is but dung and dross. Those in the world that have large revenues, that join house to house, and field to field, alas! they have but a spot of earth, in the map it is nothing; but he that hath Christ and his righteousness, he is the rich and great man, greater than the greatest monarch upon earth if he be carnal; and he may say with David, Ps. xvi. 6, 'I have a goodly heritage,' when he had made God his portion, and hath an interest in the righteousness of Christ.

2. It is called a heritage to note the largeness of our portion and

spiritual estate. Let us consider the consequences of this righteousness; it is our title and claim to all other blessings that can be had. The children of God have the largest patrimony that ever was—'All things are yours,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 21. Though God do not give us the actual possession, yet we have a general right. And all things are theirs by way of reduction in the final issue and event; all for the good of the heirs of promise, though all be not yours in the way of actual possession and enjoyment; that may be hurtful to us. But to come to particulars, there cannot be two more magnificent words spoken in the whole creation than heaven and earth, yet they are both yours by virtue of this righteousness.

[1.] For the earth: for most difficulty seems to be there. Many a christian hath not a foot of land, yet it is true all things are his. It is said of Abraham, Rom. iv. 13, 'For the promise that he should be the heir of the world,' &c. And we have the blessing of Abraham, who through the righteousness of faith was re-established in the right which Adam had before the fall. Wherever God should cast his portion, he might look upon it as his, as made over to him in Christ. Both the comfortable and the sanctified enjoyment of the creature is a part of our portion, we have it by virtue of this righteousness; God hath created all refreshments for believers that they might receive them with thanksgiving: 1 Tim iv. 3, 'Commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.' Believers only have a covenant right to make use of the good creatures and outward supports and refreshments of life. I cannot say that wicked men are usurpers of what they possess, it is their portion: Ps. xvii. 14, 'The men of the world, which have their portion in this life;' yet they have not a covenant-title as believers have; they have not these things from a loving father, from a God in covenant with them; they do not work for good to their souls. I say they are not usurpers before God; they have a general title and a creature right, but not a covenant right, till interested in Christ; this they lost in Adam. The devils themselves have their being by a creature right, so the young ravens have their food, so wicked men have a creature right; but all this is salted with a curse, and proves a snare to them. But now, whatever a christian hath, he hath it from his father from mercy, from a God in covenant with him, so he is an heir of the world; whatever of the world falls to his share, he may look upon it as a blessing of the covenant, as that which will not hinder but further his salvation. In Christ we have a new right to the creature, and we have a sanctified use of it, Heb. i. 2. It is said of Christ, that 'he is heir of all things;' we can have no part of the inheritance but by and through him, for Adam was disinherited, and he lost his covenant right over the creature by his fall; but in Christ the title is renewed. If all the world were yours, it would be no blessing to you if you could not look upon it as a legacy from Christ, as a thing that you hold by a covenant right, as that wherein you are interested by the righteousness of faith.

[2.] As the world is theirs, so heaven is theirs too. You are an heir-apparent to the kingdom of heaven: James ii. 5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in

faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' He is an heir to a crown, and the fairest crown that ever was. A poor believer walks up and down in the world in a despicable appearance, like princes in disguise in a foreign country and strange land; they have a royal patrimony and a large estate, though their appearance be despicable; the world that looks upon them thinks them miserable, that all their hopes lie '*in terra incognita*,' in an invisible land, that shall never be found out. But it is not so far but the children of God may see it through the prospective of faith, which is the evidence of things not seen. Indeed the children of God are wont to do so, they go up often to the top of Pisgah, and view the promised land and with Abraham they walk through it, and do, as it were, hear God say, All this is made over to thee in Christ; and they live upon this reversion. The Lord would not weary us with expectation too much; therefore we have somewhat in hand, but the best of our portion is to come. We are all God's children, 'heirs and co-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. Christ and we do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt us. We have a share in all his father's goods; we have one father, therefore hereafter we shall dwell in one house, and enjoy the same estate—'I go to prepare a place for you,' John xiv. 3; 'I will that they also may behold my glory,' John xvii. 24. Christ speaks as if he were not contented with his own heaven without our company.

3. It is called a heritage to show the nature of our tenure. You know of all tenures, inheritance is the most free, most sure, and the most honourable; and indeed in this way do we hold all the blessings of the covenant.

[1.] It is a free tenure. All that God seeks to magnify in the covenant is his glorious grace from first to last. In heaven we shall admire free grace: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.' Reward and wages are more servile terms, suited to a covenant made with servants; but heritage is for children. Therefore the apostle, speaking to godly servants, saith, Col. ii. 23–25, 'Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God . . . knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.' Mark how these are coupled: reward is suited to their outward relation, you will have wages; but then 'reward of inheritance,' that is suited to their inward and spiritual condition; as they are freemen and children of God, so they have an inheritance; and as servants they shall have a reward. When we come to heaven, it is a question which we shall admire most, grace or glory. It is a free manner of tenure, that so grace may be exalted. The heritage is bought before the heir be born many times. So this heritage was purchased before the children had done either good or evil. There was a covenant passed betwixt God and Christ, and that was a covenant of work and wages; Christ was to be a servant that we might be children.

[2.] It is honourable. Of all tenures, that of inheritance is best, better than holding of land by service. Now God hath put this honour upon us to make us co-heirs with his own Son: Rom. viii. 17, 'Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' We do not hold as hired servants,



but as children. Christ alone is the natural son; and we shall have Christ's own title, and are co-heirs by adoption: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he, *ἐξουσίαν*, power to be called the sons of God.' God needed us not; he had a son of his own that he delighted in before ever there was hill or mountain: Prov. viii. 30, 'Then was I with him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight.' It is the more to be admired by us because we were strangers and rebels, and could aspire to no other title than that—'Make me as one of thy hired servants,' Luke xv. 19. Though we are very ambitious, yet conscience is so possessed with the sense of guilt that we can look for no more. But now he hath put this honour upon us that we shall have the title of children and hold by an inheritance.

[3.] It is a sure title, because it is built upon nature. A father may frown upon his son for his fault, but doth not easily disinherit him; but a servant, on his offence, is turned out-of-doors. When Adam held by the first covenant, he was but an honourable servant: therefore when he offended his master, he was turned out-of-doors. But now we have the title of children by Christ. Though God may chastise us, yet he will not disinherit us: Ps. lxxxix. 33, 34, 'My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' He hath reserved a liberty in the covenant, that he will chastise us: ver. 32, 'I will visit their transgressions with the rod,' &c., but he will never alter the purposes of his love and his counsel towards us. A child may be whipped, but not disinherited. God hath not only pawned his word to us, but given us earnest that he will not change his purpose; the inheritance is past over in court: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' Those that make the purposes of God to be changeable, they cut the sinews of christian comfort; they make us to walk with God like dancers upon a rope, as if we were always ready to fall; but God hath given us earnest that he will never reverse the purposes of his grace. When we have once an interest in it, our right is indefeasible, and we cannot lose it. And mark, it is not only a sure title in regard of God, but also in regard of men; for as God will not take our heritage from us, so men cannot. We may lose goods, livings, lives, but we can never lose our heritage; this is sure in Christ, they cannot take away our better portion—'All things are yours,' even death among the rest, 1 Cor. iii. 22; that is a part of our heritage.

4. To show the condition of our present state, therefore it is called an heritage. Here we have little in hand like an heir that doth live in hope; so it is said: Titus iii. 7, 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' We live altogether upon hope. Servants and mercenaries must have pay in hand, they covenant from quarter to quarter; so carnal men that are hired servants, they must have their reward, secular conveniences: Mat. vi. 2, 'Ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν,' 'They have their reward,' they give God a discharge. If he will give them honour, wealth, and riches in the world, they look for no more. They do not look after heaven; as a servant in the family doth not regard the heritage; he knows the master

reserves that for his son, but he must have his present wages. But we live in hope God will make amends for everything; not a frown or ill look of the world, but God will recompense it; as children are content with their present maintenance and education, they know when the heritage falls they shall have enough. Only there is this difference between the earthly and the heavenly heritage; in the spiritual heritage we possess in our father's lifetime. Men give their estates when they can possess them no longer; but Christ and we possess it together, we are glorified with him. In the outward heritage the father dies to give place to the son; but here the son must die that they may covenant with the father.

*Doct. 3.* That our title to this heritage is evidenced to be right and good by the operations of faith. Then 'he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith;' that is, in his own sense and feeling. God speaks to us by the Spirit, which witnesseth to us that we are heirs and children. Now this never will be till faith hath produced some good fruits; for without this conscience cannot witness, and the Spirit will not.

1. Conscience cannot witness. Habits lie out of sight till they are drawn out into action, then they come under the view of conscience. The seed lies hidden in the ground till it spring up into a stalk; the sap is an inward thing which you cannot see, it is only discovered by the blossom and fruit: so the inward habit of grace doth lie out of sight; it is discovered to the notice and view of conscience by the operations of it: 1 John iii. 19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' We may come and make good our claim when once faith appears in the fruits of holiness: 1 John ii. 3, 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.'

2. The Spirit will not witness without this. This is God's method. The testimony of the Spirit is always subsequent to the testimony of a renewed conscience: Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' It is God's method, first to pour in the oil of grace, then the oil of gladness; first to make Christ 'a king of righteousness,' and then 'king of peace,' Heb. vii. 2. And 'after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph. i. 13. In the original there are three articles; ye are sealed 'by the Spirit,' 'by the Holy Spirit,' and 'by the Spirit of promise.' The apostle shows how the Spirit comes and seals up grace to the soul; as the 'Spirit of promise' upon gospel terms, 'after that ye believed;' and 'as the Holy Spirit,' having wrought holiness in the heart. We have a title as soon as we believe, but this title is not evidenced to us till faith be discovered to us in the fruits of holiness.

*Use.* To press you to examine yourselves. Are you, as Noah was, heir of the righteousness of faith? is this your condition? All depends upon that, and therefore I will propound two questions:—Have you the title of an heir? Have you the spirit of an heir.

1. Have you the title of an heir? Once clear up that, be a child, and thou shalt be sure of a child's part and portion. Now what can you say to this? Have you received the spirit of adoption? Faith is your title; and that faith must be evidenced by holiness. We are apt to mistake the work of faith, and cry up presumption for faith. Conscience will still be entering process against us, and citing us before the tribunal of God, if you cannot produce the fruits of holiness. How will you evidence

your faith? St Paul saith, 'We are justified by faith,' Rom. iii. 28; St James, that 'we are justified by works, and not by faith only,' James ii. 24. By faith we are justified from sin before God, and so we have peace with God; and by works we are justified from hypocrisy in the court of conscience, so we have peace with ourselves. This way must your title be made out to you. Is there a care of duty and a diligent resistance of sin?

2. Hast thou the spirit of an heir? What is the spirit of an heir? Then—

[1.] Thy main care will be carried out to make the birthright sure. This will be the first and early design of the soul: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof;' this is the great work you drive on in the world. All the children of God cannot come to assurance, but they all labour after it; and they make it their care to seek the kingdom of God, and make out their interest in him. A carnal man, if he can thrive and prosper in the way of his trade, he looks for no more, he gives God a discharge. But now an heir cannot be content till his title to the heritage be sure. Now can you live upon your reversion; wait in hope, and be godly without secular encouragement? Servants must have wages, but an heir can live upon the reversion.

[2.] An heir will not easily part with his inheritance; and therefore, have you honourable thoughts of your portion in Christ, and of the consolation of the Spirit. It is said of Esau, Heb. xii. 16, he was 'a profane person, and for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' It is the highest profaneness in the world to have cheap thoughts of the consolations of the Holy Ghost: Job xv. 9, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee?' It is not profaneness only to be drunk, whore, and commit adultery; but the greatest profaneness is to have cheap thoughts of spiritual privileges. An heir values his birthright; he is loath to sell the joy and comfort of his soul for carnal satisfactions and gratifications of the flesh. Naboth would not part with his inheritance when the king comes to bargain with him: 1 Kings xxi. 3, 'The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.' So if thou art an heir, thou wilt not part with thy portion in Christ for so vile a matter as thriving in the world. Never part with the consolations of God for worldly pleasure.

[3.] An heir is much taken with his heritage, always looking for it when it will fall into his hands. Therefore men that build their nests in the world as if they never looked for a better portion, which lavish out their strength upon the world, and never send any messengers, any spies into the land of promise, never send a believing thought into heaven, they have not the spirit of an heir: Rom. viii. 23, 'We ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' He that is a spiritual heir is always groaning, When shall I be with God and Christ, and he is feasting and entertaining his thoughts with suppositions of his future glory, and of the goodly heritage and portion that is made over to him in Christ; he is waiting, groaning, and looking for it. If thy heart be not taken up herewith, so as to favour things above, it is a sign thou hast not the spirit of an heir.